

**Nation-Building and Catholic Assistance to Migrants in Italy's Transition from  
Land of Emigration to Immigration, 1861-1990**

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## **Dedication**

For Frank, at the other end of the couch

And my parents, Michael and Susan, who gave me life and fought ferociously to save it

## Abstract

This dissertation analyzes how Italian Catholic missionaries understood Italian migrants' relationship to both an abstract Italian nation and a concrete Italian nation-state, and how those understandings affected the spiritual and charitable work that missionaries undertook with Italian migrants. Massive emigration after Italian unification in 1861 embarrassed the new state, and it attempted, with limited success, to convince Italians that they were part of an Italian national community, even abroad. Although the new state and the Catholic Church remained officially estranged until the 1929 Lateran Accords, Italian missionaries employed their own version of Italian nation-building as a key strategy for maintaining migrants' Catholicism abroad. Missionaries, including Scalabrinians, Salesians, Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and the missionaries of the *Opera* Bonomelli, followed Italian migrants around the world and created Italian Catholic communities and institutions. Missionaries frequently collaborated with the Italian state both before and after the Lateran Accords, and though missionaries always insisted on their independence from the Italian state, their relationship with the state was complex and often contested under both the Liberal (1861-1922) and Fascist (1922-1943) governments. By the mid-twentieth century, Italian missionaries' work evolved into a universal migrant ministry rather than one focused exclusively on Italians. Missionaries began to argue for a more expansive notion of the Italian national community and greater political and social inclusion for the migrants who arrived in Italy in the late twentieth century. This project examines the complex intertwining of religion and nation-state in a country known for its weak state, strong Church, and high levels of mobility.

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## Glossary

*The Church:* Shorthand for the Catholic Church

*The Conciliation:* The political reconciliation between the Italian state and the Catholic Church caused by the 1929 Lateran Accords.

*Conciliationists:* Between 1870 and 1929, Catholics who favored the resumption of official relations between the Church and the Italian state. They took a pragmatic position, believing the era of Church's temporal power was over and the two entities should focus on the day's other pressing needs.

*Holy See:* The head of the government of the Catholic Church, consisting of the administrative offices of the Roman Curia, the highest level of Catholic administration, under the direction of the Pope

*Intransigents:* Between 1870 and 1929, Catholics who thought the Church should make no accommodations or relationship with the Italian state because the state had seized Papal territories during the Risorgimento.

*Italianità:* Literally "Italianness." A broad term used to connote Italians' essential qualities, including their language, history, religion, and supposedly shared cultural heritage.

*Lateran Accords:* The 1929 agreement signed by the Italian government and the Holy See, reestablishing official relations between them

*Propaganda Fide:* A department of the Holy See which oversaw missionaries and Church affairs in countries that the Holy See deemed to be non-Catholic countries. It is known today as the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

*Religious:* Catholic men and women who took vows and became part of Catholic religious institutes. Also known as Catholic brothers and sisters

*Risorgimento:* The movement for the political unification of the Italian nation-state in the nineteenth century

*Roman Curia:* A series of offices within the Holy See that function as the Church's governance and that report to the pope

*Roman Question:* The issue of papal sovereignty during the rupture between the Italian state and the Catholic Church between 1870 and 1929

*Sacred Consistorial Congregation:* A Holy See department that handled internal Church affairs. It has been known as the Congregation for the Clergy since 1967.

*Secular Priests:* Priests ordained for a particular diocese rather than a religious order

*Temporal power:* Earthly power, usually used to refer to the Catholic Church's governance of territories such as the Papal States and distinguished from the Church's claims to authority over religious issues. Historians commonly use the word "temporal" to indicate time, but in this dissertation I employ the word in the previous, Catholic sense to create consistency with how the actors in this study employed this term.

*Vatican:* This term is sometimes used as shorthand for the Holy See. I use the term Holy See throughout this dissertation in order to avoid abruptly switching terms after discussing the Lateran Accords in Chapter Four.

### **Archival Abbreviations**

ACS: Archivio Centrale dello Stato (Central State Archives): Rome

AGS: Archivio Generale Scalabriniano (General Scalabrinian Archive): Rome

APF: Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide (Historic Archive of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith): Vatican City

ASMAE: Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (Historic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs): Rome

ASV: Archivio Secreto Vaticano (Vatican Secret Archives): Vatican City

CMS: Center for Migration Studies: New York City

CSER: Centro Studi Emigrazione-Roma (Center for Emigration Studies-Rome): Rome

## Introduction

### "Our Religion- Our Language- Our Fatherland"

In January 1891, Catholic Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini spoke at a conference about emigration in the Italian port city of Genoa. Genoa was a major exit point for Italians emigrating to the Americas for economic opportunities they could not find in Italy. Millions of people had already left Italy, newly united in 1861, and the numbers would swell in the two decades to come. While Scalabrini believed emigration was a morally neutral act, he feared for the well-being of the millions who left Italy to work around the world. Italians migrants in the Americas, he claimed, lived “without any religious assistance; abandoned to themselves or given over to the most distressing indifference, or they desert the religion of their fathers. The sentiment of nationality disappears and with it, which grieves you to think of it, the sentiment of the Catholic Faith. They fall victim to Protestant propaganda and secret societies which are more active and numerous there.”<sup>1</sup> Italians migrated in great numbers to supposedly Catholic countries such as Argentina and Brazil as well as to Protestant-dominated countries like the United States. Yet Scalabrini feared for Italians in all these countries.

Other Catholic priests and religious, including many within the Church’s hierarchy, shared Scalabrini’s concerns. They feared that Italians migrants would abandon Catholicism due to Protestant proselytizing, radical propaganda, lack of Catholic

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1"…essi vivono laggiù privi di ogni assistenza religiosa; abbandonati a se stessi o si danno all’indifferentismo più desolante, o disertano la religione dei loro padri. Smarriscono il sentimento della nazionalità e con esso, cosa che stringe il cuore a pensarvi, il sentimento della cattolica Fede, cadono vittime della propaganda protestante, vittime infelici delle sette, colà più che altrove attive e numerose." Giovanni Battista Scalabrini. "Prima Conferenza sulla Emigrazione." January 1891. Accessed August 30, 2013. [http://www.scalabrini.org/images/stories/download\\_opere\\_scalabriniane/i\\_conferenza.pdf](http://www.scalabrini.org/images/stories/download_opere_scalabriniane/i_conferenza.pdf)

infrastructure in destination countries, and discrimination or unfamiliar religious practices in Catholic parishes in destination countries. Such obstacles, combined with the financial and social hardships Italians faced when emigrating and establishing themselves abroad, led many within the Church to call for assistance to Italian migrants. However, Scalabrini's call stood out because of his insistence that "the sentiment of nationality" was linked to Italians' Catholic faith and that its loss was a threat to Italians' continued Catholicism. Scalabrini believed that being Italian meant being Roman Catholic, so to preserve Catholicism one also needed to support Italians' sense of and participation in an Italian national community when abroad.

Scalabrini had taken action on this issue in 1887, when he founded the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo, commonly known as the Scalabrinians, for the material and spiritual assistance of Italians migrating to the Americas. At the time of his 1891 speech, he had already sent 33 priests and 27 lay people abroad to do this work. These missionaries shared Scalabrini's special concern for Italian migrants as compatriots and the belief that migrants needed the missionaries' paternal guidance to safeguard their Catholicism and prevent their exploitation by unscrupulous migration and labor agents. Scalabrini, who was well-connected in both the Church hierarchy and among wealthy Italians with a charitable interest in Italian migrants, obtained support for his endeavor and spoke across Italy on the subject.

Yet Scalabrini's argument that migrants' continued identification as Italians was as important as their continued identification as Catholics was an unusual and tricky position for an Italian bishop to advocate in the late nineteenth century. The Italian state

was created in the mid-nineteenth century by seizing lands from other powers, including the Papal States, central Italian territory that popes had ruled for more than a thousand years. The pope had condemned the Italian unification movement and the newly unified state's annexation of Rome in 1870. In contrast, Scalabrini and some other Italian Catholics, notably Bishop Geremia Bonomelli, made a distinction between the Italian state and anticlericals in government. They believed the state could collaborate with the Church to assist Italian migrants and to help reinforce the idea that all Italians, even those abroad, were part of an Italian national community. Scalabrini used personal connections to obtain support for his work from friends in government and among wealthy lay Italians. In his speech, Scalabrini judged this combined effort successful, though not yet adequate to reach the millions of Italian abroad.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, several Italian Catholics, including Scalabrini and Bonomelli, created Catholic organizations either partly or entirely dedicated to assisting Italian migrants. They considered the organizations' members to be missionaries, but their religious function was not the evangelization of non-Catholics but the preservation of Catholicism among a group of people already considered Catholic. The missionaries understood national identity and Catholicism as things that could be lost, and so they believed the Church needed to adopt a defensive position to help migrants resist losing these attachments. In his 1891 speech, Scalabrini judged missionaries' work already successful and in need of expansion:

Not many years ago, there were extraordinary attempts to Americanize our emigrant brothers from Europe. Religion and Fatherland mourned the destruction of their children, losing, one by one, millions of those to whom they had given civil and religious life. Only one people could resist,

because they were watched and protected by the mother country. They knew how to raise high the standard on which was written: Our Religion- our Language- and our Fatherland.<sup>2</sup>

Scalabrini and others believed Italian missionaries were best able to meet Italians' needs because they not only understood migrants' language and culture but shared a common bond to the Fatherland. From the beginning, the assistance they offered was paternalistic. The missionaries felt that, without their help, Italian migrants could not preserve their own culture and religion.

These Italian missionary groups sought to reinforce migrants' Catholicism by binding them together in Italian national communities abroad and by placing these communities within global networks of Italian Catholicism. Each group began as a transnational organization, directed from Italy, which sent its missionaries into Italian communities around the world. Information, orders, money, and ideologies flowed from Italy out into these communities, where the missionaries adapted to conditions on the ground. Together, these groups quickly constituted a larger, global network of Italian Catholicism, both because of collaboration among missionary groups and because of the Church hierarchy's efforts to control the groups. This dissertation examines the complex ways in which missionaries in these networks understood Italian migrants' relationship to the Italian nation, the Italian state, and the Catholic Church.

## **Research Questions**

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<sup>2</sup> Non sono molti anni, vi furono tentativi incredibili per americanizzare, se così posso esprimermi, i nostri fratelli emigrati d'Europa. La Religion e la Patria hanno pianto la rovina dei rispettivi figli, perdendo l'una e l'altra e milioni quelli ai quali avevano data la vita civile e religiosa. Un popolo solo poté resistere, perché guardato e protetto dalla madre patria, seppe tener alto il vessillo, su cui era scritto: *La nostra Religione- la nostra Lingua- e la nostra Patria.* Scalabrini, "Prima Conferenza."

This dissertation analyzes how Italian Catholic missionaries understood Italian migrants' relationship to both an abstract Italian nation and a concrete Italian nation-state, and how those understandings affected the spiritual and charitable work they undertook with Italian migrants. I argue that, from the late nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries, Italian missionaries and their religious superiors engaged in a form of Italian nation-building. While often at odds with the Italian state or at least unwilling to follow its directives, these missionaries nevertheless worked to bind Italians abroad into Italian communities, an often defensive attempt to protect and foster their Catholicism abroad. Missionaries followed Italian migrants around the world, particularly to the Americas and Europe, where, under the aegis of the Catholic Church, they created a global network of Italian Catholicism through which they moved to minister to migrant communities.

This project examines the relationship among nationalism, religion, and migration as the nation-state, both as a concept and geopolitical reality, became the world's dominant form of political organization. By studying nation-building through the evolution of Italian missionary networks during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, historians can better appreciate the power of a sense of national community in this period, particularly among those educated Italians who became Catholic priests or religious brothers and sisters. Missionaries created global structures intended to foster such a sense of community, albeit in the service of Catholicism. Global connectivity, therefore, was not the sole property of the secular domain or the late twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> Global

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<sup>3</sup> World historians have argued that globalization- that is, global interconnectivity as demonstrated through the exchange and global movements of people, ideas, and goods- can be traced back hundreds, if not thousands, of years. See Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Patrick Manning, *Migration in World History* (New York:



linkages encouraged identification with an Italian national identity, while the Catholic Church, an institution that claimed universality, supported Italian nation-building transnationally and had a more nuanced relationship to the Italian state before 1929 than many historians have suggested.

While migration challenged the new Italian nation-state, global Catholic migration structures created and reinforced Italian communities around the world. Though missionaries did not prevent migrants' integration into receiving societies, they fostered ethnic identities and ties back to Italy. Participating in a global migrant network also gave missionaries and members of the Catholic hierarchy an expansive experience of migration that attuned them to migrants' problems and motivated them to include migration as part of the Church's social justice ministry by the mid-twentieth century. Catholic actors who advocated for migrants in Italy in the late twentieth century drew upon this ideology. Thus, over time, Catholic networks that began by believing migrants were best aided by those of the same national origins came to believe migrants were best aided by people who had studied and understood the particular needs of migrants, a group that was not necessarily restricted to those who shared the same national origins.

Examining the relationship between Catholicism and Italian nation-building over the *longue durée* and across the globe reveals broad and deeply-embedded trends that smaller case studies cannot suggest. While local conditions shaped missionaries' work, missionaries' worldview obtained much cohesion through the worldwide networks' center in Rome and the movement of missionaries along these networks. Employing a

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Routledge, 2005); Patrick Manning, Jan Lucassen, and Leo Lucassen, *Migration in World History: Multidisciplinary Approaches* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

long chronology prevents overstating the importance of individual events such as the 1929 Lateran Accords. Instead, it demonstrates how deeply embedded national identity was in the Church's missionary project to migrants, and how national identity shaped missionaries' understanding of migrants and their needs through more than a century of intense political, economic, and demographic upheaval. Different papacies and Italian political regimes clearly influenced missionaries' work. However, they were not the sole determinants of missionaries' work. I pay attention to other factors that allowed missionaries to express affinity toward Italy and even support for Italian imperial expansion while various Italian governments maintained problematic relationships to the Catholic Church, the institution to which missionaries dedicated their lives and whose directives they followed.

### **Religion and the Nation**

Reading Italian Catholic missionaries' work this way means interpreting it against the way the Catholic Church often- but not always, as I will show- responded to the Enlightenment and the liberal nationalist movements it inspired. Unsurprisingly, the mid-nineteenth century Church hierarchy rejected Enlightenment ideas of religious toleration, the authority of individual reason, and questioning traditional authorities, particularly the Church. It viewed the French Revolution as a godless, violent attack on authority, order, and God, and opposed the Revolution's model of the modern nation-state. The Church was particularly hostile to the Italian nation-state that unified in 1861 because it sought to annex the Papal States, a sizable territory in central Italy that the Popes had ruled for more than a thousand years.

However, as I will demonstrate, the idea of the nation-state or a national community was not fundamentally incompatible with nineteenth or twentieth century Catholicism. Some early Italian patriots wanted a united Italian state ruled by the pope. A violent 1848 uprising in Rome destroyed these hopes and made Italian Unification a process that the pope resisted with all his public influence and international alliances.<sup>4</sup> Yet even many so-called intransigents (people who thought the Church should make no accommodation or relationship with the new state) conceived of an "Italy" and of "Italians." It was the liberal nation-state and government, not the idea of an Italian national community, they found objectionable. There were also some within the Church hierarchy, including Bishop Scalabrini, who became early conciliationists, or people who favored conciliation between the Church and the new state. They took a pragmatic position, believing the time of Church temporal power was over and that it should instead focus on the pastoral needs and radical dangers of the time. Conciliationists had to tread carefully within the Church hierarchy because of the power of intransigents, but they could promote their position subtly through personal relationships or anonymous works in the press.<sup>5</sup>

The relationship between Catholicism and nation-building, particularly in Italy, was nuanced and delicate in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To properly understand it, we must distinguish between state-building, which had never been the

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<sup>4</sup> John F. Pollard, *Catholicism in Modern Italy: Religion, Society and Politics Since 1861*, (London: Routledge, 2008), 18-22.

<sup>5</sup> Arturo Carlo Jemolo, *Church and State in Italy, 1850-1950* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960). This divide was resolved with the 1929 Lateran Accords that reestablished official relations between Italy and the Holy See. Many of the earliest conciliationists, including Bishops Scalabrini and Bonomelli as well as powerful lay collaborators like Ernesto Schiaparelli, started organizations to aid Italians abroad.

Catholic Church's intent in Italy, and nation-building, which I argue even intransigent Catholics promoted in their work with Italian migrants. Here I use the term nation-building to connote the creation of a national identity and its dissemination among a group of people to foster harmony and collaboration as people with a collective group membership and interest. I believe the case of Italy demonstrates that nation-states were not the only entities to engage in and benefit from nation-building. State-building is, by contrast, the construction of a functioning state in order to exercise control over a group of people and a marked territory.<sup>6</sup> Intransigent Catholics wanted to weaken, rather than strengthen, the new Italian state, yet they too promoted migrants' identification as an Italian people abroad because they thought this was both natural and that it would reinforce their Catholicism, a nation-building strategy shared by conciliationists. Many Catholics in this period saw Catholicism as central to the Italian nation, but not to the Italian state.

These Catholics, like many secular or even anticlerical Risorgimento leaders, shared an understanding of Italy based on ethnic or cultural nationalism.<sup>7</sup> They believed people of the new state were "Italians," a coherent people who shared a common descent and language. This belief persisted despite the fact that most Italians spoke local dialects at the time of Unification and regional identities took precedence over a national Italian identity among uneducated Italians for most of the following century. Italian Catholic

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<sup>6</sup> For more on nation- and state-building, see Charles Tilly, "Western State-Making and Theories of Political Transformation," In *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Charles Tilly and Gabriel Ardant, eds. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975); Anthony D. Smith, "State-Making and Nation-Building," In *States in History*, John A. Hall, ed. (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1986).

<sup>7</sup> On ethnic nationalism, see Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1986); Rogers Brubaker, "The Manichean Myth: Rethinking the Distinction between 'Civic' and 'Ethnic' Nationalism" In *Nation and National Identity: The European Experience in Perspective*, Hanspeter Kriesl et al., eds. 55-71 (Chur; Zürich: Rüegger, 1999).

missionary networks promoted ethnic nationalism around the world. They created Italian churches and institutions, tried to teach Italians a sense of national identity and belonging, and tried to foster migrants' pride in Italy's history and accomplishments which, in Catholic narratives, owed much to Catholicism and the institutional Church. The ethnic nationalism that missionaries promoted was not the same as the ethnicity that developed within receiving societies and that has captured the attention of so many immigration historians. Here I distinguish between Church-promoted ethnic nationalism, which attempted to tie migrants to an Italian homeland and the Catholic Church, and the ethnicity that developed within self-defined migrant communities, and that often included second-, third-, or four-generation immigrants, who drew together around the idea of a shared heritage as well as shared social experiences in receiving societies. Since this dissertation is focused on missionaries' global networks and nation-building, I do not address how Italians positioned themselves as ethnic groups within culturally diverse receiving societies.

Many scholars have written about nationalism as a secular religion which uses symbols, mass rituals, and religious language and imagery in order to create popular devotion to the nation or nation-state. Anthony Smith sees religion as the origin of modern nationalism: a group believes it is a "chosen people," connected to a particular territory, sustained and regenerated by group and individual sacrifice, whose celebration and commemoration is highly valued within the community.<sup>8</sup> Historian Emilio Gentile

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<sup>8</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 255. See also Anthony D. Smith, *The Cultural Foundations of Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant, and Republic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007). Émile Durkheim, who wrote about religion as a social

has demonstrated how the Fascist state developed myths and rituals to place the Fascist state at the center of a new, secular religion and remake Italians into Fascists.<sup>9</sup> While attention to how nationalism mimics organized religion provides insights into the symbolic and historic significance of nationalist rituals, I resist labeling all rituals and deep-seated emotional beliefs as "religious." This would, among other problems, mask finer points of contention among states, religious authorities, and individuals over what constitutes a member of a religion or a nation.

Rogers Brubaker reminds us that "nationalism and religion are often deeply intertwined... Yet intertwining is not identity: the very metaphor of intertwining implies a distinction between the intertwined strands."<sup>10</sup> I carefully distinguish between the nation-building of the Italian state and the Catholic Church because the missionaries I study clearly distinguished between the two. Both secular and Catholics actors in my study ascribed to Italian ethnic nationalism, identifying with an Italian nation that included Italians abroad. Missionaries, however, identified first as Catholics by placing themselves under the ultimate authority of the Catholic Church rather than the Italian state. Missionaries always understood religion as Catholicism, and many Catholics found secular appropriations of religious symbolism, particularly by the Fascist government, to be idolatrous and appalling.

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phenomenon, was foundational in exploring this relationship. See Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life: A Study in Religious Sociology* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1912).

<sup>9</sup> Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy*, trans. Keith Botsford. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> Rogers Brubaker, "Language, Religion and the Politics of Difference," *Nations and Nationalism*. 19, No.1 (2013): 16.

Examining the intersection of religion, migration, and the nation highlights important ways and spaces in which the Italian national community was created and contested. In his monograph *Rome in America* historian Peter D'Agostino analyzed the transnational ideology of the Roman Question, the issue of papal sovereignty during the rupture between the Italian state and the Catholic Church between 1870 and 1929, in both Italy and the United States. He observed that "This conflict between Catholic and liberal conceptions of papal sovereignty was not an abstract debate. It was inseparably linked to the contest over the meaning of Italy as a nation and a state."<sup>11</sup> The bitter conflict between the Church and the Liberal Italian state over lands the new state seized from the pope during Italian Unification prevented missionaries and other Catholics from publicly supporting the Italian state until 1929. Yet, as I will show, many Italian missionaries strongly identified with the idea of an Italian nation. Missionaries believed that being an Italian meant being a Catholic, and by reinforcing Italian migrants' identification with the Italian nation, missionaries could also reinforce migrants' devotion to Catholicism. They did not think that membership in the Italian nation necessarily indicated support for the Italian state, and even after the Church and Italian reconciled in 1929, missionaries carefully maintained their independence from the Italian state while continuing to support the Italian nation.

### **Migration and the Nation**

Studying nationalism in relation to migration highlights the limitations of the nation's appeal, the state's control, and neat categories delineating who does and does not

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<sup>11</sup> Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 2.

belong. Italy presents an instructive case for analyzing these issues because its unification was quickly followed by massive emigration across the globe. Late nineteenth-century migrants often learned to think of themselves as Italians not in Italy but abroad. Scholars have demonstrated how most Italian migrants to Canada and the United States primarily identified with their Italian town or region and only learned to self-identify as "Italians" after being placed into these categories by receiving societies, their governments, and labor and political movements.<sup>12</sup> Missionaries and the Church hierarchy believed these migrants were already Italians and thus should be ministered to in Italian communities to reinforce their culture and thus their Catholicism. I argue that the network of Catholic assistance to Italians, grounded in Italy instead of abroad, also encouraged migrants' development of a diasporic Italian identity.

Focusing on migration networks necessitates a transnational approach. Ample scholarship on migration has demonstrated and interrogated how migrants live transnationally, and many such works have focused on Italians.<sup>13</sup> Historians have shown

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<sup>12</sup> For example see Donna R. Gabaccia and Fraser M. Ottanelli, eds., *Italian Workers of the World: Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Stefano Luconi, *From Paesani to White Ethnics: The Italian Experience in Philadelphia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001); John Zucchi, *Italians in Toronto Development of a National Identity, 1875-1935* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

<sup>13</sup> A selection of some of the work addressing transnational Italian lives around the world includes Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community: Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977); John W. Briggs, *An Italian Passage: Immigrants to Three American Cities, 1890-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); Dino Cinel, *From Italy to San Francisco: The Immigrant Experience* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982); Donna R. Gabaccia, *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street: Housing and Social Change Among Italian Immigrants, 1880-1930* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984); Lydio Tomasi, ed., *Italian Americans: New Perspectives in Italian Immigration and Ethnicity* (Staten Island: Center for Migration Studies, 1985); Donna R. Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Linda Reeder, *Widows in White Migration and the Transformation of Rural Italian Women, Sicily, 1880-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Franc Sturino, *Forging the Chain: A Case Study of Italian Migration to North America, 1880-1930* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1990); Pietro Bevilacqua, Andreina De Clementi, and Emilio Franzina, eds., *Storia dell'emigrazione Italiana*



how Italian migrants around the world in the nineteenth and twentieth century traveled through chain migration and kinship networks. These links not only facilitated migration and establishment in receiving countries but also movement among receiving countries and back to Italy. Italians had high rates of return migration, estimated around fifty percent. Scholars have highlighted how transnational ties through money, family, love, and political activism often persisted throughout migrants' lives and sometimes through several generations of a family.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, given the many directions and multiplicity of their movements, I conceive of the people of the Italian diaspora as "migrants" who lived and moved within global networks, rather than as "immigrants" or "emigrants."<sup>15</sup> Employing the latter terms would oversimplify migrants' movements and privilege the perspective of a single nation: the receiving nation for the former and Italy for the latter. (I do, however, refer to immigrants or emigrants when discussing how they were perceived by a particular historic actor.) The term "migrants" also underscores the broad range of mobile people within international migrant networks, including refugees, business people, members of the military, students, tourists, pilgrims, as well as the transnational religious actors of my

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(Rome: Donzelli Editore, 2001); Donna R. Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta, eds., *Women, Gender and Transnational Lives Italian Workers of the World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> On chain migrations, see Samuel L. Baily, "Chain Migration of Italians to Argentina: Case Studies of the Agnesi and the Sirolesi," *Studi Emigrazione* 19, No. 65 (1982): 73-91; Sturino, *Forging the Chain*. For a sample of Italian migrants' transnational ties see Emilio Franzina, *Merica! Merica!: emigrazione e colonizzazione nelle lettere dei contadini veneti in America Latina, 1876-1902* (Milano: Feltrinelli economica, 1979); Davide Turcato, "Italian Anarchism as a Transnational Movement, 1885-1915," *International Review of Social History* 52, No. 3 (2007): 407-444; Sonia Cancian, *Families, Lovers, and Their Letters: Italian Postwar Migration to Canada* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010); Stefano Luconi, "Emigration and Italians' Transnational Radical Politicization," *Forum Italicum: A Journal of Italian Studies*. 47, No. 1 (2013): 96-115.

<sup>15</sup> Dirk Hoerder, "From Immigration to Migration Systems: New Concepts in Migration History," *OAH Magazine of History* 14, No. 1 (Fall 1999): 5-11; Donna R. Gabaccia, "Nations of Immigrants: Do Words Matter?" *The Pluralist* 5, No. 3 (2010): 5-31.

study. Italian missionaries may be considered migrants as much as the labor migrants they followed. Missionaries generally went abroad for fixed terms, and even those who might spend most of their life abroad returned to Italy to rest, visit family, or undertake temporary assignments within Italy before migrating abroad again.

This study considers missionaries' transnational linkages as part of larger, overlapping global networks of Catholic assistance to Italian migrants. Following the work of Dirk Hoerder and others, I approach global migration as a "system," a methodological framework that takes into account the cultures of origin and departure, the process of movement, insertion or acculturation in receiving societies, and connection among migrant communities around the world.<sup>16</sup> This systems approach illuminates the networks that missionaries and other Catholics felt they were part of: at the broadest level, an institutional Church that claimed to be universal and was headquartered in Rome; at a middling level, missionary orders and charitable organizations that operated all over the world but reported back to a central authority. Resources and personnel were shared throughout both networks.

I map out these larger networks of Italian Catholic nation-building abroad to investigate the relation between religion, particularly Catholicism, and liberal nationalism through the prism of migration, which posed a challenge to both in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This macroscopic approach means the systems I analyze are the hierarchical structures that compromised and connected those Catholic organizations that employed Italian nation-building as a key component of their work with migrants, an

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<sup>16</sup> Christiane Harzig, Dirk Hoerder, and Donna R. Gabaccia, *What Is Migration History?* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2009).

approach that may be termed "transnationalism from above."<sup>17</sup> Such a big-picture view would not, however, be possible without the vast literature already examining individual Italian communities, including local, transnational, and ethnic studies.

Missionaries needed to create a global network in order to minister to Italians who had migrated around the world. In understanding Italians' movements, I find it helpful to employ Donna Gabaccia's conception of Italian migration history as multiple diasporas. Over several centuries, diasporas originated from the areas that presently constitute Italy and included diverse groups of people such as elite migrants recruited for their cultural productions, political exiles and refugees, and labor migrants. Millions of Italians fanned out across the world, forming diaspora communities that looked to Italy as their point of origin, even when they did not like the Italian government(s) or did not intend to return to Italy. These scattered people were emotionally connected to other people, residing in Italy as well as other receiving countries, who considered Italy- or, more often, particular regions or villages in Italy- their home.<sup>18</sup>

However, the term diaspora is disputed and must be thoughtfully applied lest it be expanded beyond usefulness.<sup>19</sup> It is not helpful to think of Italian Catholic missionaries as part of an Italian diaspora. While I do not believe in limiting the definition of a

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<sup>17</sup> Michael P. Smith and Luis Guarnizo, *Transnationalism from Below* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1998).

<sup>18</sup> Donna R. Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000).

<sup>19</sup> On different interpretations of "diaspora" see George Shepperson, "The African Diaspora: Or the African Abroad," *African Forum* 1, No.2 (Summer 1966): 76-93; Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," In *Colonial Discourse & Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds., 392-403 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Kevin Kenny, "Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study," *Journal of American History* 90, No.1 (June 2003): 134-162; Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Rogers Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, No.1 (2005): 1-19.

diaspora to what Robin Cohen, using the historic model of the Jewish diaspora, terms a "victim diaspora," I believe that a diaspora must include people scattered around the world who look back to a homeland, real or imagined, as a point of origin which nevertheless cannot exercise control over them. Otherwise such people would be part of a network, not a diaspora, with direct physical, rather than emotional, ties among their communities around the world. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century Italian labor migrants were part of a diaspora: although the Italian state tried to influence Italians abroad, it had limited power and the laws and cultures of receiving societies usually had far greater effects on migrants. However, for Italian missionaries under the control of the Holy See as well as their own missionary organizations, the Italy-based Catholic hierarchy had very real control over their lives and employment. That is not to say missionaries did not share some of lay Italian migrants' feelings or that they lacked agency. But missionaries moved within networks firmly rooted in Italy and their core loyalty was to the Catholic Church as an institution, not to Italy as a place.

Constructing an Italian nation abroad was not solely a Catholic project. Mark Choate has written about Italy from 1880 to 1915 as an "emigrant nation" whose government attempted to establish an Italian community far outside state borders by building global Italian networks through schools, colonial societies, transnational banks, and international relations as well as by supporting the Catholic Church's missionary activities. I owe a large intellectual debt to his work and believe that his observation that the Italian state attempted to become "the center of a global network of Italians" is also

applicable to the Church.<sup>20</sup> As I will demonstrate, this Catholic global network continued to grow long after 1915, alternately in harmony and in conflict with the Italian state. Italian missionary networks always attempted to remain distinct from the activity of the state, but in many cases they shared information, funds, and the assistance of wealthy Italian lay benefactors.<sup>21</sup>

Choate also made an important contribution to the literatures of Italian migration and nation-building by demonstrating that the Italian state's efforts at Italian nation-building abroad encompassed both work with migrants and the pursuit of an Italian colonial empire. Like the study of migration, the history of Italian colonialism has only recently entered into the national historiography of Italy, and it lags far behind the literatures on British, French, American, and other western forms of colonialism.<sup>22</sup> Yet, apart from Choate's contribution, the literatures on Italian migration and colonialism remain quite separate. I incorporate both here because, though few Italians migrated to Italian colonies, Italian empire-building played a crucial role in making Italians abroad, even for many Catholics. For example, Catholic missionaries clashed along national lines in disputed colonial territories. Italy's colonial invasion of Libya in 1911 and Italy's entrance into World War I in 1915 were the first times that Italian missionaries publicly

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<sup>20</sup> Mark I. Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), 15.

<sup>21</sup> Italy was not the only state to employ a multi-pronged approach in an attempt to manage its emigrants abroad, particularly in the twentieth century. See Nancy L. Green and Francois Weil, eds., *Citizenship and Those who Leave: The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); David Fitzgerald, *A Nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages Its Migration*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> The most comprehensive history of Italian colonialism is Nicola Labanca, *Oltremare: storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002). See also Claudio Segrè, *Fourth Shore: The Italian Colonization of Libya* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Angelo Del Boca, *Italiani, brava gente ? un mito duro a morire* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2005); Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller, eds., *Italian Colonialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

supported the Italian state and that significant numbers of migrants in the diaspora expressed pride in Italy.

### **Sources and Methods**

While my study of the global network of Italian Catholic migrant assistance would not have been possible without hundreds of studies of particular Italian migrant communities, my contribution is integrating archival material on this transnational Catholic work into the historiography of Italy's global migrations in order to illuminate the intersection of nation, religion, and migration over the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. My archival evidence comes from collections in archives and libraries in Italy, Vatican City, and United States. Those sources quickly revealed the global and interconnected nature of Italian migrations, both in the cases of labor migrants and the Catholic missionaries who followed them. For example, *Italica Gens*, a global federation of such missionaries, published its own bulletin to inform missionaries of Italian migrants' conditions across the world and efforts made to assist them. The January-February 1915 issue was typical, containing news spanning several continents. It included articles about Italians in Asia Minor and Syria, efforts to help Italian agricultural workers in Brazil, the conditions of Italians working on the Constantinople-Baghdad railway line, schools established by Italian religious orders that taught Italian from Armenia to Baghdad, the work of an Italian orphanage in Denver run by the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and the visit of an Italian government official to the Salesian Fathers' Don Bosco Institute in Uruguay.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Italica Gens* VI, Volume 1-2. Jan-Feb 1915.

My lens is tightly focused on Catholic missionaries' Italian nation-building work, and I examine this by studying their global networks, those who shaped them, and the beliefs of the missionaries who moved through them. This dissertation is not a complete history of Catholic assistance to Italian migrants. Between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, Italians migrated across six continents; a project attempting to examine every group that worked with Italians would be superficial and ultimately impossible. Nor am I interested in every migration-related vicissitude of individual religious orders, dioceses, or the Holy See.<sup>24</sup> While I am aware of the religious and charitable work that some non-Italians and non-Catholics undertook with migrants, these too fall outside my chosen focus.

A range of printed material has provided insight into the network's actors, structures, and (sometimes conflicting) ideological currents. Fortunately, Catholic and state bureaucracies produced and preserved many official documents and private communications involving members of their members. Beginning in the 1960s, secular and Catholic archives dedicated to migration were founded around the world. I have used correspondences, reports involving individual missionaries, Catholic groups, the Catholic hierarchy, and several nation-states; organizational records and annual reports, periodicals, published writings and pamphlets, diaries, and public statements. Since my focus is on the networks themselves and not on particular local nodes in those networks—that is, on individual missions—much of the material I use was generated by those who directed portions of the network or by the missionaries themselves. Missionaries were

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<sup>24</sup> The Scalabrinians attempted a comprehensive history of their own religious order. It covers less than a hundred years (stopping at 1978) and it is six volumes. See Mario Francesconi, ed., *Storia della Congregazione scalabriniana*, 6 vols (Rome: Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1973-1982).

subject to regulation by Catholic superiors and by national governments while simultaneously wielding authority (at least within Catholic structures) over other lay migrants. Unsurprisingly, a global diaspora generates source materials in many languages. When my primary sources are not in English, I provide the original text in a footnote. All translations are mine.

My study's time span posed some challenges in accessing archival material, though they did not prove insurmountable. While none of my archival material in the United States was restricted, both Vatican City and Italy have strict date limits on accessing materials. Vatican materials are generally released after 75 years when the current pope authorizes opening the records of an entire papacy. Therefore, as of the end of my research in 2013, the Vatican only granted researchers access to collections through the papacy of Pius XI (1922-1939). There are a few exceptions to this rule: recent popes have permitted a few later collections to be released, such as the records of the Vatican Information Office for Prisoners of War (1939-1947) and the Archives of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), but these collections did not prove helpful to my research. Italian law does not allow materials fewer than 50 years old to be accessed, so this limited my access to state archives as well as to collections at the Centro Studi Emigrazione Roma (CSER) and the Archivio Generale Scalabriniano (AGS), both located in Rome. I could, however, examine materials related to World War II and the early postwar period which I could not access at the Vatican. Periodicals, statistical data, and public statements, obviously, were not affected by these restrictions.

## **Chapter Outline**



Scholars, secular Italian nationalists, and Italian Catholics have defined “Italian” in a variety of ways, impacting how they conceived, studied, and tried to regulate Italians in Italy and abroad. Those who sought the creation of an Italian nation-state in the nineteenth century had a primordialist view of the nation, believing in the existence of an “Italian” people with ancient roots in the Italian peninsula and islands. Primordialists insisted that “Italians” shared a history and culture and therefore should have their own state. However, the long and difficult history of Italian nation-building projects demonstrates the fallacy of this idea and instead suggests that the Italian state was clearly an example of what Benedict Anderson famously terms an “imagined community.”<sup>25</sup> Italy’s people, including its migrants, have never spoken a uniform language, but rather many dialects which reflect the influences of many invaders and outside rulers, as well as distinctive local and regional social and cultural histories. Scholars such as Peter Burke have shown how artists and intellectuals who identified with what would become the Italian nation tried to promote a national language, based on the work of Dante, and a national culture (*civiltà italiana*).<sup>26</sup> They created this elite culture during the late Middle Ages and Renaissance. Its contributions to art, architecture, music, and scholarship were admired around Europe and carried abroad by elite Italian migrants before Unification

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<sup>25</sup> Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). Scholars who employ a modernist interpretation of nationalism and nation-building argue against primordialism and claim that nations are the result of the modern world and its economic and communication structures. Some scholars believe nations may have roots in pre-modern cultures, but nations are ultimately constructed by either an intelligentsia or bureaucratic state. For an overview of the field of nationalism studies, see Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 2 ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Some of Burke’s noted scholarship on Renaissance and early modern Italian culture include Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy*, 2nd ed. (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Peter Burke, *Languages and communities in early modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

but it had little place in the lives of most people living in the peninsula. Leaders of the new Italian state lamented that most Italians lacked this language and culture, which they called *italianità* (literally “Italianness”), but this deficiency did not contradict their belief that these people *were* Italian, only that they did not know how to behave properly. The new state engaged in Italian nation-building within Italy, most clearly by creating public schools, and within the diaspora by supporting Italian schools, banks, and cultural institutions.

In Chapter One, I demonstrate that Italian Catholic missionaries also engaged in Italian nation-building among Italian migrants, but missionaries intended to strengthen migrants’ ties to the Catholic Church, not to the new Italian state. These Italian missionaries also held a primordial view of the Italian people and nation, but they believed being Catholic was an intrinsic part of being Italian. Missionaries were moved by the hardships faced by Italian migrants, whom they considered fellow Italians as well as fellow Catholics, and provided migrants with both religious and charitable assistance. Despite the bitter break between the liberal Italian state and the Catholic Church, a range of Italian Catholics, from Bishops Scalabrini and Bonomelli, who both had friends in the Italian government, to intransigent Catholics such as Mother Frances Cabrini, who was firmly opposed to the Italian state, believed missionaries who understood Italians’ language and culture could best help Italian migrants and preserve their Catholicism. The transnational missionary networks that they founded engaged in Italian nation-building alongside missionary work, teaching and reinforcing the idea that Italians abroad, who usually identified with their hometowns rather than an Italian nation, were part of an

Italian national community. Missionaries created Italian parishes, schools, social groups, and charitable organizations dedicated to Italian migrants that often sought to promote a Catholic version of *italianità*. By creating Italian Catholic communities, missionaries believed they were safeguarding migrants' Catholicism in receiving countries where migrants often experienced hostility and discrimination, even within the local Catholic Church. By the eve of World War I, multiple transnational missionary networks radiated from Italy out into Italian migrant communities on multiple continents.

Missionaries believed the Church's guidance was essential to preserving migrants' *italianità* and Catholicism, and in Chapter Two I examine how the Church hierarchy sought to regulate both migrants' and missionaries' behavior, obedience to Catholic superiors, and adherence to Church norms. The Church claimed that Catholics could fully practice Catholicism only through Church institutions, including the parish, under the teaching, spiritual, and moral authority of the Church's clergy and religious. Missionaries also believed that the Church's guidance was essential to defending migrants' Catholicism from competing ideologies, particularly liberalism, secularism, and socialism. Transnational Catholic missionary organizations were created to pursue a new mission, Italian migrants' material and religious assistance, but missionaries shared the Church's existing hierarchical organization and authority structures and rooted their work in Catholic family, gender, and sexual norms. International migration challenged these ideals because great distances separated migrants from family members as well as missionaries from their religious superiors. By the early twentieth century, the Holy See became increasingly concerned about missionaries' obedience to Church authorities, and

it intervened in missionary networks in order to bring them more closely under the Holy See's control.

The Italian state's attempts at imperial expansion in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries challenged the Holy See's insistence that Italian missionaries remain apolitical in their nation-building work with Italian migrants. In Chapter Three, I demonstrate how Italian missionaries' definition of *italianità* expanded during this period to include support for Italian empire-building. The Italian state sought an overseas colonial empire, the annexation of Mediterranean territories to the Italian state, and worldwide influence through Italian migrant communities in countries in which the state could not acquire territory. Italian Catholic missionaries and Italian migrant communities increasingly displayed Italian nationalism, despite the ongoing Roman Question, and celebrated Italian imperial successes, particularly after the Italian War with Libya 1911-1912 and Italy's entrance into World War I in 1915. Italian missionaries welcomed territorial gains as potential destinations for migrants and a source of international prestige that would reflect well on all Italians. Missionaries supported the idea that Italian imperialism spread Catholic civilization because they already viewed Catholicism as the heart of *italianità*.

The victories that the Italian state claimed in Libya and World War I introduced pride for empire-building into missionaries' *italianità* and became the origin of missionaries' limited support for the Italian state, a support that continued but remained contentious throughout the period of Fascist rule (1922-1943). A key part of the Fascist project was remaking Italians as Fascists, and this included diaspora Italians. Chapter

Four analyzes how, throughout the Fascist era, Italian missionaries continued their Italian nation-building work based on the idea that Catholic *italianità*, not Italian Fascism, united the people of the Italian nation. Catholic missionaries insisted upon their independence from the Italian government even as missionaries often collaborated with and supported the Fascist state. The 1929 Lateran Accords established an official relationship between the Holy See and the Italian state, ended the Roman Question, and freed Italian missionaries to vocalize support for the Italian state. I argue, however, that the Accords were not a watershed in missionaries' relationship to the Italian state, nor did they fundamentally alter Catholic missionaries' understandings of *italianità*. Missionaries persisted in defining *italianità* as a shared Italian language, history, and culture with Catholicism- not the Italian government or Fascism- at its heart.

Though the Fascist era was the period in which Catholic missionaries most directly expressed their support for the Italian government, Catholic rejection of the idea that *italianità* was limited to Fascism also enabled Catholic *italianità*'s survival. Italian missionaries only gradually abandoned Catholic *italianità* in the decades after World War II, when Italian missionaries transformed their spiritual and charitable work from Italian nation-building into a more universal ministry serving all migrants, not only Italians. In Chapter Five, I show how demographic changes in Italian migrant communities combined with more expansive Catholic interest in migration issues decentered *italianità* as the organizing principle of Italian missionaries' work, and how Catholics began to think about migration as a universal social justice issue, not just a concern of individual national communities.

## **Chapter One: Catholic Missionaries and the Origins of Italian Nation-Building in the Italian Diaspora: 1861-1914**

### **Introduction**

In 1861, Italian nationalists finally succeeded in creating the modern nation-state of Italy. The unification of the long-divided peninsula dislodged many of its traditional powers, among them the Catholic Church. The formation of Italy involved the loss of almost all of the pope's physical territory in central Italy, culminating in the capture of Rome on September 20, 1870, creating a huge rift between the Church and the new state. Over the next several decades, the Italian government and the Catholic Church battled each other for the loyalty of the newly-minted "Italian" people. At the same time, the residents of Italy, who had already migrated abroad in smaller numbers for centuries, began emigrating en masse to destinations on several continents in search of better economic opportunities. While both the Italian state and the Catholic Church struggled for influence among the nation-state's new citizens, they were also concerned, for humanitarian and ideological reasons, about the hundreds of thousands leaving it every year.<sup>27</sup>

Both the state and the Church sought to retain emigrants' identification with their institutions and thus their loyalty, but they faced major challenges. After Italian Unification, few citizens of the new nation spoke standard Italian, shared liberal ideas of nationalism, or felt invested in the new state. Italy was a traditionally Catholic country, due in large part to the proximity of the Holy See, and many Italians self-identified as Catholic. However, not all Italians were Catholic or even religious: some Italians were

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<sup>27</sup> More than 14 million people left Italy in the period 1876-1914 alone, for an average of more than 350,000 departures a year. Gianfausto Rosoli, *Un Secolo Di Emigrazione Italiana: 1876-1976* (Roma: Centro studi emigrazione, 1978), 21.

secular radicals or had become radicalized while abroad. Even Italian believers often had a tenuous at best connection to official Catholic doctrine and practices, as some Catholic bishops in receiving countries complained. These Catholics participated in popular forms of worship, such as the festival of the town saint, but might not regularly attend Mass or financially support their local parish. They were frequently more connected to the religious traditions of the *paesi* (small towns) they had left in Italy than with the unfamiliar and sometimes more regimented Catholic life in their new countries.

In Italy, the state engaged in a process of Italian nation-building to teach people to identify with the new nation, a necessary step before people could develop loyalty to the Italian state which claimed its legitimacy as the political embodiment of the nation. An important element in this nation-building process was the creation and dissemination of *italianità* (Italianness), a process begun in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. For several centuries, elites and intellectuals who identified with what would become the Italian nation (the first Italian patriots) promoted a national language, based on the work of Dante, and a national culture (*civiltà italiana*). They extolled the virtues of the “Italian” art, architecture, music, and scholarship that had long been admired in Europe.<sup>28</sup> *Italianità* meant identification with the idea of “Italy” as the source of artistic, musical, and cultural production instead of attachment to one’s region or *paese*. Italian patriots intended participation in *italianità* to bind Italians together and into a national project. After Unification, Italian politicians created reforms to bring the country’s regions under central government control and weaken the influence of the Catholic Church, which,

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<sup>28</sup> Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

according to nineteenth-century liberal ideas, was an obstacle to modernity and national unification.

The state attempted to use Italian nation-building to bind Italians to itself instead of to the Catholic Church, but I argue that Italian nation-building also became an important strategy that Catholic missionaries used to maintain Catholicism among Italian migrants. For Catholic intellectuals and Church leaders, an intrinsic quality of being an Italian was being a Catholic, so Catholic efforts at Italian nation-building were predicated on a supposedly shared Italian Catholic culture. Missionaries encouraged migrants to worship in Italian communities as a way of preserving their faith in new and sometimes hostile receiving societies, which proved an effective strategy to combat the loss of Italian Catholics' faith abroad. Given Italians' high rates of return migration (half of Italian emigrants would eventually return to Italy),<sup>29</sup> supporting migrants' Catholicism in Italian religious communities could also prevent Italians from returning to Italy with new convictions threatening to Catholicism, such as socialism and anarchism. Despite the Holy See's hostility to the liberal Italian state and its concern that some missionary efforts strayed too far from its control, the Holy See supported Catholic missionaries' efforts at Italian nation-building in order to strengthen migrants' ties to Catholicism.

Both the Italian state and the Catholic Church were slow to recognize and respond to Italian migrants' needs. Instead, individual Italian Catholic religious spearheaded efforts to aid and evangelize Italians abroad. Most were motivated by their own Italian nationalism, which was an ethnic nationalism attached to the idea of an Italian nation, not to the liberal state. Missionaries viewed Italian emigrants as their brethren whom they

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<sup>29</sup> Rosoli, *Un secolo di emigrazione*, 30.



were obligated to assist and created organizations that worked transnationally, providing migrants with religious and charitable assistance during their journeys and in the receiving societies. By the eve of World War I, multiple transnational networks radiated from Italy out into Italian migrant communities on multiple continents. The networks promoted Italian language and culture alongside Catholicism because missionaries hoped to make migrants Italian, which in their minds meant devout Catholics.

### **The Catholic Church, Italian Unification, and Contests over the Meaning of Italy**

The creation of an Italian state was not inevitably at odds with the Catholic Church. In the early nineteenth century, a movement to create an Italian nation-state began to take shape. It would spawn the Risorgimento, the physical unification of the Italian peninsula and islands during the mid-nineteenth century, and the declaration of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861.<sup>30</sup> Italian patriots believed that the people of these areas were united by a shared *italianità*, and, following nineteenth-century liberal ideals of nationalism, that they should have their own sovereign nation-state. They were bitterly disappointed by the 1815 Congress of Vienna that again divided Italy under several foreign powers in an attempt to restore the pre-Napoleonic European balance of power. During the ensuing period, known as the Restoration (1815-1848), Italian patriots, a tiny but vocal minority, sought to replace these powers with an Italian nation-state.

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<sup>30</sup> The literature on the Risorgimento is vast. Notable recent works include Alberto Mario Banti and Paul Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia. 22, Annali. Il risorgimento* (Torino: Einaudi, 2007); Mario Isnenghi and Eva Cecchinato, *Fare l'Italia: unità e disunità nel Risorgimento* (Torino: UTET, 2008); Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall, *The Risorgimento Revisited: Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). For a recent examination of the historiography see Lucy Riall, *Risorgimento: The History of Italy from Napoleon to Nation-State* (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

There were, however, conflicting ideas about the form this state should take. Republicans, most famously Giuseppe Mazzini and members of his Young Italy (*Giovane Italia*) movement, sought open revolution to create a united, republican Italian state. During the 1848 wave of European revolutions, they declared several republics in the north and central peninsula. French and Austrian invasions quickly crushed these republics.<sup>31</sup> The successful push for unification came from Italian liberals who put their hopes in the Kingdom of Savoy's reactionary monarchy and Camillo di Cavour, the Kingdom's Prime Minister and founder of its Liberal Party. Liberals believed that the state should safeguard civil rights, freedom of religion, fair elections, and place limits on (but not abolish) monarchy. Cavour's realpolitik approach to diplomacy and Giuseppe Garibaldi's military success finally resulted in the peninsula and islands' official unification, and the Kingdom of Italy was declared in 1861.

Despite this outcome, Catholicism and the papacy had occupied a place in many different Risorgimento dreams for Italy. For more than a thousand years (756-1870), the Popes ruled a portion of the central Italian peninsula commonly known as the Papal States. Some early nineteenth-century Catholic nationalists, known as "Neo-Guelfs,"<sup>32</sup> believed the Pope could lead a united Italian state and restore Italy to the primacy and

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<sup>31</sup> These failures led to death and exile for many republicans. Many pre-Unification exiles established Italian communities abroad that would grow exponentially with the arrival of non-exiles later in the century. Some of these communities, such as that of Buenos Aires, were fiercely anti-clerical, creating great obstacles for Italian Catholic missionaries. Dennis Mack Smith, *Mazzini* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

<sup>32</sup> They took their name from the Guelfs of the Italian Middle Ages who supported the pope and the Papal States against intrusion by the Holy Roman Empire. David S. Peterson, "Out of the Margins: Religion and the Church in Renaissance Italy," *Renaissance Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (2002): 835-879. The Neo-Guelfs viewed medieval Italy as a glorious era of Italian history and thought a revived Italy, governed by the pope, could be constructed in keeping with contemporary liberal ideas.

glory they felt it possessed in the Middle Ages.<sup>33</sup> Vincenzo Gioberti, a priest, philosopher, and politician from Turin, argued for papal leadership in his *On the Civil and Moral Primacy of the Italians (Del primato morale e civile degli italiani)*, published in 1843. He called for a federation of Italian states with the pope as its head. Gioberti wrote that the Italian leader must be Catholic because the religion was "Italy's great tie as a nation" and that "Catholicism, in my view, is not only a religion but a civilization."<sup>34</sup>

Pope Pius IX's response to the European revolutions of 1848 quickly dashed these hopes. Pius refused to support a liberation war against the Catholic Austrian Empire, even though many Italian patriots loathed the Austrians as northern Italy's repressive foreign occupiers. In 1848, revolution swept the Italian city-states and Pius, feeling threatened, fled the Papal States in November. On February 8, 1849, a Constituent Assembly proclaimed a Roman Republic, seized Church property, and proclaimed freedom of worship. Pius called upon the Catholic powers to restore him. French troops reconquered Rome while the Austrians secured the northern Papal States. Pius finally returned to Rome in August 1850 as a staunch opponent of republicanism, liberalism, and Italian Unification.<sup>35</sup>

The division between Italian patriots and Pius and his conservative supporters in the Church hierarchy grew starker and bitterer after Italian Unification in 1861. The new Kingdom of Italy was a constitutional monarchy controlled by a strong Parliament whose

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<sup>33</sup> Francesco Traniello, *Religione cattolica e stato nazionale: dal Risorgimento al secondo dopoguerra* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007), 167-173.

<sup>34</sup> "...il gran vincolo dell'Italia, come nazione...il cattolicesimo a mio senno non è solo una religione, ma una civiltà..." Vincenzo Gioberti, *Del primato morale e civile degli italiani* (Lousanne: S. Bonamici e Compagnia, 1845), lxvi.

<sup>35</sup> David I. Kertzer, "Religion and Society, 1789-1892," in *Italy in the Nineteenth Century 1796-1900*, John Anthony Davis, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

members were often (but not all) anti-clerical. However, the new state lacked several important territories in the peninsula, most notably Rome. Pius vocally condemned the state's incorporation of remaining territories throughout the 1860s, appealing in vain for the French to intervene and stop it.<sup>36</sup> Pius also railed against the new Kingdom's liberal ideology. In 1864, he issued the famous "Syllabus of Errors," an appendix to the encyclical *Quanta Cura*. The Syllabus listed eighty nineteenth-century ideas that the Pope condemned as false in a clear attack on liberalism and modernity. Among the ideas he denounced were rationalism, freedom of religion, and excluding the Catholic Church from temporal affairs and governance. The final idea condemned was that "The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization."<sup>37</sup> Successive popes also deemed liberalism and modernity as threats to the Church's power and Catholics' faith in both Italy and other countries.

Pius was ultimately powerless to stop the incorporation of his remaining territory into the new Italian state. The pope's temporal power ended permanently with the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in the summer of 1870. The French emperor Napoleon III recalled his troops stationed in Rome. On September 20, 1870, Italian troops attacked Rome and the papal troops who defended it. The Italian king, Vittorio Emanuele II, moved into the papal palace on the Quirinal Hill. Pius fled to the Vatican Palace, where he famously declared himself a "prisoner of the Vatican" and refused to

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<sup>36</sup> John Francis Pollard, *Catholicism in Modern Italy* (London: Routledge, 2008), 23-27.

<sup>37</sup> Pius IX, *Syllabus of Errors*.

leave the Vatican as a protest of the Italian state's rule over Rome. The next four popes also identified themselves in this way, and none left the Vatican until 1929.<sup>38</sup>

The issue of papal sovereignty and temporal power came to be known as the “Roman Question.” The pope and the Catholic hierarchy obstinately refused to support the new state and charged Catholics to do the same. These Catholics were known as intransigents for their refusal to accept or to compromise with the new Italian state. Giacomo Margotti, an influential Catholic editor, was an early intransigent who promoted the concept of “*nè eletti, nè elettori*,” (“neither elected nor electors”), arguing that Catholics should not participate in the Italian parliament.<sup>39</sup> Intransigents and the Church hierarchy adopted Margotti’s ideas. In 1868, the Church issued a decree sanctioning Margotti's stance, declaring it *non expedit* (“not expedient”)- that is, forbidden- to vote in national elections. *Non expedit* remained Church policy until 1905, when Pope Pius X loosened these restrictions with his encyclical *Il fermo proposito* which permitted bishops to request a suspension of the rule in order to prevent the election of socialist candidates. The policy was completely ended in 1918.

The Roman Question, crucial to contests over the meaning of Italy, was not solely an Italian issue but also played out in international diplomacy and in transnational Italian and religious communities. Historian Peter D'Agostino demonstrated that the question of the pope's temporal power was directly linked to the legitimacy of the Italian state in the eyes of many national and religious groups. His transnational study of the Roman

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<sup>38</sup> The Catholic Church and Italian state formally recognized each other with the 1929 Lateran Accords, signed by Benito Mussolini, King Victor Emmanuel III, and Pope Pius XI. I will discuss this in Chapter Four.

<sup>39</sup> Margotti is quoted in Pietro Scoppola, ed., *Dal neoguelfismo alla Democrazia cristiana: antologia di documenti* (Roma: Editrice Studium, 1963), 39.

Question in Italy and the United States showed that Italian migrants, American Catholics, American members of the Church hierarchy, non-Catholics in the United States, and American government officials all took passionate interest in the Roman Question. Their stance on the Roman Question led people within these communities to support or place pressure on the Italian government and transnational Catholic Church during moments of conflict in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. They also engaged in heated transnational debates over the nature of the Italian national community and the role of Catholicism and the institutional Catholic Church within it.<sup>40</sup>

Notwithstanding this rupture, Catholicism remained influential within Italy and some Catholics sought ways to retain influence in the new state. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Italy declared Catholicism the official state religion while also guaranteeing liberal freedoms like freedom of the press, assembly, and freedom for religious minorities. After Unification, moderate and conservative liberals, called the *Destra*, held power until 1876 and counted Catholic liberals among their ranks. At the same time, many Italian politicians tried to chip away at the Church's power, but the Church was too physically and culturally entrenched to be easily dislodged. The state tried to legislate Catholic *opere pie*, Catholic-run charitable institutions, in order to make them efficient (they often had high administrative costs) and devoted only to charity, not elaborate religious festivals. The new nation adopted 1859 Piedmontese legislation, and the Italian Parliament passed additional laws in 1890 and 1910. The laws, however, failed to achieve their desired reforms, and the battle over the *opere pie* meant little to most

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<sup>40</sup> Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Italians.<sup>41</sup> Catholic assistance to Italian emigrants became a natural extension of previous charitable efforts as well as an attempt to protect emigrants' Catholicism at home and abroad.

### **Migration and Italian Nation-Building: Catholic and Secular Attempts to Build an Italian National Community Abroad**

Italian nationalists, regardless of their position on the Roman Question, faced large obstacles in teaching Italy's new citizens to identify as Italians or imagine themselves as part of an Italian national community.<sup>42</sup> While Catholicism was at least culturally entrenched in Italy, secular *italianità* had no connection to most Italians' lived realities. Disseminating *italianità* was a frustrating and often fruitless endeavor. The standard Italian adopted by nineteenth-century Italian patriots and the new state as the national language was in fact a Florentine dialect derived from the medieval works of the poet Dante Alighieri. After much debate about a national language, Italian nationalists adopted and began promoting this dialect during the Renaissance. However, at Unification only 2.5% of the population actually spoke Italian.<sup>43</sup> Dialects, often mutually unintelligible, varied widely across Italy and regionalism exacerbated Italians' linguistic fragmentation. Illiteracy rates were especially high in southern Italy where few schools

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<sup>41</sup> Giovanna Farrell-Vinay, *Povert  e politica nell'Ottocento: le opere pie nello stato liberale* (Torino: Scriptorium, 1997); Maria Quine, *Italy's Social Revolution: Charity and Welfare from Liberalism to Fascism* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); S. J. Woolf, *The Poor in Western Europe in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (London: Methuen, 1986).

<sup>42</sup> Benedict Anderson's famous description of modern nationalisms as based upon the creation and promotion of an "imagined community" is particularly apparent in the Italian case. Despite several Italian governments' attempts to linguistically, culturally, and politically unify the nation-state, scholars argue that the Italian national community remains fractured and contested to the present. Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Luca Bussotti, *La cittadinanza degli italiani: analisi storica e critica sociologica di una questione irrisolta* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2002); Sabina Donati, *A Political History of National Citizenship and Identity in Italy, 1861-1950* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2013);

<sup>43</sup> Tullio De Mauro, *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita* (Bari: Laterza, 1963), 43.

had existed before Unification, and across Italy many people opposed compulsory schooling. Elites resisted the cost and loss of social control while families often needed children to work to support the family. As a result, many Italians remained illiterate and uneducated, unaware of the historical and cultural ties that supposedly bound them to their new countrymen.

Many Italians, particularly in the south, viewed the Italian state as only the latest in a series of exploitative governments and yet another of the foreign powers which had subjugated them for centuries. Foreign rulers had heavily taxed the people, provided them with little stability and services, and exacerbated problems of absentee landownership. For many Italians, the new liberal state did not provide longed-for opportunities for Italian freedom and self-government but was yet another outsider demanding taxes and conscripts for the military. Instead, most Italians' attachment was to their *paese* (town) and the kinship networks therein. They relied on these connections to survive in Italy and these ties formed the basis of chain migrations when people left.<sup>44</sup> The liberal ideas of patriotism, nationalism, and imagined membership in a national community which Risorgimento leaders and the post-Unification liberal governments promoted fell on deaf ears.

Political and cultural ideals also had limited resonance in most Italians' difficult lives. Mid-nineteenth century Italy was largely agricultural. There was a sharp difference between wealthy landowners, who wielded major power in the new Parliament, and those who worked their estates. Many peasants struggled to survive on

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<sup>44</sup> For example see John Zucchi, *Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity, 1875-1935* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).



their meager land holdings while most agricultural laborers were actually *braccianti*, seasonal laborers who had nothing but their arms (*braccia*) to offer employers. Italy came to industrialization later than other European countries, and its industries were concentrated in northern Italy. Living standards in Italy were low. Malnutrition and disease, particularly malaria and cholera, were frequent problems.<sup>45</sup>

Poverty and unemployment caused emigration before Unification, and no attachment to the new nation prevented the new nation's citizens from further migration. For centuries, people of the peninsula migrated across Europe and the world, totaling approximately two million people between 1790 and 1870. However, poverty, faster and less expensive rail and transatlantic travel, and the need for cheap labor in industrialized European nations incited fourteen million Italians to leave Italy between 1876 (when the government began keeping reliable statistics) and 1914. According to Donna Gabaccia, Italians made up approximately ten percent of all international migrations between 1815 and 1914.<sup>46</sup> While earlier Italian migrants had been elites and political exiles, they were joined in the nineteenth century by millions of laborers.<sup>47</sup>

While the Italian state tried to tout *italianità* as evidence that Italy belonged among the European great powers, Italy's past cultural and artistic accomplishments

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<sup>45</sup> For a detailed explanation of the causes of Italian emigration, see Robert F. Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919); Piero Bevilacqua and Emilio Franzina, eds., *Storia dell'emigrazione italiana. Vol. 1, Partenze* (Roma: Donzelli, 2001).

<sup>46</sup> Donna R. Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000) 3. Gabaccia's book argues that these diverse and lengthy population movements compromised a series of overlapping diasporas from what became Italy.

<sup>47</sup> However, even educated Italians went abroad to escape unemployment after Unification. Unlike some educated migrants in earlier eras, they did not go abroad to for lucrative work in the arts. Instead, they were frequently overqualified for the work which they found. By contrast, the educated citizens of more prosperous nations such as France and Great Britain emigrated, often to those nations' colonies, to pursue career advancement and greater economic opportunities. See Marzio Barbagli, *Educating for Unemployment: Politics, Labor Markets, and the School System--Italy, 1859-1973* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

meant little in destination countries crowded with newly-arrived Italians. The Italian government viewed emigration as an embarrassment. However, as Mark Choate shows in his monograph *Emigrant Nation*, the Italian state gradually realized that it could not control emigration and instead sought to strengthen migrants' ties to Italy for its own benefit. Choate argues that, between Unification and World War I, the Italian state created an "emigrant nation" of diaspora Italians connected to Italy through a global network centered upon Italy. To orient emigrants' remittances and political influence abroad toward Italy, the state created and supported transnational structures including legal protections for migrants, migrant banks, Italian schools for migrants abroad, and charities, including support for Catholic groups that helped Italian migrants and fostered *italianità* abroad.<sup>48</sup>

These Catholics groups believed that Catholicism provided *italianità*'s core, so if they reinforced migrants' connections to an Italian national community, they strengthened migrants' connection to the Church. Building on Choate's work, I argue that by the beginning of the twentieth century, several pioneering Italian Catholic groups had created their own transnational networks to do this work. In 1888, the Italian Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini observed that "...our emigrants' needs can be divided into two classes: moral and material..."<sup>49</sup> Other Italian Catholic leaders and missionaries shared his thinking. Material well-being meant safety, food, shelter, humane working conditions,

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<sup>48</sup> Mark I. Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>49</sup> "...i bisogni cui vanno soggetti i nostri emigranti si possono dividere in due classi: morali e materiali..." Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, *L'emigrazione italiana in America: osservazioni* (Piacenza: Amico del Popolo, 1888), 48. This book was extremely influential in publicizing and gaining support for Catholic work with Italian emigrants.

the ability to provide for one's family, and care for vulnerable groups such as orphans. Moral (or spiritual) well-being meant that Italian migrants could learn and practice Catholicism as defined in Church doctrine, including religious instruction for children, Mass attendance, and receiving the sacraments.

Migrants' continued Catholicism faced a number of challenges abroad. Many Italians migrated to countries with large Protestant populations such as Germany, which had recently attacked the Catholic Church and tried to impose secularism during the so-called *Kulturkampf* (1871-1878).<sup>50</sup> Protestant missionaries in many Protestant-majority countries sought to convert migrating Catholics. Many Protestant missionary societies began their evangelizing activities at the port of arrival. In 1892, Protestant missionaries' work prompted the Italian St. Raphael Society, a Catholic organization that assisted Italians at New York City ports, to warn migrants "to be on their guard, lest they be allured by the thousand means made use of by Protestants to bring them over to their belief."<sup>51</sup> Catholic authorities also feared migrants would adopt radical ideologies abroad and bring them back to Italy. In 1904, Father Pietro Pisani warned that most Italian seasonal migrants to western and central Europe returned to Italy "drenched in irreligious and subversive principles" influenced by their fellow workers, who Pisano characterized as mostly socialists.<sup>52</sup> The Church, like the Italian state, feared the appeal of communists, socialists, and anarchists and their growing strength in parts of Italy.

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<sup>50</sup> Ronald J. Ross, *The Failure of Bismarck's Kulturkampf: Catholicism and State Power in Imperial Germany, 1871-1887* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1998).

<sup>51</sup> Pietro Bandini, *First Annual Report of St. Raphael's Italian Benevolent Society. July 1st 1891 to June 30th 1892*, CMS Collection 005, Box 6.

<sup>52</sup> "imbevuti di principi irreligiosi e sovversivi, suggestionati dalla parola o dall'esempio dei compagni di lavoro..." Pietro Pisani, *Il vero pericolo dell'emigrazione temporanea* (Roma: Tip. dell'Unione Cooperativa Editrice, 1904), 4. ASMAE Ambasciata d'Italia presso La Santa Sede (1947-54) b. 236

The lack of a familiar Italian Catholic infrastructure abroad presented another obstacle for Italians who wanted to practice Catholicism after emigrating. Even in some Catholic-majority destinations such as rural areas of Brazil and Argentina, migrants lived spread out and isolated, far from a church, clergy, or large Italian community.<sup>53</sup> Access to a priest or church, however, did not mean that Italian Catholics would be welcome in the local Catholic community. In Argentina and Brazil, foreign priests were subject to more scrutiny than national clergy, and Italian Catholics in urban areas often faced hostility from the local Catholic community. Sometimes the local Catholic culture was unfamiliar and alienating to Italians, such as the Irish-dominated Catholic Church in the United States, Canada, and Australia.<sup>54</sup> The local Church was often quite critical of Italians' folk-based faith practices. Often when Italians formed their own Catholic congregations, they were forced to worship in the basement of established churches before eventually building their own parishes.<sup>55</sup>

Attempts to keep Italians Catholic by ministering to them as Italians, however, ran into the same problem of regional difference that so vexed secular nationalists in Italy. Migrants often valued replicating their *paese's* religious practices over strict adherence to Catholic doctrine and practice. Italian priests abroad complained that while many Italian

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<sup>53</sup> Gianfausto Rosoli, *Insieme oltre le frontiere: momenti e figure dell'azione della Chiesa tra gli emigrati italiani nei secoli XIX e XX* (Caltanissetta: S. Sciascia, 1996).

<sup>54</sup> Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 237; Anthony Paganoni, *The Pastoral Care of Italians in Australia: Memory and Prophecy* (Ballan, Vic: Connor Court, 2007), 19.

<sup>55</sup> Silvano Tomasi notes that these parishes, called duplex parishes, became “the almost universal transition toward independent Italian churches” in the late nineteenth-century United States. Italians and another, ethnically-diverse congregation would share a building and parish administration. The Italians occupied the often inferior basement level. Silvano M. Tomasi, *Piety and Power: The Role of the Italian Parishes in the New York Metropolitan Area, 1880-1930* (Staten Island, N.Y.: Center for Migration Studies, 1975), 76-81.

migrants did not regularly attend Sunday Mass or financially support their parish, they spent much time and money organizing the annual celebration (*festa*) that honored their *paese's* patron saint. Northern Italian clergy were particularly critical of southern Italians' culture, language, and religious practices.<sup>56</sup> Just as the Italian state could not get Italians in Italy and abroad to act according to its definition of an Italian, so too Italian priests could not get Italian Catholic migrants to fit their definition of Catholic, a definition based upon adherence to Catholic doctrine and deferring to the authority of the institutional Church.

Despite these difficulties, perceived threats to Italians' Catholicism alongside humanitarian concerns about migrants' hardships spurred several Italian Catholics to act, creating transnational migrant assistance networks that used Italian nation-building as a tool to reinforce migrants' Catholicism. These activities did not, however, aim to foster Italian state-building. Though this work spurred early collaboration between the Catholic Church and the Italian state (even as the Holy See refused to acknowledge the new state's legitimacy), none of the networks' founders intended to strengthen the state's power. Instead, regardless of their opinion of the state, the founders all promoted the idea of an Italian national community among Italian migrants, reinforcing migrants' connection to Italy and teaching them *italianità* in order to preserve an Italian identity that they considered fundamentally Catholic.

### **The Beginnings of Catholic Assistance to Italian Migrants**

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<sup>56</sup> For classic examples of Italian emigrant Catholicism in the United States, see Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Prelates and Peasants: Italian Immigrants and the Catholic Church," *Journal of Social History* 2, no. 3 (1969): 217-268; Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

Catholic assistance to Italian migrants began even before the Risorgimento, but when Italian emigration grew exponentially in the late nineteenth century, many Italian religious groups emerged to address migrants' needs. Some of these early groups became noted for the charitable and religious assistance they provided Italian migrants around the world, but their work was never solely dedicated to Italians. Although these founders and their missionaries did not work to reconcile the Church and Italian state, their work nevertheless promoted Italian nation-building. They understood their work as assistance to "Italian" emigrants, and not to people of particular Italian regions or of individual *paesi*. These missionaries went into Italian migrant communities to tend to children and the sick and to provide religious services in Italian as a way of protecting Italians' faith abroad.

The first Catholic work with Italian migrants began before Italian Unification with the work of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, commonly known as the Pallottines after their founder, the Roman priest Vincenzo Pallotti. Their mission was to evangelize and help people find their vocations, their divine purpose in life. In 1844, Pallotti, concerned by the lack of support for Italian Catholics in London and the anticlericalism that they encountered there, sent an Italian priest, Don Raffaele Melia, to minister to them. The mission grew and eventually Pallotti secured permission from Pope Pius IX to create the Church of San Pietro in London, the first church for Italians outside Italy. Its success led Cardinal John McCloskey of New York to ask the Pallottines' assistance with his city's growing Italian population, and in 1884 two Italian priests arrived from London to assist Italians in Harlem. The Pallottines also worked in

Brooklyn and established churches in Brazil and Uruguay during the 1880s.<sup>57</sup> Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the Pallottines and other religious orders that included many Italians, particularly the Capuchins, Franciscans, and Jesuits, were also recruited by local churches to aid Italians or began to work with Italians around them.

An important group with a major mission helping Italians was Mother Francesca Cabrini's Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, founded in 1880. While not dedicated exclusively to Italians, the Missionary Sisters did much charitable work with Italians in the Americas and ran schools, orphanages, and hospitals that catered to Italian or majority Italian populations. Cabrini herself was an intransigent and many of her sisters, even those who worked with Italians, were not Italians themselves. Nevertheless, the Sisters created Italian spaces for migrants in order to bind Italian migrants more tightly to the Church.

While Cabrini was Italian, her devotion to Italian migrants from a viewpoint of charity and evangelization, rather than a sense of *italianità*, can be explained by the fact that she was sent to work with Italian migrants, rather than choosing this mission as had the founders of other groups working with Italian migrants. Cabrini and seven sisters formed what would become known as the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1880; Cabrini remained the group's Mother Superior until her death in 1914. Cabrini dreamed of becoming a missionary and had wanted to work in China. However, when she sought papal permission in 1887, Pope Leo XIII directed her to go to the United States instead and work with Italians there. Cabrini, who was deeply devoted to papal

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<sup>57</sup> Vincenzo Rosato, "I pionieri del servizio ai migranti italiani. Gli interventi provvidenziali di Pallotti, Bosco, Scalabrini, Bonomelli e Cabrini a partire dall'Unità d'Italia," *Studi Emigrazione* XLVIII, No. 183 (2011) 407-426.

authority, unhesitatingly obeyed and arrived in New York City with seven of her sisters in 1889.<sup>58</sup>

The Missionary Sisters soon spread across Europe and the Americas, opening schools, hospitals, and orphanages. The Sisters' initial situation in New York was rocky due in large part to fraught relations and finances with the groups that had initially requested the Sisters and other collaborators<sup>59</sup>- but the Sisters prospered due to Cabrini's dynamic leadership and shrewd management. The sisters' prolific work with Italians took place mainly across the United States: by 1912, Cabrini reported that there they operated four hospitals, orphanages in six cities (and one in Buenos Aires), and schools in seven cities.<sup>60</sup>

While Cabrini strove to aid Italians, she remained an intransigent, hostile to the Italian state and its liberal values. In 1889, an Italian hospital in New York sought to obtain the Sisters' help, but Cabrini's intransigence led her to refuse because, as she told one of her sisters, "I am not in agreement with the Garibaldini." She was unmoved by a visit from a delegation of two Italian Vice-Consuls and a representative of the Italian Legation because she found the hospital's republican beliefs objectionable, particularly a hospital fundraiser celebrating September 20<sup>th</sup>, the anniversary of the Italian seizure of Rome and a popular anticlerical holiday. She vowed that "Under such an Administration,

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<sup>58</sup> For a detailed biography of Cabrini's Italian upbringing and her work in the United States, see Mary Louise Sullivan, *Mother Cabrini, Italian Immigrant of the Century* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1992).

<sup>59</sup> Stephen Michael DiGiovanni, "Mother Cabrini: Early Years in New York," *The Catholic Historical Review* 77, No. 1 (Jan 1991): 56-77.

<sup>60</sup> Mother Cabrini, "Columbus Hospital Memorandum, New York [ca.1912]." Translated and reproduced in Sullivan, *Italian Immigrant of the Century*," 275-279.



I would not go there for anything in the world..."<sup>61</sup> However, Cabrini and some within the New York Church recognized the need for an Italian hospital. Cabrini agreed to have the Sisters work at Columbus Hospital, and in 1892 they purchased the Hospital and moved it to lower Manhattan to save it from Scalabrinian mismanagement. Cabrini was careful to make sure her organizations served the charitable purposes she intended, not others' agendas.<sup>62</sup>

Cabrini did not eschew involvement with patriotic Italians or the Italian government entirely, however. The Sisters' operations were constantly in need of funds and Cabrini was politic, as she was with Catholic groups with whom she disagreed. She built the Columbus Hospital of Chicago with some money from the Italian government's Emigration Fund but insisted "You know that the Emigration funds are a private company, although under the auspices of the government, but one does not have to have recourse to the government. If it were government money, I would not take it."<sup>63</sup> Cabrini was also shrewd enough to make a case to the Commissariato that her work not only aided Italians but promoted *italianità*. In a letter requesting funds for Columbus Hospital in New York, she reported that Italians in the hospital were "...received with open arms, not only in the name of the charity which binds us, but by persons in whose hearts the feelings of *italianità* are alive and whose purpose in life is to come to the aid of their unfortunate compatriots at a time of great need." She claimed the hospital was truly an

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<sup>61</sup>"...con i garibaldini non vado proprio d'accordo...Sotto una Amministrazione simile, non ci andrei per qualunque cosa al mondo..." Mother Cabrini to Sister Maddalena Savaré, New York 15 July 1889, In Imelda Cipolla and Maria Regina Canale, eds., *Lettere di S. Francesca Saverio Cabrini (1868-1889)* (Roma: Città Nuova, 1996), 542.

<sup>62</sup> Sullivan, "*Italian Immigrant of the Century*," 193.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 143.

Italian hospital because in 1909 it saw 40% of all Italians treated in all New York City hospitals and Italians constituted 89% of its patients.<sup>64</sup> Italians liked the hospital, she wrote, because their language and customs were understood there, and poor Italians received good service and free care. For Cabrini, however, migrants' language and customs constituted *italianità*; in her view the promotion of *italianità* was not a political project as were state-sponsored projects among migrants.

Consequently, Cabrini was glad when *italianità* provided comfort to migrants but she did not see an impetus to preserve *italianità* or an Italian community in and of themselves because she thought migrants' Catholicism could be preserved by the Sisters' efforts and institutions, not by *italianità*. Fostering *italianità* could even be detrimental, if it bound migrants to the liberal Italian government or prevented migrants from adjusting to their new homes. Cabrini reportedly told Archbishop Michael Corrigan of New York that "... the Italians here were not to be considered as true Italians, but as Americans because at this point they were not going back to Italy." Cabrini privately criticized the Scalabrinians, Italian missionaries solely dedicated to work with Italians, to one of her sisters, saying: "If possible, I would like to go where the Missionaries from Piacenza are not because I do not like their spirit, which seems more attached to the tricolor flag than to the Pope."<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Cabrini, "Columbus Hospital Memorandum, New York [ca.1912]," In Sullivan, "Italian Immigrant of the Century," 276.

<sup>65</sup> "Se posso, ho più piacere andare dove non vanno i Missionari Piacentini, poiché non mi piace tanto il loro spirito, che pare più attaccato alla bandiera tricolore che non al Papa..." Mother Cabrini to Sister Maddalena Savaré, in Cipolla and Canale, eds., *Lettere di S. Francesca Saverio Cabrini (1868-1889)*, 541. She asked Sister Maddalena not to mention this remark because it would be imprudent. The Sisters often worked with the Scalabrinians, though they also had difficulties of funding and communication. I will discuss the Scalabrinians in the next section.

Cabrini was wary of the Scalabrinians' emphasis on Italian language and culture, and Cabrini rejected an attachment to *italianità* over what she viewed as migrants' best interests. She insisted on bilingual education in her orphanages, arguing that the children would need to speak the language of the host country to support themselves. "Purely Italian schools are contrary to common sense and contrary to the interests of the Italians themselves, who have to seek their livelihood by speaking the language of country."<sup>66</sup> Language training was also important for the Sisters who learned languages while they were in formation in Italy: English for work in the United States, Spanish for Central America, and Italian for the many recruits who were not Italians.<sup>67</sup> Some Sisters learned Italian dialects in order to teach catechism in Italian parishes, but by 1913, all Sisters in the United States could speak English. Cabrini encouraged her Sisters in the United States to become American citizens as quickly as possible in order to become part of American society and to obtain the same respect for their work as American-born sisters. Cabrini herself became a U.S. citizen in 1909.<sup>68</sup>

Nevertheless, the Sisters' work and institutions in Italian communities helped build and reinforce conceptions of an Italian community among migrants. Abroad, migrants often clustered together, often despite regional differences, and sometimes Italians sought out the Sisters' institutions because they felt familiar, as Cabrini reported with her hospitals. The Sisters grew exponentially throughout Cabrinin's life, and by her death in 1917, the order had 67 houses in Europe, the United States and Latin America.

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<sup>66</sup> Quoted in Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, 137.

<sup>67</sup> For example, see the following letters in Cipolla and Canale, eds., *Lettere di S. Francesca Saverio Cabrini (1868-1889)*: Cabrini to Sr. Maddalena Savaré, Codogno, 9 November 1888, 460-462; Cabrini to Sr. Maddalena Savaré, New York, 15 June 1889, 532-5.

<sup>68</sup> Sullivan, "*Italian Immigrant of the Century*," 104.

Approximately 400 of the Order's more than one thousand sisters worked with Italians in the United States.<sup>69</sup> Cabrini was quickly celebrated for her work with immigrants: Pope Pius XII canonized her in 1946, and in 1950 he declared her the "Patroness of Immigrants" in response to lobbying by the Sisters and bishops of the United States and Canada. Her patronage, however, was not limited to Italians but included "all the immigrants."<sup>70</sup>

The work of the Salesian Society and its women's institute, the Salesian Sisters, provided some of the most widespread assistance to Italian emigrants around the world.<sup>71</sup> Though never an exclusively Italian mission, the Salesians' work developed as an outgrowth of their focus on education and youth. Don Giovanni Bosco, the Salesians' Italian founder, worked with impoverished boys near Turin and founded the Salesians in 1859 to work with poor and abandoned boys. The Salesians grew rapidly and worked on multiple continents within a decade. Bosco and Mary Domenica Mazzarello cofounded the Salesians Sisters in 1872 to provide assistance to poor girls. In 1874, Pope Pius IX granted official approval to the Salesian Society, and at his behest, Bosco sent his first missionaries to Argentina the following year to work with Italians there. The Salesians spread quickly around the world, working with Italian families and children as part of their larger work with children.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Sullivan, "*Italian Immigrant of the Century*," 245.

<sup>70</sup> Pius XII, "Papal Brief which Proclaims Saint Francis Cabrini 'Patroness of Immigrants', "

<sup>71</sup> The Salesians were originally called the Society of St. Francis de Sales, though they are most commonly known as the Salesians of Don Bosco in honor of their founder. The Salesian Sisters are formally known as the Salesians Sisters of St. John Bosco or the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (*Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice* in Italian).

<sup>72</sup> See Pietro Stella, *Don Bosco: Life and Work* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Don Bosco Publications, 1985); Pietro Braido, *Don Bosco's Pedagogical Experience* (Rome: LAS, 1989); Francis Desramaut, *Don Bosco en son temps: 1815-1888* (Torino: Società editrice internazionale, 1996). There is a large literature on

When Bosco sent his first missionaries to Argentina, he told them to care for Italian families whom he believed were in spiritual danger in an unfamiliar land with little spiritual support. He warned his missionaries that migrants were "little instructed in the language and customs" of Argentina, "far from schools and churches, and do not go to worship or if they do understand nothing." Bosco had reason to be concerned. This period was the beginning of massive emigration to Argentina, and most of those who left had little education and were vulnerable to con artists. Most Italians settled in urban areas, particularly Buenos Aires,<sup>73</sup> which was fiercely anticlerical.<sup>74</sup> While Roman Catholicism was Argentina's official religion, the Church hierarchy officially designated Argentina as mission territory and the Church in Argentina was stretched thin. The Archdiocese of Buenos Aires included not only the city but also the inland pampas and distant Patagonia, and Archbishop Federico Aneiros (1873-1894) was eager to have the Salesians' assistance. In rural areas, Italians could be isolated and far from the care of a priest, even if they wanted one.

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Bosco. Many of the books, like the biographies of other (often sainted) founders of Catholic religious orders, are little more than hagiographies.

<sup>73</sup> Buenos Aires, with a population of more than 300,000 Italian emigrants by 1910, had the second largest concentration of Italians abroad after New York City. Samuel L. Baily, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 57, 59.

<sup>74</sup> Both Argentinian nationalists and a previous generation of Italian emigrants were hostile to the Catholic Church. In the late nineteenth century, the Argentinian government and Church clashed over civil and educational matters, including the Educational Law of 1884 which eliminated the Church from public schools. For a Salesian missionary's account see "Relazione: di una Missione sulle sponde del Rio Negro in Patagonia: Partenza e preludi di una persecuzione- Pretese di una donna- Abuso di potere- Calunnia," Father Domenico Milanesio to Don Bosco. Buenos Ayres, 20 Febbraio 1885, in APF, Scritti Riferite nei Congressi. America Meridionale dall Istmo di Panama allo Stretto di Magellano, 1878-1885, Volume 14. During the Risorgimento, thousands of Italian political exiles, including fiercely anti-clerical Mazzinians and anarchists, fled to Argentina and were the established leaders of Argentinian Italian communities when much larger numbers of Italians began arriving in the 1870s. Fernando Devoto and Roberto Benencia, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Ed. Sudamericana, 2009).

Bosco had a special concern for Italian migrants because of their origins. Most migrants to Argentina were from the Italian regions of Piedmont and Liguria where the Salesians already had many charitable works. Bosco instructed his departing missionaries to "Go, find these our brothers, whom misery and misfortune brought to a strange land, and make every effort to make them know how great is the mercy of God, who sends you to them for their good of their souls."<sup>75</sup> Don Bosco's words were typical of the discourse of later Catholic missionaries to Italian migrants. These Italian families were their "brothers," despite Italian regional and linguistic differences. This was not a political solidarity- Don Bosco, like most priests of his time, did not support the anticlerical Italian state- but nevertheless he acknowledged a shared Italian culture and customs. For Don Bosco, this culture included Catholicism and its cultural practices, so migrants' ignorance of Catholic doctrine and their inability (or unwillingness) to receive Catholic sacraments was as urgent a need as material assistance.

This belief was shared within the Society and motivated its work with Italians. In 1887, the Salesians' official paper worried that Italian migrants "deprived of religious and moral instruction" and consumed with "procuring a piece of bread" would eventually lose "all principles of morality and almost fall in degradation." The editorial saw spiritual dangers to Italians in both urban and rural areas of the Americas. Those in rural areas were isolated and far from priests, and thus did not give any thought to religion.

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<sup>75</sup> "Vi raccomando con insistenza particolare la posizione dolorosa di molte famiglie italiane... I genitori, la loro figliolanza poco istruita della lingua e dei costumi dei luoghi, lontani dalle scuole e dalle chiese, o non vanno alle pratiche religiose o se ci vanno nulla capiscono. Perciò mi scrivono, che voi troverete un numero grandissimo di fanciulli e anche di adulti che vivono nella più deplorabile ignoranza del leggere, dello scrivere e di ogni principio religioso. Andate, cercate questi nostri fratelli, cui la miseria o sventura portò in terra straniera, e adoperatevi per far loro conoscere quanto sia grande la misericordia di quel Dio, che ad essi vi manda pel bene del loro anime," *Memorie biografiche di S. Giovanni Bosco*, XI (Torino: SEI, 1930), 385. Cited in Rosoli, *Insieme oltre le frontiere*, 394.

Populous, urban areas were also dangerous for migrants as places where "the ministers of error try with all their means to take the only treasures that they brought with them from Italy: their Faith."<sup>76</sup>

The Salesians considered their work with Italian migrants to be part of their evangelization mission. In 1878, a Salesian missionary reported how the Salesians had taken over the Buenos Aires' parish of S. Giovanni Evangelista, which was located in a neighborhood of 25,000 Italians and a "nest of Freemasonry." The writer called this area a "new and vast evangelical field" where the two Salesians assigned to the parish taught Catechism to adults and children and reportedly began to get the local population to receive sacraments.<sup>77</sup> Despite Italian migrants' supposed Catholicism before emigrating, the Salesians assumed the same authoritative and paternal relationship with migrants as they assumed with the South American Indians they evangelized at the same time. The missionary reported that the Salesians' "profound desire to advance toward the savages" led to work among indigenous people in central Argentina.<sup>78</sup> The Salesians believed that people who had never been exposed to Catholicism needed its instruction in order to live moral lives. Father Milanesio, a Salesian in Patagonia, reported to Don Bosco in 1884 that the Indians there lived under "religious superstition." The Indians' observations of the world led them to believe in a Supreme Being, but Father Milanesio did not consider this

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"... privi d'istruzione religiosa e morale, e se a stento riescono talora a procacciarsi un tozzo di pane, finiscono dopo alcun tempo col perdere ogni principio di moralità e cadono quasi nell'abbruttimento."; "...i ministri di errore cercano con ogni mezzo di toglier loro quel solo tesoro che seco han recato dall'Italia: la Fede." "Gli italiani in America e le nostre Missioni," *Bollettino salesiano* XI, No 10, (October 1887), 121.

<sup>77</sup> "nuovo e vasto campo evangelico," Salesian Missionary to the Holy Father, Buenos Aires, 18 Sept. 1878, APF, Scritti Riferite nei Congressi, America Meridionale dall Istmo di Panama allo Stretto di Magellano, 1878-1885, Volume 14.

<sup>78</sup> "...nostro vivo desiderio di avanzare verso il selvaggi," Salesian Missionary to the Holy Father.

sense of God sufficient for living a moral life. He observed "But as is natural, it is almost impossible that man, abandoned to himself, and guided only by natural reason, can conserve the light of reason in its integrity, and he thus falls into error, coming to create a confused idea of God and his attributes which many times does not distinguish between the source of good, which is God, from the source of evil, which is the devil."<sup>79</sup>

The Salesian undertook their evangelizing and charitable work from their mission posts, which included churches, schools, orphanages, and hospitals. In 1877, Bosco reported to the Propaganda Fide that the Salesians in Argentina had five churches, a seminary, two schools, and an institution in Buenos Aires that served poor children, including indigenous children, and Bosco was sending many more missionaries.<sup>80</sup> By 1906, Salesians had additional schools in Buenos Aires and taught more than 2,000 students; 80% were Italian and many attended for free.<sup>81</sup> However, historian Samuel L. Baily argues that the Salesians accomplished more in rural Argentina than in anti-clerical Buenos Aires,<sup>82</sup> and the Salesians' work in rural areas also served to foster and maintain an Italian identity among the people. Rural Italian communities often had small populations and were great distances from one another. Priests periodically traveled from community to community to say Mass, administer sacraments, and record vital records, such as births, baptisms, and marriages. Priests performed services in Italian at the

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<sup>79</sup> "...Ma, come è naturale, l'uomo abbandonato a se stesso, e guidato solamente dalla ragione naturale è quasi impossibile che possa conservare nella loro integrità i lumi della ragione, per cui cadendo di errore in errore, viene a farsi un'idea tanto confusa di Dio, dei suoi attributi che spesse volte non sa distinguere il principio del bene che è Dio dal genio del male che è il demonio," Father Dom. Milanese to Don Giovanni Bosco, Patagones, 3 Marzo 1884, APF, Scritti Riferite nei Congressi, America Meridionale dall Istmo di Panama allo Stretto di Magellano, 1878-1885, Volume 14.

<sup>80</sup> Don Bosco to Cardinal Alessandro Franchi, Torino 18 Oct 1877, APF, Fondo Scritture riferite nei Congressi America Meridionale, Volume 16 (1889-1892).

<sup>81</sup> Rosoli, *Insieme oltre le frontiere*, 206-7.

<sup>82</sup> Baily, *Immigrants in the Land of Promise*, 198.



request of the community. In performing these civil functions, priests took on a role normally performed by the state in urban areas, increasing the Church's importance in Italian rural communities.

The Salesians' efforts were not confined to Argentina. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Salesians rapidly opened missions across Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Americas, and many- but not all- of these missions served Italians. The Salesians quickly began working with Italians across South and Central America, including Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Mexico. Bishops around the world appealed to the Salesians to come work with Italian migrant populations in their dioceses because of the Salesians' reputation. The Salesians first came to the United States at the request of the local bishops, beginning in San Francisco in 1897 and quickly spreading to Oakland, New York, and Philadelphia. The Salesians spread across the Mediterranean in the 1890s, working with Italians in Oran, Tunis, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Smirne, and Constantinople; and Europe in Switzerland, Germany, and Belgium. By 1904 the Salesians counted 1,050 missionaries and 700 Salesian Sisters assisting Italians around the world.<sup>83</sup>

Schools operated by the Salesians became an important site for imparting Italian language and culture to the second generation of Italians. By 1910, the Salesians taught Italian in 94 different schools: 83 across 13 countries in the Americas and 11 schools in 4

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<sup>83</sup> Francesco Motta, "La risposta della Società Salesiana alla 'grande emigrazione italiana' (1890-1914)," In *Salesiani di Don Bosco in Italia: 150 anni di educazione* (Roma: LAS, 2011); Francesco Motto, "I precedenti della missione salesiana fra gli immigrati italiani negli Stati Uniti (1868-1896)," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane. Rivista Semestrale di Storia religiosa e civile* XXVII, No. 2 (52) (July-December 2008): 347-367; Luciano Trincia, *Per la fede, per la patria: i salesiani e l'emigrazione italiana in Svizzera fino alla prima guerra mondiale* (Roma: LAS, 2002).

European countries.<sup>84</sup> The presence of Italian in the schools depended on the local context: in 1911 one Salesian reported that in Latin America, the Salesians did not have special churches and schools for Italians because they learned the local language easily. However, in North America English was difficult for Italian emigrants and Salesian schools there were "almost all exclusively for Italians."<sup>85</sup> Still, even in schools in which Italian migrants' children had to learn the local language, Italian was often offered as a class. Schools taught standard Italian, and since most Italian migrants spoke only dialect, Italian language instruction helped unify them abroad. Salesians reinforced their educational efforts with cultural activities in the school and parish, including lectures, concerts, and pageants, to celebrate Italian culture and language, a rich heritage that was, unsurprisingly, Catholic. The promotion of the Italian language led scholar Gianfausto Rosoli to observe that "In some moments, valorizing Italian linguistic and cultural patrimony assumed tones which may have taken on ethnocentric accents, at times even nationalistic, provoking understandable reactions on the part of Argentinians."<sup>86</sup>

Italian language remained important in Salesian work and life throughout the order's rapid growth. By 1904, the Salesians felt that their experience had demonstrated that using Italian migrants' "national language" was a powerful means of keeping their Catholic faith strong. An article in the Salesians' bulletin described Italian language as a "natural tie" which drew Italian migrants closer to one another and to the Church and

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<sup>84</sup> Motto, "La risposta della Società Salesiana alla 'grande emigrazione italiana' (1890-1914)," 190.

<sup>85</sup> Father Paolo Albero to Cardinal Merry Del Val, Torino 12 Oct. 1911, ASV, Seg di Stato 1914. Rubrica 18 Fasc. 11.

<sup>86</sup> "In alcuni momenti, i toni della valorizzazione del patrimonio linguistico culturale italiano possono aver assunto accenti etnocentrici, a volte perfino nazionalistici, provocando reazioni comprensibili da parte argentina," Rosoli, *Insieme oltre le frontiere*, 418.

drew the Salesians' lay Cooperators around the world deeper into the Salesians' mission.<sup>87</sup> The Salesians and Salesian Sisters attracted many non-Italian members as they expanded around the world, but Italian remained their official language, and those in formation studied Italian as part of their training. Italian schools around the world often strongly encouraged students to study Italian, and even non-Italian students had the opportunity to learn Italian.

The Salesians also promoted *italianità* and helped migrants develop an Italian consciousness through the press. The Salesians began publishing their monthly bulletin, *Il Bollettino Salesiano*, in 1877. The *Bollettino* often published news and letters from missionaries in Latin America, and beginning in February 1903 it included the section *Per gli emigranti italiani* (*For the Italian emigrants*) with information about emigration. In 1892, the Salesians also founded the monthly magazine *Cristoforo Colombo*, which eventually reached 3,000 subscribers and was the first Italian Catholic periodical in Argentina. The newspapers *Vita Coloniale* in Córdoba and *L'Italia* in Buenos Aires followed during the ensuing decades. Many of these newspapers provided an Italian-language alternative to the Italian radical press. *Cristoforo Colombo*, for example, advocated for new mutual aid societies to combat the influential anticlerical societies, and it criticized the liberal Italian government and the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> of September among Italians in Argentina.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> "Per gli emigranti italiani," *Bollettino salesiano* XXVIII. No 2. (Feb 1904), 37.

<sup>88</sup> Rosoli, *Insieme oltre le frontiere*, 210, 420-422. I am not suggesting that the Salesians published exclusively in Italian. As the Salesians expanded, *Il Bollettino Salesiano* was translated into numerous languages. In Argentina, the Salesians also published Spanish-language periodicals about the family and Catholicism.

By the eve of World War I, Salesians and Salesian Sisters worked with Italians on several continents as an important part of their mission to evangelize and work with youth. Bosco and his successor Don Michele Rua (Rector Major 1888-1910) believed Salesian missionaries could cultivate Italian migrants' connection to Catholicism through familiar language and customs because they conceived of Italian culture as Catholic and their work with Italians abroad an extension of their work with the needy in Italy. In this sense, the Salesians were not much different from other orders, such as Capuchins and Jesuits, in which Italian religious were requested to aid Italians abroad when destination countries did not have sufficient personnel familiar with Italian language and culture. However, the Salesians also understood the importance of reinforcing a group Italian identity to preserve migrants' Catholicism, and their work echoed- and often collaborated with- other Italian Catholic groups dedicated exclusively to Italian migrants.

### **Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini and the Scalabrinians**

Rapidly increasing Italian emigration in the late nineteenth century also spurred several Italian clergy members and bishops to found organizations solely for material and spiritual assistance to Italian emigrants. For these men and many of the priests in the groups they founded (who were Italian or the children of Italians), *italianità* was not incompatible or separate from Catholicism but rather closely entwined with it, and thus by strengthening *italianità* and a sense of an Italian community abroad, they thought they would also be reinforcing Catholicism. In contrast to some of the groups already described, these men were conciliationists, rather than intransigents, friendly to the Italian state and often nationalistic as they worked for reconciliation between the Church and the

state. These groups engaged most explicitly in Italian nation-building projects with migrants to tie them closer to the Church.

After their first missionaries arrived in the Americas in 1888, the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo, commonly known as the Scalabrinians after their founder Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, became synonymous with the pastoral care of Italian migrants. Bishop Scalabrini publicly advocated for Italian migrants within the Church hierarchy, to the Italian government, and in public in Italy. Scalabrini was committed to Catholicism and its preservation in the modern world while being a proud Italian. His advocacy on behalf of Italian migrants was also shaped by his efforts to reconcile Italy and the Church. Scalabrini began his work with migrants a decade before the Italian state attempted to regulate emigration or assist, and his advocacy helped force the state to take action.<sup>89</sup>

Scalabrini (1839-1905) first became passionate about migrants' difficulties by observing the problems of his diocese, and he was an early advocate of intervention by the clergy. From 1876 until his death he was bishop of Piacenza, a largely rural diocese in Emilia-Romagna which had already sent 11% of its population abroad by the time that Scalabrini became bishop. Scalabrini made six complete pastoral tours of Piacenza during his time as bishop, traveling to every parish, familiarizing himself with his

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<sup>89</sup> There is a large literature on Scalabrini and the Scalabrinians. The definitive biography is Mario Francesconi, *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini: vescovo di Piacenza e degli emigrati* (Roma: Città Nuova Ed, 1985). For more on the activities of the Scalabrinians in this era, see Mary Elizabeth Brown, *The Scalabrinians in North America, 1887-1934* (Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies, 1996); Graziano Battistella, *Itinerant Missions: Alternate Experiences in the History of Scalabrinians in North America* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1986); Lice Maria Signor, *John Baptist Scalabrini and Italian Migration: A Socio-Pastoral Project* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1994); Luigi Favero, "Los Scalabrinianos y los emigrantes italianos en Sudamerica," *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 4, 12 (1989): 231-255.

people's problems, and recording his observations.<sup>90</sup> Scalabrini shared other Catholic bishops' opposition to liberalism and radicalism and feared that migrants might adopt such beliefs abroad. In 1879, he issued a decree to his priests warning against the spiritual dangers of emigration and telling his priests to discourage people from leaving. If people decided to emigrate anyway, the priests should “inform them in a fatherly way about the way of life in those faraway regions and how they might be able to defend and preserve in its entirety, with diligence and firmness, the deposit of faith that they possessed.”<sup>91</sup>

Scalabrini was concerned for migrants' physical hardship and would later credit a scene in a Milan railroad station for inspiring his work. There, he observed hundreds of poor Italians waiting to emigrate without a full understanding of the hardships that awaited them. Scalabrini later wrote: “There were elderly bent with age and fatigue, men in the prime of youth, women leading or carrying their children, and youth, all united by a single thought, all directed to a common goal. They were emigrants.” They were beginning the long journey to far-away America “where they hoped to find fortune less adverse, a land less ungrateful for their sweat.”<sup>92</sup> This scene stayed with Scalabrini and led him to pay attention to stories of the difficulties migrants faced on their journeys and settling in new countries. In newspapers he read the Italian government's warnings to avoid scam artists; friends told him how Italians abroad were considered the “pariah of

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<sup>90</sup> Signor, *John Baptist Scalabrini*, 177.

<sup>91</sup> Mario Francesconi, ed., *Inizi della congregazione scalabriniana (1886-1888)*, Vol. 2 (Rome: Centro studi emigrazione, 1969), 11.

<sup>92</sup> “Erano vecchi curvati dall’età e dalle fatiche, uomini nel fiore della virilità, donne che si traevano dietro o portavano in collo i loro bambini, fanciulli e giovanette tutti affratellati da un solo pensiero, tutti indirizzati ad una meta comune. Erano emigranti....dove speravano di trovare meno avversa la fortuna, meno ingrata la terra ai loro sudori,” Scalabrini, *L’emigrazione italiana in America*, 3-4.

the emigrants,” made to do the worst jobs. Scalabrini was deeply moved by emigrants' pain and fixated on their distance from Italy. He also faulted the Italian state for neglecting its responsibility to care for its people, observing that “thousands and thousands of our brothers living almost completely without the defense of their mother country.”<sup>93</sup>

Scalabrini believed there was a pressing need to protect migrants both materially and spiritually from migration's hardships, and he saw a need for missionary assistance. Scalabrini reported the "religious abandonment in which one finds hundreds of thousands of Italian emigrants" to Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, head of the *Propaganda Fide*<sup>94</sup> in 1886. Scalabrini believed priests and institutional Catholicism were key components in maintaining migrants' faith, and he worried about "hundreds of souls who live and die without seeing a priest's face, without hearing a word about religion, without receiving the Sacraments, who live and die like beasts." He asked Simeoni, head of the Church's missionary efforts "is there no way to provide for so many poor souls? Why so many generous efforts for the conversion of infidels and we would allow our Catholic countrymen to perish?" Scalabrini suggested the need could be met by "an association of Italian priests who would have for their scope the spiritual assistance of Italian emigrants in America, who would watch over their departure and arrival, and provide as much as

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<sup>93</sup> “i paria degli emigranti”; “migliaia e migliaia de' nostri fratelli vivono quasi senza difesa della madre patria,” Scalabrini, *L'emigrazione italiana in America*, 6.

<sup>94</sup> The Sacred Congregation of the *Propaganda Fide* (Propagation of the Faith) was a department of the Holy See that oversaw missionaries. Therefore, early missionary activities with Italian emigrants were under its jurisdiction. The *Propaganda Fide* also administered Church affairs in non-Catholic countries. The United States, Canada, and Great Britain were under its jurisdiction until 1908.

possible for their Christian future."<sup>95</sup> Significantly, here Scalabrini worried about Italian migrants as fellow countrymen (*connazionali*) who merited as much, if not more, attention than non-Italians and non-Catholics, and who would be best served by other Italians.

However, what set Scalabrini and his missionaries apart from other Italian priests and religious who worked with Italian migrants was Scalabrini's belief that religion and nationalism were not only both important values, but mutually reinforcing ones. In Scalabrini's famous 1887 pamphlet, *Observations on Italian Emigration in America*, he wrote "Religion and fatherland, these two supreme aspirations of every good heart, intertwine, become complete in this work of love, which is the protection of the weak, and come together in admirable agreement."<sup>96</sup> Scalabrini's belief that the state and Church shared the same paternal responsibility for migrants' welfare and should collaborate did not sit well with both the state's anticlerical liberals and the large intransigent faction within the Holy See that wanted no compromise with the Italian state. Scalabrini, however, thought that being Italian meant being a Catholic, and these two identities did not need to be in conflict. A conciliationist, he advocated within the Holy

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<sup>95</sup> "Mesi sono fu da me, e più volte, un mio antico discepolo nel seminario di Como, ora sacerdote e professore, il quale avendo dovuto intraprendere il viaggio d'America per rivedere colà il padre suo e la sua famiglia, rimase profondamente commosso e addolorato al vedere l'abbandono religioso in cui vi si trovano centinaia di migliaia di italiani colà emigrati. Vi hanno gruppi che formerebbero Parrocchie di parecchie centinaia di anime che vivono e muoiono senza vedere la faccia di un prete, senza udire una parola di religione, senza ricevere Sacramenti, che vivono e muoiono come bestie...non vi sarebbe modo di provvedere a tante povere anime? Si fanno tanti e generosi sforzi per la conversione degli infedeli e lasceremo perire i nostri connazionali già cattolici? Non sarebbe il caso, E.mo, di pensare ad una associazione di preti italiani, che avessero per iscopo l'assistenza spirituale degli italiani emigrati nelle Americhe, che ne vegliassero la partenza e l'arrivo, e provvedessero al loro avvenire cristiano per quanto è possibile?" Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, *Scritti. Vol. 1: L'Emigrazione. I missionari di San Carlo: Parte I (1887-1892)* (Roma: Congregazione Scalabriniana, 1980), 3.

<sup>96</sup> "Religione e patria, queste due supreme aspirazioni di ogni cuore bennato, si intrecciano, si completano in quest'opera d'amore, che è la protezione dei deboli, e si fondono in ammirabile accordo," Scalabrini, *L'Emigrazione italiana in America*, 63.



See for reconciliation with Liberal Italy. He concluded his pamphlet, saying "May Italy, sincerely reconciled with the Holy See, emulate ancient glories and add undying ones, setting even its faraway children on the shining paths of true civilization and progress."<sup>97</sup>

Scalabrini, who was well-connected within both the Holy See and the Italian government, did not earn the ire of the intransigent Leo XIII because Scalabrini placed the interests of the Church first, a position that was not far from Leo's. Scalabrini wrote to Pope Leo XIII in 1882, urging the pontiff to abolish *non expedit* and telling him that it was increasingly ignored in Scalabrini's diocese, preventing those who obeyed the Church from participating in politics (and thus voting against the leftists who were popular in northern Italy).<sup>98</sup> While Scalabrini would be privately frustrated with the Holy See's lack of engagement with political developments during the following decades, he carefully followed the Holy See's policies in public and had good relations with Leo. The pope did not entirely reject people's attachment to nation-states (and thus Scalabrini's nationalism), writing in 1890 that "... the supernatural love for the Church and the natural love of our own country proceed from the same eternal principle, since God Himself is their Author and originating Cause." However, loyalty to the Church was paramount, especially when the church and state were in conflict: everyone was bound "to love

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<sup>97</sup> "Possa l'Italia, sinceramente riconciliata con la Sede Apostolica, emulare le antiche glorie ed un'altra aggiungerne imperituro, avviando sui luminosi sentieri della vera civiltà, e del vero progresso anche I suoi figli lontani," Scalabrini, *L'Emigrazione italiana in America*, 64. However, Scalabrini felt like this before he began his work with Italian emigrants. In his first pastoral letter in 1876, he instructed the people of his diocese to pray for "our most august King Victor Emmanuel and all those entrusted with political power" that they would return to Catholicism and the Church. See Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, "Pastoral Letter, January 30, 1876," Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, *Scritti Vol. 7: Pastorali: Parte I (1876-1883)* (Roma: Congregazione Scalabriniana, 1980), 11.

<sup>98</sup> Giovanni Battista Scalabrini to Pope Leo XIII, 1882, *Scritti Vol. 4: lettere (ai papi, alla segreteria di Stato, ad ecclesiastici, a suore, a laici), Parte I* (Roma: Congregazione Scalabriniana, 1980), 34.

dearly" their country but "we have a much more urgent obligation to love, with ardent love, the Church to which we owe the life of the soul, a life that will endure forever." <sup>99</sup>

Scalabrini founded his religious order, the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo, commonly known as the Scalabrinians, in 1887. The Scalabrinians' aim, according to their 1888 rule, was to "keep the Catholic faith living in the hearts of our countrymen, and to secure whenever possible their moral, civil, and economic well-being."<sup>100</sup> The next year, the order sent its first missionaries abroad: two priests and a brother to the United States and five priests and two brothers to Brazil. From 1888-1900, the order and its institutions rapidly expanded: the missionaries founded their own missions and parishes wherever they went. In the United States, Scalabrinians founded parishes on the East Coast, as far south as New Orleans, and as far west as Kansas City, Missouri. In Brazil, the Scalabrinians ran several churches and missions in the southern states of Paraná, São Paulo, and Rio Grande do Sul.<sup>101</sup>

Leo XIII supported the Scalabrinians' work, including their commitments to Italian nation-building, because Scalabrini's concerns about justice for vulnerable workers and maintaining Italian migrants' Catholicism aligned with Leo's own concerns. In December 1888, Leo issued an encyclical on Italian migrants for the bishops of America called *Quam Aerumosa*. Scalabrini had written the draft upon which the

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<sup>99</sup> Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Sapientiae christianae*. January 10, 1890. Accessed July 13, 2013.

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_10011890\\_sapientiae-christianae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_10011890_sapientiae-christianae_en.html)

<sup>100</sup> "Scopo di questa Congregazione è di mantener viva nel cuore de nostri connazionali emigrati la fede cattolica, e di procurare quanto è possibile il loro benessere morale, civile, ed economico." *Regole 1888*, Capitolo 1, Article 2, AGS, Rome, Italy. A religious order's rule was a document stating how members should live their lives. The Scalabrinians' original rule dedicated their activities to the assistance of Italian emigrants and listed the types of assistance they would provide.

<sup>101</sup> Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, "Relazione delle Opere dei Missionari di San Carlo per gli emigrati italiani," Piacenza. 10 Aug. 1900, AGS. BA 03 04 f.2.

encyclical was based. *Quam Aerumnosa* echoed Scalabrini's *Observations on Italian Emigration in America* when he said Italians were driven by economic necessity to migrate and faced abuses on their journey. The encyclical also worried about Italians' spiritual welfare without the guidance of Italian priests: "Among all these evils, however, that is by far the most calamitous which... renders it not so easy as it should be to obtain the saving assistance of God's servants who are unable to speak to them the word of life in the Italian tongue..." It went on to lament how many Italians in America lacked Catholic baptisms, last rites, and marriages and consequently drifted from Catholicism while "wickedness" grew. Leo called on the American bishops to accept the Scalabrinian priests trained at the Scalabrinian seminary in Piacenza with "fatherly affection."<sup>102</sup>

The root of these social concerns was clear in Leo's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, a landmark document which quickly became the foundation of modern Catholic social teaching and extremely influential in subsequent Catholic understandings of migration.<sup>103</sup> Leo laid out a vision of justice that was different from both socialism

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<sup>102</sup> Leo XIII, *Quam Aerumnosa*. December 10, 1888, In *The Papal Encyclicals. Vol. 2, 1878-1903*. Claudia Carlen, ed. (Raleigh: Pierian Press, 1990), 191-193, sec. 2-4.

<sup>103</sup> Catholic social teaching is the Catholic Church's doctrine on justice in material matters including economics, the makings of a just society, and the role of states. Catholic social teaching is hierarchical and largely driven by the writings of several popes, although bishops' conferences have also contributed several important works. All are rooted in clerics' understanding of the Bible and Catholic philosophers. While there is no official list of documents, the core of Catholic social teaching is a series of socially-focused documents that began with *Rerum novarum*. Many key social teaching documents were written to commemorate the anniversary of *Rerum novarum*. One may see this connection in several of their names: *Quadragesimo Anno (Fortieth Year)* (1931), *Octogesima Adveniens (Eighty Years Later)* (1971), and *Centesimus Annus (Hundredth Year)* (1991). For a critical analysis of the major documents of Catholic social teaching, including *Rerum Novarum*, see Charles E. Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002). See also Kenneth R. Himes and Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005).

and unbridled capitalism. He criticized how “...working men have been surrendered, isolated and helpless, to the hardheartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition.”<sup>104</sup> He outlined the duties and rights of capital and labor as well as citizen and state, emphasizing the dignity of the individual and the need for class harmony. Leo sharply criticized the exploitation of workers and asserted workers' rights to private property, a just wage, regulations regarding working hours and women and children's labor, and the right to strike when necessary. Leo claimed that it was the Church's role to teach and work for social justice. Although Scalabrini was not personally involved in writing *Rerum Novarum*, its concerns were in keeping with his own. The encyclical and subsequent Church social justice teachings formed the basis of the universal Catholic understanding of migration that developed in the twentieth century.

### **The Scalabrinians and Nation-Building in Action**

The parish was the place where Italian migrants came into contact with the bulk of the Scalabrinians' Italian nation-building efforts. In Brazil and the United States, the Scalabrinians were either invited by local bishops to minister to the local Italian population or the Scalabrinians opened their own parishes for Italians. While most religious services were conducted in Latin, priests could preach, make announcements, and advise parishioners in Italian. Parishes frequently sponsored parochial schools, nurseries, and activities for children. The Scalabrinians' parishes were not characterized by the formation of satellite Italian groups abroad- that would ignore the impact of the receiving societies as well as the enormous difference between migrants' culture and

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<sup>104</sup> Leo XIII, *Rerum novarum*, May 15, 1891, in *The Papal Encyclicals*, Vol. 2, 241-261, sec. 3.

*italianità*- but they did contribute to migrants' development of a consciousness as Italians abroad and successfully reinforced many migrants' ties to the Catholic Church.

Scalabrinian parishes also housed Italian cultural groups and familiar religious devotions. Our Lady of Pompei, a Scalabrinian parish founded in New York City in 1895, had a Women's Youth Circle (*Circolo Gioventù Femminile*). The group's aim was to promote religious and “intellectual education,” all under official Church guidance. Article 3 of the Circle's Statutes designated Italian the Circle's “official language,” saying “...it will be preferred in everything, both out of respect to the country of origin and in order to make the best use of the youth's education in classical Italian authors.”<sup>105</sup> Here the young women had a space to promote *italianità* themselves, speaking Italian in the United States and studying Italian literature as part of their Church-sanctioned moral and intellectual development. Devotion to religion and Italian culture were clearly compatible and mutually-reinforcing parts of their heritage. Our Lady of Pompei also had a chapter of the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary (*Confraternita del Santissimo Rosario*). The Confraternity, dedicated to the recitation of the rosary, had existed for centuries in Europe, but the group at Pompei was derived from Catholic devotion to Our Lady of Pompei, the parish's namesake and a popular devotion among southern Italians.<sup>106</sup> Such devotions indicated the strength of regional, not pan-Italian, cultures in the Americas, but parishes that welcomed the presence of these devotions and feast days

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<sup>105</sup> “Art. 3: La lingua ufficiale del Circolo sarà l'Italiano, e quella si preferirà in tutte, sia per rispetto alla patria d'origine, che per potere fare uso migliore nella educazione della gioventù dei molti autori classici italiani,” *Statuto del Circolo Gioventù Femminile nella Parrocchia Italiana Madonna di Pompei in New York*, 1913. CMS. Collection 037: Our Lady of Pompei Records, New York, N.Y., Box 13, Folder 161.

<sup>106</sup> *Scheda per gli Associati al Santuario ed alla Confraternita del SS. Rosario in Valle di Pompei*. 1899. CMS. Collection 037: Our Lady of Pompei Records, New York, N.Y., Box 13, Folder 161.

from parishioners' native villages drew the migrants into institutional Catholicism and Scalabrinian churches.

The Scalabrinians also ran itinerant missions to minister to small Italian communities scattered across rural areas of the United States and Brazil. Priests visited isolated communities a few times a year to preach and perform sacraments. In October 1888, Father Pietro Colbacchini, a Scalabrinian priest in Brazil, wrote to Scalabrini to describe a recent week-long mission in several Italian communities. Traveling by train and horseback, he visited several towns where he said Mass for hundreds in mixed Italian-Brazilian parishes and performed sacraments, several baptisms, and marriages. He noted he had visited these areas twice in the preceding year, a contrast to two of his fellow priests who went on Sundays to minister to Italian communities that were much closer.<sup>107</sup>

Attention to the prominence of Italian language and culture within the parish should not give the impression that the parish functioned as an isolated Italian oasis abroad. Rather, the Scalabrinians had to adapt their plans on the ground, and Scalabrinians ministered to non-Italians when they encountered them, as Colbacchini's ministry indicates. The Scalabrinians intended to conduct their work in Italian, but many Scalabrinians found that they needed to learn the local language in order to be effective. Scalabrini himself had planned for bilingual instruction in the Scalabrinians'

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<sup>107</sup> Pietro Colbacchini to G.B. Scalabrini, 20 October 1888, P. Pietro Colbacchini Letters N.1, AGS. Scaffale 2, Palchetto F, Numero 476. For traveling missions in the United States, see Graziano Battistella, *Itinerant Missions: Alternate Experiences in the History of Scalabrinians in North America* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1986).

schools, but only one school, Boston's Sacred Heart, attempted this.<sup>108</sup> Italian nation-building occurred while priests and their parishioners adapted to foreign institutions and practices and assisted one another: navigating a new language and culture often strengthened the connection between Scalabrinian priests and their parishioners, forming hybrid Italian communities abroad rooted in Catholicism and the local parish.

This was the case at New York's Our Lady of Pompei. The longtime pastor, Father Antonio Demo (pastor 1899-1935), spoke both English and Italian, and advocated for his Italian parishioners in both American and Italian spheres. For example, Father Demo delivered a lengthy Italian speech on November 18, 1912 at the opening of the Italian Lyceum at Public School No. 95 in Manhattan. In it, he extolled the greatness of Italian history, lamented the current difficulties of migrants' lives and their children's materialism, and urged the parents present to encourage their children to value their intellectual and spiritual education. Father Demo also served on the local School and Civic League's Committee of Safety alongside other neighborhood religious and charitable leaders. Father Demo advocated on Italians' behalf with both governmental and private organizations, serving as a crucial link connecting parishioners to American institutions and establishing a parishioner's credibility. His personal papers contained requests for him to verify a parishioner's address, find them employment, or help a secular charitable organization arranging aid for an Italian family. Father Demo clearly

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<sup>108</sup> Brown, *The Scalabrinians in North America*, 205.

had knowledge of English and American society that enabled him to provide the help that his parishioners sought.<sup>109</sup>

The Scalabrinians continued their work after Scalabrini's death in 1905. Unlike the groups previous discussed, they remained solely focused on Italian migrants in faithful adherence to Scalabrini's original vision for the Society. However, they continued to work with non-Italians who found their way to Scalabrinian institutions. In the decade before his death, Scalabrini began to think more broadly about migrant advocacy, believing his Italian model could be a model for pastoral care for other migrants. However, this was not something the Scalabrinians would pursue until the mid-twentieth century. The Scalabrinians endured some difficult times in the decades after Scalabrini's death, including financial difficulties and a Holy See investigation, but they remained the only Catholic group solely dedicated to Italian migrants that survived the twentieth century.<sup>110</sup>

### **The *Opera Bonomelli*: Lay and Religious Collaboration in Migrant Assistance**

Italian Bishop Geremia Bonomelli, Scalabrini's friend and fellow advocate for Italian migrants, engaged in similar Italian nation-building efforts in his own transnational migrant assistance network. In 1900, Bonomelli created a missionary organization called the *Opera di Assistenza agli operai italiani emigrati in Europa e nel Levante* (Work of Assistance for Italian Emigrant Workers in Europe and the Levant),

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<sup>109</sup>“Father Demo's November 18, 1912 speech at Public School No. 95, New York, NY,” CMS, Collection 037, Box 11, Folder 134. This box also contains correspondence with a variety of local government and charitable institutions with which Father Demo assisted Italian parishioners. For more on Demo and Our Lady of Pompei, see Mary Elizabeth Brown, *From Italian Villages to Greenwich Village: Our Lady of Pompei, 1892-1992* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1992).

<sup>110</sup>I will discuss how the Scalabrinians' mission finally broadened to include all migrants in Chapter Five.



commonly known as the *Opera Bonomelli*,<sup>111</sup> to aid Italian migrants working in Europe and the Mediterranean. Unlike similar Catholic groups, lay people were part of the *Opera Bonomelli*'s structure and government, not merely wealthy benefactors or assistants, because Bonomelli was a conciliationist who regarded working with the secular world as an opportunity to better help migrants, and not as a threat to Church power. Therefore, of all the organizations I discuss, the *Opera Bonomelli*'s network most integrated lay and religious voices into the Italian nation-building work they engaged in abroad.

Bonomelli was the bishop of the diocese of Cremona in northern Italy, an area that experienced much temporary and seasonal migration to other European countries such as Switzerland and Germany. There, Italians found work in their burgeoning industries, seasonal agriculture, and railway construction. The most famous new railway was Switzerland's Gotthard railway, a north-south route that crossed the Swiss Alps, facilitating easier rail transportation between Italy and Germany via Switzerland. When completed in 1882, the railway made it even easier for Italians to travel to central Europe and increased migration in this direction. In 1900, Bonomelli spent three months traveling in Europe to observe Italian migrants' conditions and to evaluate Catholic efforts to help them. He went to cities and seasonal labor communities in Switzerland, Germany, and France. He was distraught by Italians' terrible working conditions.

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<sup>111</sup>The organization was renamed the *Opera Bonomelli* in the Bishop's honor after his death in 1914. However, the literature refers to the organization as the *Opera Bonomelli* or, more succinctly, the *Opera*. I will use this convention throughout this dissertation. Unlike the Scalabrinians, there is little scholarship on the *Opera* itself. The best general history of its origins and activities may be found in the early chapters of Philip V. Cannistraro and Gianfausto Rosoli, *Emigrazione, Chiesa e fascismo: lo scioglimento dell'Opera Bonomelli, 1922-1928* (Roma: Studium, 1979).

Observing the Gottard he wondered “and how many victims does this mammoth work cost!” Bonomelli worried about the “inevitable accidents” caused by dangerous terrain and working conditions. He grieved over illnesses that developed among the Gottard's workers, either killing them or afflicting them for the rest of their lives. He noted “It's a dear price you pay for progress!”<sup>112</sup>

Bonomelli was also concerned about migrants' continued Catholicism. He feared that migrants, far from their families, culture, and traditional support mechanisms, would abandon their faith and be vulnerable to Protestant proselytizing. Permanent migrants in these countries particularly troubled him since they were far from structures that would reinforce their faith and religion; intermarriage with Protestants was, in his words, “frequently fatal to the Catholic party and the children.”<sup>113</sup> Bonomelli observed that linguistic and cultural differences between Italians and local Catholic churches sometimes made Italian Catholics feel unwelcome in new places. He noted that few Italians attended German-speaking Catholic churches in Germany or Switzerland. Catholic clergy in these areas frequently lamented Italians’ ignorance of basic tenets of Catholicism. While Bonomelli was concerned about the quality of religious education in Italy, he also believed that migrants could also be intimidated by the presence of

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<sup>112</sup> “E quante vittime costò quel lavoro gigantesco! Quanti feriti per gli accidenti inevitabili delle mine, delle frane, delle cadute, degli urti, dei trasporti! Quanti ammalati, che finirono al cimitero o rimasero infermi per tutta la vita! Fu in quel lavoro titanico, che sviluppossi una malattia speciale, di cui si occuparono i medici e che menò gradissima strage. È a sì caro prezzo che si paga il progresso!” Geremia Bonomelli, *Tre mesi al di là delle Alpi* (Milano: L. F. Cogliati, 1901), 22. For more on Italian migrants' physical and religious condition in Europe, see Luciano Trincia, *Emigrazione e diaspora: Chiesa e lavoratori italiani in Svizzera e in Germania fino alla prima guerra mondiale* (Roma: Studium, 1997).

<sup>113</sup> “...sovente sono fatali alla parte cattolica e alla prole,” Bonomelli, *Tre mesi al di là delle Alpi*, 54.

foreigners and so their seeming ignorance of Catholic doctrine "could be, in part, more illusory than real."<sup>114</sup>

Bonomelli founded his own organization to safeguard Italian migrants' material and spiritual welfare, and Italian nation-building was a cornerstone of his approach. At the time, neither the Italian state nor the Holy See had structures in place to help migrants in Europe. Bonomelli founded the *Opera* in 1900 to aid Italian migrants in Europe, and efforts in the Mediterranean quickly followed. The *Opera* aimed to provide migrants with educational, religious, social, and charitable assistance by creating chapels, schools, traveling libraries, recreation centers, and savings banks for Italian workers abroad.<sup>115</sup> Young Italian priests, usually from northern Italy, received a few months of preparation in Italy, including study of the receiving society's language. Bonomelli hoped that these priests, who shared migrants' language and culture, would strengthen Italian migrants' bonds to each other and the Church.

The *Opera's* members and governance formed a transnational web of lay and religious who extended the *Opera's* work, information, and support base throughout Italy, Europe, and the Mediterranean. The *Opera* was not a purely religious society but an independent, lay-run organization in which priests and religious participated and received funding for their work. Article 1 of the *Opera's* statutes clearly stated that the organization was instituted "under the auspices of the *Associazione nazionale per*

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<sup>114</sup> "Questa ignoranza può essere in parte più apparente che reale," Bonomelli, *Tre mesi al di là delle Alpi*, 53.

<sup>115</sup> *Opera di Assistenza degli Operai italiani* (Lettera di Sorazio e Grignolio), Sept 1900, In Werthmann, *Bonomelli e l'assistenza religiosa alle prima emigrazione italiana in Germania. Vol. 3, L'opera Bonomelli*, Istituto Storico Scalabriniano, ed. (Francoforte: Ufficio Documentazione e Pastorale delle MCI in Germania e Scandinavia, UDEP, 1992), 5-6. (Hereafter *Vol. 3, L'opera Bonomelli*.)

*soccorrere i Missionari Cattolici Italiani.*”<sup>116</sup> The *Associazione Nazionale* supported material and spiritual aid to Italians in the Middle East and Italian colonies. Liberal and conciliationist lay Catholics founded the group in Florence in December 1886. They funded projects of the *Opera* and other Italian missionary groups, including religious orders such as the Salesians. The *Opera's* direction included a president, vice-president, treasurer, and several secretaries. The *Associazione Nazionale's* Council of Delegates elected the president who in turn chose the *cooperatori* (partners). *Cooperatori* included people, in Italy or abroad, who publicized the *Opera's* work, collected data about migration, or personally assisted Italians abroad. *Cooperatori Ecclesiastici* (religious partners) included both the missionaries who worked with migrants and religious in Italy who distributed *Opera* materials to parishioners about to emigrate.<sup>117</sup>

The importance of the laity in this network set the *Opera* apart from the Scalabrinians, even though both groups shared similar understandings of *italianità* and publicly advocated for Italian migrants. Bonomelli saw their major difference as only one of means and said this in a 1900 letter to Scalabrini:

...the public will understand that between our two *opere* there is not even the shadow of opposition. You [help] permanent emigrants in America, I, temporary emigrants in Europe, with different means: you, independent, I as an appendage of the Association for Italian Catholic Missionaries... You distrust the lay element; you have your reasons: but I want a lay component in the *Opera*, because it is doubly profitable and because the material and moral means will be more secure.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> “Opera di Assistenza degli Operai Italiani emigrati all'estero,” Article 1, In Istituto Storico Scalabriniano, *Vol. 3, L'opera Bonomelli*, 11.

<sup>117</sup> Istituto Storico Scalabriniano, *Vol. 3, L'opera Bonomelli*, 11-12.

<sup>118</sup> “...pubblicamente si comprenderò che le due opere nostre non presentano neppure l'apparenza di opposizione. Voi gli Emigrant stabili in America, io gli Emigranti temporanei in Europa, con mezzi diversi, voi indipendente, io come appendice alla Assoc. pei Miss. Cath. Ital. ...Voi diffidate dell'elemente laico; avrete le vostre ragioni: ma io lo vorrei socio nell'Opera, perchè è un guadagno doppie e perchè i mezzi materiali e morali saranno più sicuri.” Bonomelli a Scalabrini, Cremona, 23

Bonomelli's collaboration with the laity was an important part of his vision. Bonomelli believed that the laity could make important contributions to the Church, developing and directing their own ministries, not merely implementing the clergy's programs under supervision. Scalabrini, by contrast, would never have consented to work as an appendage of a lay organization. He told Bonomelli that he did not look down on lay "cooperation." However, Scalabrini believed it was not a good idea for lay people to initiate religious works because "it is with difficulty that they cast off secondary aims, particularly political ones."<sup>119</sup>

The *Opera's* emphasis on *italianità* and its collaboration with non-religious groups also attracted the interest and support of the Italian government. The *Opera's* success and moderate political position- compared to those of anarchist and socialist groups that also worked with Italian emigrants in Europe- led liberal and conservative government actors to support its work. They appreciated Bonomelli's nationalism and supported his work to spread it abroad, particularly in Germany, where the *Opera* could spread *italianità* in places where Italian diplomats could not do so due to the delicate diplomatic situation. Italian consular officials felt confident enough in the *Opera* to leave the dissemination of *italianità* to the organization. However, while Bonomelli believed the spread of *italianità* was crucial for migrants and supported Church-State reconciliation, he did not run his work as an extension of the state or its interests. Both his conviction and the policy of the *Consiglio Centrale dell'Opera* required the maintenance of the organization's independence.

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Apr 1900 in Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, *Scritti: Volume 3. Carteggio Scalabrini-Bonomelli. Controversie con gl'Intransigenti* (Roma: Congregazione Scalabriniana, 1980), 271-272.

<sup>119</sup>Scalabrini to Bonomelli, 24 Apr 1900, In Scalabrini, *Scritti: Volume 3*, 272.

Though Bonomelli was critical of the state's attacks on the Church, he believed the Roman Question was outdated and actively worked behind the scenes to promote reconciliation between the Catholic Church and Italian state. He believed that Catholic politicians and voters should be allowed to participate in politics in order to combat threatening ideologies like socialism. Bonomelli maintained a private correspondence with Tancredi Canonico, the President of the Italian Senate, to whom he confided that continuing *non expedit* was not only “damaging but ridiculous.” The pope and bishops, Bonomelli believed, should not be political leaders or have temporal power. Instead, voters should cast their ballots thinking about “their duties as citizens and Christians, aiming for the good of their Religion and *Patria (Fatherland)*.”<sup>120</sup> Bonomelli publicly followed Church doctrine and was careful not to say anything that publicly contradicted official Church positions. However, in 1889 the strength of his beliefs led him to publish an anonymous 81-page article called "Rome and the Reality of Things: Thoughts of an Italian Priest." In it he said that, while the people of Italy initially were not united, the idea of Italian unity had made "remarkable" penetration across the peninsula. It was a "sad but indubitable fact" that the Pope's temporal power had ended, and the Holy See could not count on any foreign power's military intervention to restore it. "The future is evidently democracy," he wrote, and religious freedom would be the "basis of the future state." The pope could instead be a powerful moral force in the world and should instead

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<sup>120</sup> Il Vescovo Bonomelli al Senatore Canonico, 15 Settembre 1904, In Geremia Bonomelli and Tancredi Canonico, *Corrispondenza inedita fra mons. Geremia Bonomelli ed il sen. Tancredi Canonico: 1903-1908* (Brescia: Gatti, 1937), 94.

have a small piece of land, such as he now had in Rome, where he could work independently of any government.<sup>121</sup>

Bonomelli shared his intransigent and conciliationist counterparts' fear of radicalism, which Bonomelli considered a threat to one's proper love of their country and God. He noted that socialism was attractive to Italian migrants and spread "frighteningly" among them because migrants were "little educated," angry over previous mistreatment, and "because they are seduced, as is natural, by the comfort and happiness that dangles before them." Thus the material work of the missionaries, who helped migrants find jobs and reported on migrant abuses, was crucial. Worse still for Bonomelli was anarchism. He was appalled by the 1901 assassination of the conservative Italian king Umberto I by Gaetano Bresci, an Italian anarchist who had migrated to the United States and organized there before returning to Italy to assassinate Umberto. Bonomelli found it even more disturbing that some Italian workers in Switzerland had celebrated the assassination. He wrote that "For some it was an obscene celebration, a Jacobin racket and they were not ashamed to insult the *patria* in front of strangers. When a man renounces and hates his *patria*, applauds he who has killed his king, he has reached the lowest level of perversion."<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Geremia Bonomelli, "Rome e l'Italia e la realtà delle cose: pensieri di un prelado italiano," *Rassegna Nazionale*, XI Vol. XLVI, 1 Mar 1889, 6-87. Only a handful of people, including Scalabrini, knew that Bonomelli was the author. See Glauco Licata, *La Rassegna Nazionale : Conservatori e cattolici liberali italiani attraverso la loro rivista (1879-1915)* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e di letteratura, 1968), 60-62.

<sup>122</sup> The full quotation is "Il socialismo si propaga spaventosamente tra i nostri operai e perchè poco istruiti, e perchè molti sono pieni di rancore contro i padroni lasciati in Italia, e perchè sedotti, com'è naturale, dal benessere, dalla felicità, che loro si fa balenare. Il socialismo ne spinge alcuni anche verso l'anarchismo e mi guarderò bene dal ripetere qui le espressioni orrende, che si udirono dalla bocca dei nostri operai, allorché giunse tra loro la notizia dell'assassino del Re Umberto. Per alcuni fu una festa oscena, una gazzarra da giacobini e non si vergognavano di insultare alla patria in faccia agli stranieri.

Bonomelli considered love of the homeland part of a proper moral order, and it was with this mindset that he founded the *Opera*. Violence and attacks on traditional authorities frightened Bonomelli as they did intransigent Catholic leaders. The nineteenth-century Church hierarchy routinely supported traditional political authorities over movements for republican and radical governments. However, King Umberto had been uncompromising with the Holy See. Bonomelli's outrage over the king's assassination and the reaction was instead a matter of principle. The *patria* was not the government but the entire national community and heritage. Thus rejecting the *patria* was not only rejecting established authorities but one's entire community, making it "the lowest level of perversion," an unnatural state of being. For Bonomelli, Italians, even abroad, were bound into a community that had bonds and interests clearly differentiated from those of outsiders. Applauding Bresci's action meant that an Italian worker identified more with Bresci, radicalism, and radical communities than with his supposed homeland and its culture- a culture that was, to Bonomelli, Catholic and not atheistic.

Galvanized by missionaries and lay collaborators who also believed that their compatriots needed their assistance, the *Opera* expanded quickly. By 1903, the *Opera* had secretariats in multiple countries: 14 in Switzerland (plus two seasonal secretariats), three in Germany, three in France, one in Luxemburg, and one in Tunisia. Social programs were run out of the secretariats, which were attached to either a church or a school. The *Opera* also accepted recommendations in many other locations in Switzerland and Germany as well as in France, Austria-Hungary, Luxemburg, Egypt,

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Quando un uomo rinnega la patria, la disprezza e l'odia, applaude a chi ha ucciso il suo re, ha toccato l'ultimo grado del perversimento. E in Svizzera non mancarono operai che fecero tutto questo." Bonomelli, *Tre mesi al di là delle Alpi*, 54-55.



Eritrea, and the Levant.<sup>123</sup> Historian Luciano Trincia estimates that in this time the *Opera* sent more than a hundred Italian priests to Italian communities in Germany and Switzerland, usually to industrial centers or construction sites. The priests also conducted traveling missions to make sure that Italians in most German and Swiss industrial centers had at least occasional access to a priest.<sup>124</sup>

The *Opera* also sought to maintain Italians' religion and language by distributing a weekly newspaper in Germany and Switzerland called *La Patria*. It was published in both Freiburg, Germany, and Basel, Switzerland where the *Opera* had secretariats. In a letter to the *Opera*'s missionaries, Antonio Baslini, the *Opera*'s Secretary-General, said the newspaper “must carry out a most noble moral and social apostolate among the workers, even where the work of the missionary can not reach.” It could have a “notable importance” and “healthy effect” in Italian communities. Therefore the missionaries should promote it before all other periodicals. Baslini also encouraged the missionaries to send the newspaper periodic updates about their secretariat so that readers would become more familiar with the extent of the *Opera*'s work and develop a sense of themselves as part of a larger community of Italians abroad. Baslini told the missionaries that the newspaper was a piece of propaganda and publicity.<sup>125</sup>

### **Protecting the National Community in Transit**

Catholic groups did not limit their work to Italian migrants who were permanently established in receiving countries. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,

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<sup>123</sup>Istituto Storico Scalabriniano, *Vol. 3, L'opera Bonomelli*, 27, 32.

<sup>124</sup>Trincia, *Emigrazione e diaspora*, 244-245.

<sup>125</sup> “Antonio Baslini ai MM. RR. Missionari e Rappresentanti dell'Opera di Assistenza,” In Istituto Storico Scalabriniano, *Vol. 3, L'opera Bonomelli*, 71-72.

Catholic organizations developed to help migrants from their Italian ports of departure through transit to their final destinations. These groups provided spiritual services, travel and employment information, assistance with local authorities, and tried to protect migrants from abuses.

By the early twentieth century, many northern Italian dioceses, concerned about the massive emigration from their districts, had established their own emigrant information and assistance bureaus. When Cardinal Rafael Merry del Val, the Holy See's Secretary of State, issued a circular letter in 1911 asking Italian bishops about their activities on behalf of Italian emigrants, several northern Italian responded that they had already had committees in place for several years. Ferdinando Rodolfo, bishop of Vicenza, estimated that 12,000 people emigrated from his diocese each year out of a total population of 500,000. Therefore, six years prior the diocese established an office for emigrants in which a knowledgeable priest provided information about emigration law, religious and charitable services in destination countries, sent and translated letters in French, English, and German; and maintained correspondence for news about emigration with several groups, including Italian consulates and the *Opera Bonomelli*. The group also ran emigrant lodgings near Vicenza's train station, helped sick migrants, and provided assistance with civil and religious documents.<sup>126</sup> Other bishops whose dioceses offered similar services were also frequently in contact with the Salesians, the *Opera*

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<sup>126</sup> Bishop Ferdinando Rodolfi to Cardinal Merry Del Val. Vicenza 6 Oct. 1911; *Unione degli emigranti vicentini: Norme ed Indirizzi*; Unione degli emigranti Vicentini, *Relazione sull'opera della Unione emigranti nell'anno 1910* (Vicenza: Società Anonima Tipografica, 1911). All documents in ASV. Seg di Stato 1914 Rubrica 18 Fasc 11. This folder also contains other reports from northern Italian bishops.

Bonomelli, and a group of Italian missionaries, led by Monsignor Giacomo Coccolo, which assisted Italian emigrants onboard ships.

Catholic missionaries also helped Italian migrants at the port of arrival. The most famous group assisting Italians migrating to the United States was the Italian St. Raphael Society.<sup>127</sup> Bishop Scalabrini collaborated with Marquis Giovanni Battista Volpe-Landi to create the St. Raphael Society in 1892. It provided dockside aid to Italian migrants arriving in New York City. The organization's goal was "to render assistance to Italian people upon their arrival in America, and prevent them falling into the hands of dishonest people,"<sup>128</sup> which the group did at Ellis Island and in New York City from 1892-1923 and briefly in Boston from 1902-1906. Migrants often faced many scams and bureaucratic difficulties upon arrival. In New York City, agents charged unsuspecting arrivals exorbitant fees for transportation tickets, meals, and temporary lodging. Some money-changers attempted to cheat immigrants, and other people went through migrants' luggage. When looking for employment, migrants were frequently at the mercy of *padroni*, bosses who were prominent employers in Italian communities and frequently exploited migrants' labor.

The New York St. Raphael Society generally consisted of a Scalabrinian priest and a lay agent who provided support at Ellis Island while also connecting migrants to other Italian Catholic social services. The staff performed a variety of services for new

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<sup>127</sup> Edward C. Stibili, *What Can Be Done to Help Them?: The Italian Saint Raphael Society, 1887-1923* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2003). The St. Raphael Society is just one of several. The Italian Lay Association of Assistance was Scalabrini's brainchild. Msgr. Coccolo had the Missionaries of Saint Anthony.

<sup>128</sup> P. Bandini, *First Annual Report of Saint Raphael's Italian Benevolent Society* (New York, 1892) 4, CMS Collection 005, Box 6.

arrivals, including language interpretation, assistance with Ellis Island bureaucracy, help with money-changing, and travel arrangements. The priests performed marriages of young women to their fiancés, arranged Christian burials for the dead, and accompanied other new arrivals, especially women and children, to the St. Raphael Society hospice in lower Manhattan where the Pallottine Sisters assisted them. There, migrants could meet their family and friends or stay briefly before continuing on to other American cities. The Society's agents even escorted some women and children to family members in other parts of the New York City and its suburbs. They also referred sick Italians to the Missionary Sisters' Columbus Hospital. In 1922, the Society began to hold a Sunday Mass for all Catholics on Ellis Island.<sup>129</sup> Thus the St. Raphael Society was migrants' first introduction to the Scalabrinian and Italian networks of assistance in the United States.

This work, however, was never entirely funded by the Church. Because the Society was never on firm financial footing, it depended on funding from Italian-American benefactors in New York and on subsidies from the Italian government. Government subsidies were the result of the Emigration Law of 1901<sup>130</sup> which established an Emigration Fund that enabled both government and private agencies to provide services to Italian migrants. The state's Emigration Fund became an important

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<sup>129</sup> *Società San Raffaele per gli italiani immigranti. Relazione morale e finanziaria dell'anno 1922*, 6, CMS Collection 005, Box 6.

<sup>130</sup> The 1901 Emigration Law was not the Italian state's first piece of emigration legislation, but it was the first to be effective. The social and economic aspects of emigration were debated in pamphlets and in the Italian press throughout the 1870s and 1880s, and many notable Catholics, including Bishop Scalabrini, lobbied for government intervention to protect emigrants from the abuses they encountered throughout their journeys. The government passed its first real reforms in 1888 to stop emigration agents' worst abuses, but the law accomplished little. The 1901 law created basic regulations designed to protect migrants during the recruitment process and their journeys. For further information on these laws and Catholic involvement in related legislative debates see Fernando Manzotti, *La polemica sull'emigrazione nell'Italia unita* (Milano-Roma-Napoli: Dante Alighieri, 1969); Antonio Perotti, "La società italiana di fronte alle prime migrazioni di massa. Il contributo di Mons. Scalabrini e dei suoi primi collaboratori alla tutela degli emigrant," *Studi Emigrazione* V, No. 11-12 (1968): 1-196.

source of revenue for migrant aid organizations, including Catholic ones, and often made the Catholic Church and Italian state collaborators when assisting Italian migrants. For many years, the St. Raphael Society received 12,000 lire annually from the Fund.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the Roman Question, the Italian state and Catholic Church became collaborators during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as both sought to aid and influence migrants. Intransigents such as Mother Cabrini never supported Italian state-building projects, but all Catholic groups which developed transnational networks to assist Italian migrants engaged explicitly and implicitly in Italian nation-building projects. Catholic missionaries considered Italian identity to be fundamentally Catholic, so they fostered the development of an Italian national community abroad. They created Italian parishes, social groups, and charitable organizations which often encouraged migrants' *italianità*. In doing so, they believed they were safeguarding migrants' Catholicism and strengthening their connection to the institutional Catholic Church.

By 1914, transnational Italian missionary networks radiated from Italy out into the diaspora. Clearly many individual missions first adapted their nation-building plan on the ground. But they had been created by networks that continually provided funds and personnel and that disseminated a nation-building ideology from the top down. I have not addressed every single network undertaking such work. Instead, I have analyzed the major networks and, more importantly, the Italian Catholic nation-building ideology they shared and promoted into the 1950s. While these networks were all under the aegis of the Catholic Church, which provided funding and some oversight, they did not in this

period form a single, global Catholic networks of Italian migrant assistance. Networks overlapped and collaborated, but retained key differences in their organization, personnel, and attitude toward the Italian state.

In the early twentieth century, the Holy See began exerting more control over how missionary networks functioned. The Holy See became increasingly aware of reports of individual missionaries who, quickly sent abroad with limited supervision, flouted Church rules regarding sexuality and worked for their own financial gain, not the interests of their missions. At the same time, new missionary organizations, particularly the *Opera Bonomelli*, were not always fully deferential to the local bishop in receiving societies. The papacy, absorbed in battles against the Italian state, liberalism, and leftist ideologies, had not initially created a comprehensive program to assist Italian migrants, instead allowing individual missionary groups to develop their own migrant missions. In Chapter Two, I show how the Holy See began to regulate Italian missionary groups to ensure they followed the Church's norms regarding gender, family, sexuality, and the obedience to the Church's hierarchical authority that missionaries were supposed to instill among Italian migrants. The Holy See increasingly monitored and exerted control over Italian missionaries, bringing their individual transnational nation-building networks under the Holy See's central authority. However, as Chapter Three will show, the Holy See never completely prevented some missionaries from expressing an *italianità* which, inspired by Italian imperial expansion in the early twentieth century, blurred the distinction between Catholic *italianità* and Italian nationalism.

## Chapter Two: Regulating Catholic *Italianità* Abroad, 1889-1922

### Introduction

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Italian Catholic missionaries believed the Church's guidance was essential to preserving migrants' *italianità* and Catholicism. The Church claimed that Catholics could fully practice Catholicism only through Church institutions under the teaching, spiritual, and moral authority of the Church's clergy and religious. Missionaries also believed that the Church's guidance was essential to defending migrants' Catholicism from competing ideologies, particularly liberalism, secularism, and socialism. Transnational Catholic missionary organizations were created to pursue a new mission, Italian migrants' material and religious assistance, but missionaries shared the Church's existing hierarchical organization and authority structures and rooted their work in Catholic family, gender, and sexual norms. International migration challenged these ideals because great distances separated migrants from family members and missionaries from their religious superiors. By the early twentieth century, the Holy See became increasingly concerned about missionaries' obedience to Church authorities, and it intervened in missionary networks in order to bring them more closely under the Holy See's control.

Promoting a Catholic family ideal was a key component of both missionaries' attempts to create Italian Catholic communities abroad as well as the Holy See's vision for the structure of all of Catholic society. Missionaries worked with all members of Italian families, including children, parents, and the elderly, and encouraged Catholic families to reinforce and reproduce Catholic values through family involvement in parish

life, such as attending religious services, joining parish organizations, and sending children to the parish's religious education program. The presence of female missionaries allowed missionaries to engage in gendered work with women and children. According to Catholic doctrine, the family was the basic unit of society, and consequently Catholic clergy and religious upheld patriarchal gender roles and limited sex to marriage to ensure the stability of this ideal Catholic society. The Catholic Church also claimed that its structure mirrored a family: all Catholics had strictly-defined roles within the Church and the Church hierarchy had a paternal authority and responsibility to guide Catholics. Missionaries were supposed to guide the migrants in their missions while also obeying their own superiors, both within their organizations as well as bishops, the Roman Curia, and ultimately, the pope. The Church claimed that its authority was God-given, not the result of a social contract with Catholics, a clear contrast to the liberal ideas that had driven Italian Unification and secular ideas of the Italian national community in the nineteenth century.

Migration quickly revealed many challenges in enforcing these Catholic ideals and authority structures across long distances, and by the mid-1920s, the Holy See had taken several steps to better monitor and control Italian missionaries and their work. The Holy See created two new Church entities, the Pontifical College of Italian Emigration and the Prelate for Italian Emigration, to train and supervise individual Italian priests who wanted to become missionaries and work with Italian migrants. The Holy See also intervened in both the *Opera Bonomelli* and the Scalabrinians to ensure that missionaries respected Church authority structures, and the Holy See took the dramatic step of putting



the Scalabrinians directly under the Holy See's control in 1922 because of systemic problems in missionaries' selection and supervision. Italian missionaries operated more directly under the Holy See's authority by the end of this period, but Catholic *italianità* and Italian nation-building efforts remained ideologically unchanged, only more carefully observed by the Holy See, which remained concerned by migrants' hardships and continued to believe that encouraging migrants *italianità* benefited Catholicism.

### **The Church's Global Institutions, Adapted for Italian Missionaries**

The missionary groups dedicated to Italian migrants which began in the late nineteenth century did not emerge in a vacuum and soon inserted themselves into the Catholic Church's long-established framework for transnational work. Throughout its history, the Church claimed that its authority over religious matters came directly from God.<sup>131</sup> While the Church had been the state religion of many governments from antiquity into the twentieth century, the Church claimed universality, and this conviction drove its constant efforts to evangelize and grow, especially as European empires expanded after 1500.<sup>132</sup> By the nineteenth century, amid heated debate in and outside the Church, the papacy had asserted itself as the Church's central and ultimate authority.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Church teaching has, since its origins in Antiquity, pointed to Matthew 16:18 as evidence that Jesus intentionally passed his authority to his apostle Peter, and by extension, the Catholic Church. ("And I tell you, that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.") The Church considers the pope, as the Church's head bishop, to be Peter's direct successor, a doctrine that is unsurprisingly disputed by other Christian churches. The First Vatican Council (convoled by Pius IX in 1868) declared that "...the Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff hold a world-wide primacy, and that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of blessed Peter," Vatican Council I. *Pastor Aeternus*, Ch 3, par. 1.

<sup>132</sup> Stephen Neill and Owen Chadwick, *A History of Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1986).

<sup>133</sup> The most dramatic example of the strengthening of the papacy was the controversial doctrine of papal infallibility, the pope's ability to make infallible statements regarding matters of Catholic dogma when speaking *ex cathedra* (with the full authority of his office). The First Vatican Council declared the doctrine in 1870. See First Vatican Council, *Pastor Aeternus*, Ch. 4.

Structurally, this meant that, long before the foundation of the missionary groups working with Italy's migrants, many Catholic institutions were already transnational and participated in a global network under the authority of the Holy See.

Missionaries worked within two main types of Church hierarchical authority structures. The first were units based on geography. The smallest unit of jurisdiction was the diocese, a territorial area that could be as small as a single city. A diocese contained its own churches, schools, charities, and other Church outreach. Priests working there were called secular or diocesan priests and served only within that particular diocese. A bishop, a priest elevated to this rank by the Church hierarchy, ran the diocese.<sup>134</sup> Only a bishop could authorize a priest to work in another diocese, either temporarily or permanently, and both the sending and receiving bishops needed to give permission for such a move. By the late-nineteenth century, the Church hierarchy alone, not state governments, chose bishops. Technically the pope chose bishops, but in practice, his decision received great input from other bodies within the Church because of their knowledge of local needs and politics.

Religious orders had a separate and often transnational structure of authority that interacted with multiple Church dioceses wherever the orders worked. A religious order could include priests, sisters, brothers, or lay people who usually took vows to join. Most but not all Catholic religious orders worked internationally to fulfill the order's particular religious mission wherever an opportunity arose. Religious orders worked in local dioceses with the approval and sometimes the invitation of the local bishop. While their

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<sup>134</sup> Not all bishops, however, ran a diocese. Special dioceses, called archdioceses, were run by Archbishops or Cardinals.

work had to respect the local bishop's authority, religious orders had their own chain of superiors: the head of an individual mission (if multiple missionaries staffed the mission), the missionary in charge of larger geographic areas often called provinces, and finally the group's director. The religious order's hierarchy assigned, recruited, trained, and disciplined its members. Like bishops, these leaders were also under the pope's authority and the Church hierarchy's supervision.

Within these basic structures, religious orders and other groups working with Italian migrants took several forms that varied missionaries' commitments and oversight. Members of religious orders progressed through several levels of commitment over many years before they finally took permanent vows. Other Italian missionary groups, not technically religious groups, also functioned transnationally. For example, the Scalabrinians did not begin as a religious order but rather as a pious society whose members pledged five-year commitments to the society. While the Scalabrinians trained some young men to be Scalabrinian priests, other priests decided to join the Scalabrinians after working elsewhere. This was the case for Giacomo Gambera, an early Scalabrinian priest sent to New York, Boston, Pittsburgh, and New Orleans between 1889 and his death in 1934. Originally ordained in a northern Italian diocese, Gambera fought his local bishop to receive permission to join the Scalabrinians when he was 33. Gambera argued that helping Italian migrants, whom he believed were vulnerable to the proselytizing of many other Christian sets, was much more important than "limited work in a small parish" in northern Italy.<sup>135</sup> By contrast, the *Opera Bonomelli* was a Catholic

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<sup>135</sup> Giacomo Gambera, *A Migrant Missionary Story: The Autobiography of Giacomo Gambera* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1994), 62.

association that sent secular Italian priests abroad for five-year terms with the permission of the bishop in the missionary's diocese of origin as well as the bishop in the receiving diocese. Each of these arrangements technically followed Church rules, but in reality, the Scalabrinians and the *Opera Bonomelli* had loose supervision that quickly led members of the Church hierarchy to criticize them.

The Church hierarchy oversaw all these bodies through the Roman Curia. The Roman Curia was a series of offices within the Holy See that functioned as the Church's governance and reported to the pope. In the late nineteenth century, its offices oversaw a range of areas, including doctrine, charity, and internal Church affairs. A bishop was always the head of each office and supervised the priests and religious who made up the office's staff. Missionaries were regulated by the *Propaganda Fide*, the office in charge of missionary activities and all Catholic activities in countries designated as "mission territory," and the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, which handled internal Church affairs. The Secretary of State represented the Holy See in international diplomacy and sometimes interacted with missionaries. The Roma Curia was headquartered in Rome, and though its employees might work in many other countries, the Curia's offices further solidified Rome as the center of the Church's global network. Therefore, though a ministry to Italian migrants was new, the transnational web of Holy See supervision was not. Its oversight was so institutionalized and expansive that when missionaries failed to meet their mission or clashed with a powerful critic, not only individual missionaries but entire organizations could be censured.

### **Catholicism and the Family**

The family was the core unit of the Italian Catholic society and the building block of the Catholic communities that missionaries sought to build among Italian migrants. The family was also a major site of contention for Catholics in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as they confronted a rapidly changing world. Industrialization, secularism, socialism and other radical philosophies, newly powerful nation-states trying to control their citizens, and migration threatened traditional Catholic ideals of the family as well as the Church's control over family institutions. The Church considered its authority derived from God, not its members, unlike many nineteenth and twentieth century secular ideologies, including liberal nationalism. Missionaries supported this Church authority as they sought to create migrant Italian communities rooted in the idea of the nuclear family and in traditional Catholic gender roles, even when male migrants had traveled far from family. Missionaries' work was therefore paternalistic because it was rooted in the idea that lay migrants needed the missionaries' guidance to retain their *italianità*, which at its core was also a Catholic *italianità*. In missionaries' eyes, *italianità* functioned as a defense against modernity and the seductions of secular, modern society; it maintained a common tie between generations of migrant families, and further supported the Church's oversight of migrants' lives.<sup>136</sup>

In Catholic doctrine too, the family was the basic unit of society. This idea was clearly taught to Catholics in the Catechism of Pius X,<sup>137</sup> which said that God had

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<sup>136</sup> For major issues concerning Italian families in this period, see Marzio Barbagli, Maria Castiglioni, and Giampiero Dalla Zuanna, *Fare famiglia in Italia: un secolo di cambiamento*. (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003); David I. Kertzer, *Family Life in Central Italy, 1880-1910: Sharecropping, Wage Labor, and Coresidence* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1984); David I. Kertzer and Marzio Barbagli, eds., *Family Life in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1789-1913* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

<sup>137</sup> A catechism is a summary and explanation of Catholic doctrine. Historically, there have been many different catechisms since the development of printing in Europe. While their theology remained the

"constituted and established family life in order that in it man might have the first helps that are necessary towards his spiritual and temporal well-being."<sup>138</sup> Catholic doctrine asserted that the family, like all social relationships, involved both rights and responsibilities for all parties. Parents' authority came from the need to guide and protect their children. Therefore parents had a duty "to love, support, and maintain their children," educate them in religious matters, "correct their faults," and "to help them to embrace the state to which God has called them."<sup>139</sup> Children were subordinate to their parents' authority and had a duty to respect their parents, to "obey them in all that is not sinful, and assist them in their temporal and spiritual needs."<sup>140</sup> The Church taught that both parental authority and children's obedience "are derived from God."<sup>141</sup>

Family was, in turn, the basis of civil society: "Civil Society is the union of many families under the authority of one head for the purpose of assisting each other in securing their mutual perfection and temporal happiness."<sup>142</sup> The head of society was the pope, within the Church, and the head of the government in secular society, but civil

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same (and practices only changed after major Church councils), individual catechisms were intended for different audiences within the Church. The catechism I quote here is the Catechism of Pius X, formally known as the *Compendium of Christian Doctrine*, which Pius X prescribed for use around Rome after he became pope. It is simply written, with most points made in one-sentence questions and answers, so that it could be studied and understood by common people. This particular catechism was already in use in northern Italy by the beginning of the twentieth century, and Pius wished it to be adopted across Italy. It was not, however, the only popular catechism in use at the time. Among the most influential were the Baltimore Catechism, the result of the Third Baltimore Council (1884) and a standard in American Catholic schools from 1885 through the 1960s, and the Catechism of the Council of Trent, or Roman Catechism, commissioned in 1566 as part of Counter Reformation efforts to improve understanding of Catholic theology. Although the Roman Catechism was intended for priests, it remained the most influential catechism until the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) was issued in 1992.

<sup>138</sup> The Catholic Church, *A Compendium of Catechetical Instruction*, John Hagan, ed. (Dublin: Browne and Nolan Limited, 1928), 149.

<sup>139</sup> Hagan, ed., *A Compendium of Catechetical Instruction*, 168.

<sup>140</sup> Hagan, ed., *A Compendium of Catechetical Instruction*, 149.

<sup>141</sup> Hagan, ed., *A Compendium of Catechetical Instruction*, 149.

<sup>142</sup> Hagan, ed., *A Compendium of Catechetical Instruction*, 168.

society's authorities, according to the Catechism, obtained their authority "from God, who established it [civil society] for the common good."<sup>143</sup> Society was based on interdependency because a family could not care for all its needs alone and therefore needed to be "united in civil society so as mutually to aid one another for the common good and happiness."<sup>144</sup> Therefore, Church doctrine considered the family unit as the building block of society and the Church's divinely-sanctioned authority necessary to oversee activity among each piece. The institutional Church claimed its authority and rooted the organization of its family-based vision of society through its interpretation of the Fourth Commandment, "Honor your father and mother."<sup>145</sup> The Pius X Catechism instructed Catholics that "Under the names of father and mother this Commandment also includes all our superiors, both ecclesiastical and lay, whom we must consequently obey and respect."<sup>146</sup>

The Church was, unsurprisingly, not entirely successful in getting people to adhere to these values either in Italy or abroad. The Catholic social welfare network in Italy and other European Catholic countries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries included a robust network of foundling hospitals and orphanages to care for children born outside of marriage and officially abandoned to these institutions. When institutions placed greater restrictions on the infants they would take, mothers abandoned children elsewhere. Abortion and infanticide, notoriously difficult to track, were nevertheless also widespread. Catholic Italians worried that unmarried migrant women, particularly those

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<sup>143</sup> Hagan, ed., *A Compendium of Catechetical Instruction*, 168.

<sup>144</sup> Hagan, ed., *A Compendium of Catechetical Instruction*, 168.

<sup>145</sup> Exodus 20:12

<sup>146</sup> Hagan, ed., *A Compendium of Catechetical Instruction*, 149.

who worked as domestic servants, could engage in sexual activity away from family control or would become targets of sexual violence, with pregnancies resulting.<sup>147</sup>

Migration further challenged Catholic family ideals, transforming but not breaking family ties and networks and thus heightening the Church hierarchy's concerns about the moral dangers of migration. New lifestyles, modern ideologies, and, in some countries such as the United States, Protestantism, challenged Catholic gender and family roles. By the late nineteenth century transnationalism had become "a working class way of life" for Italians who migrated across the globe.<sup>148</sup> Families, including husbands and wives, parents and children, were frequently separated by thousands of miles. Scholars have shown that Italian family and kinship ties persisted between Italian villages as Italian workers scattered across the world. Money, news, and people flowed fairly easily and extensively through these networks.<sup>149</sup> Yet with married men often living abroad for

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<sup>147</sup> Rachel Fuchs, "Charity and Welfare" in David I. Kertzer and Marzio Barbagli, eds., *Family Life in the Long Nineteenth Century*; Rachel G. Fuchs, *Poor and Pregnant in Paris: Strategies for Survival in the Nineteenth Century* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992); David I. Kertzer, *Sacrificed for Honor: Italian Infant Abandonment and the Politics of Reproductive Control* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993). Families also used foundling homes to relieve themselves of a child they could not care for. Often a married mother intended to temporarily leave her child and reclaim the child when the family's situation improved. Getting children back, however, was difficult due to laws on abandonment and extraordinarily high infant mortality rates in these institutions.

<sup>148</sup> Donna Gabaccia, "When the Migrants are Men: Italy's Women and Transnationalism as a Working-class Way of Life," In Pamela Sharpe, ed., *Women, Gender, and Labour Migration: Historical and Cultural Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2002). See also Donna R. Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta, eds., *Women, Gender and Transnational Lives Italian Workers of the World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

<sup>149</sup> This is a large literature. For some examples see Samuel L. Baily, "Chain Migration of Italians to Argentina: Case Studies of the Agnonesi and the Sirolesi," *Studi Emigrazione* 19, No. 65 (1982): 73-91; Emilio Franzina, *Merica! Merica!: emigrazione e colonizzazione nelle lettere dei contadini veneti in America Latina, 1876-1902* (Milano: Feltrinelli economica, 1979); Sonia Cancian, *Families, Lovers, and Their Letters: Italian Postwar Migration to Canada* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010); Donna R. Gabaccia, *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street: Housing and Social Change Among Italian Immigrants, 1880-1930* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984); Linda Reeder, *Widows in White Migration and the Transformation of Rural Italian Women, Sicily, 1880-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Franc Sturino, *Forging the Chain: A Case Study of Italian Migration to North America, 1880-1930* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1990);



months or years before returning to Italy or earning enough money to send for their families, fears about morality, faith, and national commitments proliferated.

Missionaries were very concerned about migrants' sexual behavior abroad and especially about the potential for adultery and bigamy when men lived apart from women and from the Church's oversight. Catholicism limited sexual relations to marriage, and missionaries worried that sex outside the marriage threatened not only the bond between spouses but the material and spiritual health of the entire family. They feared that migrants would abandon their families and Catholic beliefs, pursuing their own sexual pleasure instead. After his 1900 visit to Italian communities in Switzerland, Bishop Bonomelli reported that migrants' sexual behavior, alongside poverty, exploitation, and political radicalism, was a major problem in Italian communities. "They easily enter mixed marriage, which are often disastrous to the Catholic party and their children. There are cases (rare, but they exist) of workers who have a wife in Italy and another outside Italy. That is not to mention paramours, affairs, and other disorders."<sup>150</sup>

Intermarriage gravely concerned Church officials who feared it would cause migrants to abandon Catholicism. Catholic doctrine forbade Catholics to marry non-Catholics. In his 1880 encyclical *Arcanum*, Leo XIII wrote that Catholics should "turn with dread from such marriages." Intermarriage harmed the practice and reproduction of Catholicism, endangering the Catholic spouse's beliefs and preventing the children's

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Pietro Bevilacqua, Andreina De Clementi, and Emilio Franzina, eds., *Storia dell'emigrazione Italiana* (Rome: Donzelli Editore, 2001).

<sup>150</sup> "Contraggono facilmente matrimoni misti, che sovente sono fatali alla parte cattolica e alla prole. Vi sono casi (rari, sì, ma vi sono) di operai che hanno una moglie in Italia e ne menano un'altra fuori d'Italia. Non parliamo di concubinati, di tresche e d'altra disordine." Geremia Bonomelli, *Tre mesi al di là delle Alpi*. (Milano: L. F. Cogliati, 1901), 54.

"proper education." Marriages with non-Catholics, Leo wrote, were also ideologically dangerous "and often lead to a mixing up of truth and falsehood, and to the belief that all religions are equally good."<sup>151</sup> Intermarriage was a particular concern in countries where migrants were exposed to great numbers of non-Catholics, such as the United States, and in countries where anticlericalism and radical ideologies were influential in migrant communities, such as in France or Argentina.

Missionaries feared competing ideologies within migrant communities because their understandings of the family did not align with the Church's teachings. The Republican ideology that inspired the Risorgimento cast the family as the vehicle for fostering love of the nation and its values. Giuseppe Mazzini, the famed Italian nationalist, wrote that "The Family is the Country of the heart" and that "the task of the family is to educate *citizens* [emphasis in original]."<sup>152</sup> Like Catholics, Mazzini believed that "The Human family is the conception of God, not of man" and that women, "the angel of the Family," played an important sustaining and educational role in it.<sup>153</sup> However, Mazzini's modern ideas about women's right to education, vote, and serve in government did not sit well with the Church. He wrote, for example, "Love and respect Woman. Do not seek only consolation in her, but strength, inspiration, a redoubling of

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<sup>151</sup> Leo XIII, *Arcanum*, February 1880, par. 43. Accessed November 12, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_10021880\\_arcanum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_10021880_arcanum_en.html)

<sup>152</sup> Giuseppe Mazzini, *The Duties of Man and Other Essays* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1915), 60-61. For more on Mazzini and his nationalist and religious ideas, see Simon Levis Sullam "Dio e il popolo," in Alberto Mario Banti and Paul Ginsborg, eds., *Il Risorgimento. Storia D'Italia. Annali*, 22 (Torino: G. Einaudi, 2007); Marta Bonsanti, "Amore familiare, amore romantico e amore di patria," in Banti and Ginsborg, *Il Risorgimento*, 2007; Ilaria Porciani, *Famiglia e nazione nel lungo Ottocento italiano: modelli, strategie, reti di relazioni* (Roma: Viella, 2006); Denis Mack Smith, *Mazzini* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

<sup>153</sup> Mazzini, *The Duties of Man and Other Essays*, 61.

your intellectual and moral faculties. Blot out of your mind any idea of superiority to her; you have none whatever."<sup>154</sup> Mazzini thought the nation, not the Church, was at the family's center, a view shared by anticlerical Italian republicans around the world.

While the Liberal Italian state was not republican and did not implement equality for women, the Church still clashed with the new state over its attempts to exercise power over the institution of marriage. In the encyclical *Arcanum*, Pope Leo XIII also condemned state-sanctioned civil marriage apart from religious marriage, saying that "in Christian marriage the contract is inseparable from the sacrament, and that, for this reason, the contract cannot be true and legitimate without being a sacrament as well."<sup>155</sup> In Italy, as elsewhere, the Church rejected intrusion by the state into the marriage and family sphere, which it regarded as its natural and historical domain. The Italian state, however, defined and regulated marriage apart from Catholic beliefs and Church input until the signing of the Lateran Accords in 1929.

At the same time, beyond the control of both Church and state, socialist, anarchist, and feminist thinkers questioned patriarchy and hierarchies, including the Catholic family model in which the family operated under male authority.<sup>156</sup> Leo XIII explained that "The husband is the chief of the family and the head of the wife." The wife had to be "subject to her husband and obey him," though this was supposed to be an honorable position which the husband would not abuse. "Since the husband represents Christ, and since the wife represents the Church, let there always be, both in him who commands and in her who obeys, a heaven-born love guiding both in their respective

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<sup>154</sup> Mazzini, *The Duties of Man and Other Essays*, 62.

<sup>155</sup> Leo XIII, *Arcanum*, par. 23.

<sup>156</sup> Josef Ehmer, "Marriage," in Kertzer and Barbagli, *Family Life in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 2002.

duties."<sup>157</sup> The Church's radical opponents, however, rejected any notion of a divinely-ordained family hierarchy, and missionaries especially feared radical influence among Italian migrants. As Chapter One revealed, missionaries sponsored their own assistance efforts with Italian migrants precisely because missionaries feared losing their ideological influence over migrants because of the influence of existing socialist, communist, and anarchist groups in receiving societies. Italian missionaries were particularly concerned about *Società Umanitaria*, or *Umanitaria*, a socialist organization that began in Milan at the turn of the twentieth century to aid the working poor. Dedicated to workers, not exclusively migrants, *Umanitaria* provided similar social services to the *Opera* Bonomelli in northern Italy, including labor bureaus, guidebooks, dormitories, and financial assistance, as well as temporary employment for workers.<sup>158</sup>

Italian missionaries instead promoted official Catholic ideals of the family. Missionaries believed the family functioned as the core unit of Catholic society and the guidance of Church authorities, from the parish priest up to the pope, was necessary to safeguard and reproduce migrants' Catholicism. Though missionaries and their superiors varied in their adherence to the Holy See's intransigence and rules for missionaries' conduct, all groups promoted the same Catholic family model. They shared a hierarchical understanding of the world and tried to defend it by forming Italian Catholic

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<sup>157</sup> Leo XIII, *Arcanum*, par. 11.

<sup>158</sup> For more on *Umanitaria*, see Maria Letizia D'Autilia, *Il cittadino senza burocrazia: Società umanitaria e amministrazione pubblica nell'Italia liberale* (Milano: A. Giuffrè, 1995); Giovanni Spadolini, Alberto Cavallari, and Saverio Monno, *Umanitaria: cento anni di solidarietà*. (Milano: Charta, 1993); Massimo Della Campa and Gaetano Afeltra, *Il modello Umanitaria: storia, immagini, prospettive* (Milano: Società Umanitaria, 2003); Ivano Granata, *In difesa della terra: l'Ufficio agrario della Società umanitaria, 1905-1923* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2003).

communities abroad that would be cemented together by an *italianità* rooted in Catholicism.

### **Gender, Sexuality, and Catholic Migrant *Italianità***

The Church's authority structures were also sharply gendered, and this affected the work male and female missionaries undertook with Italian migrants and how their individual groups were allowed to grow. The Church permitted only men to be priests, bishops, and the pope. Consequently, the pope and the bishops who administered offices of the Roman Curia and individual dioceses were all male, and they exercised significant power over the activities of female religious orders, including female missionary orders. Within this system, female missionaries nevertheless demonstrated agency by adapting their work to meet needs on the ground. Some dynamic women such as Mother Cabrini overcame opposition from men in lower levels of the Church hierarchy, but they did so by appealing to higher authority- in Cabrini's case, the authority of Pope Leo XIII and, by extension, God. Disseminating Catholic *italianità* meant advocating a national community modeled on traditional Catholic gender roles, even among female missionaries who created these new communities.

Much of the missionary work with Italian migrants would not have functioned without the labor of Catholic sisters.<sup>159</sup> These women took religious vows (which included a commitment to celibacy) to individual Catholic religious orders, lived in

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<sup>159</sup> There is a small literature on the work of Catholic sisters with Italian migrants, though studies of North America dominate. Stefania Bartoloni, ed., *Per le strade del mondo: laiche e religiose fra Otto e Novecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007); Maria Susanna Garroni, ed., *Sorelle d'oltreoceano: religiose italiane ed emigrazione negli Stati Uniti : una storia da scoprire* (Roma: Carocci, 2008). See also Carol K. Coburn, "An Overview of the Historiography of Women Religious: A Twenty-Five-Year Retrospective," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 22, No. 1 (2004): 1-26.

community with other women, and engaged in evangelization or charitable work in accordance with their order's mission. They were not nuns- that is, Catholic religious sisters who lived cloistered, contemplative lives. Rather, like many women who became religious sisters after the French Revolution, the sisters who worked with Italian migrants sought to be engaged in the world. Sisters moved great distances to assist Italian migrants, dealing with physical hardship and danger, Church and secular bureaucracy, and constant financial challenges as they founded and maintained ever-growing networks of schools, hospitals, and other charitable institutions. Religious sisters were part of the institutional Church. Sisters engaged in this work under the direction of superiors, both female superiors within their orders and Catholic bishops who had authority over them. Yet all sisters were ultimately under the control of the Church's male-only clergy and were subject to its surveillance and direction.<sup>160</sup>

Catholic sisters were essential to missionary work because they worked in intimate spaces where priests and brothers could not go. Scalabrinian Father Giuseppe Marchetti recognized this fact of gendered life when he founded the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, commonly known as the Scalabrinian Sisters (*Scalabriniane*) in 1895. Father Marchetti wrote to Bishop Scalabrini and explained that: "...they are very much needed, and I feel that Jesus wants them to avert a kind of evil from the immigration movement which the priests are unable to remove."<sup>161</sup> As women, sisters were thought to be naturally suitable for nurturing roles such as teaching and nursing.

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<sup>160</sup> Jo Ann McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996).

<sup>161</sup> Quoted in Lice Maria Signor, *John Baptist Scalabrini and Italian Migration: A Socio-Pastoral Project* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1994), 199.

Sisters could also enter migrants' domestic spaces in which they observed private family life, gave charity, and tried to spread Catholicism.

Catholic sisters assisting Italian migrants worked with populations that Catholics considered especially vulnerable and impressionable: women, children, the elderly, and the sick. The work of a small group of Italian Sisters of Charity among Italians in Paris in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was typical. Originally a handful of Italian sisters scattered across the city working with Italians, their work was, according to their 1911 Rule "principally religious and moral."<sup>162</sup> The Rule instructed the Sisters to get to know the Italians in the neighborhoods under their jurisdiction and to make a list of the families living there. Sisters were to "exhort" Italian families to attend Mass and to send their children to catechism class (the sisters were encouraged to select days and times most convenient for students and their families). Sisters prepared children to receive sacraments and visited the sick at home. All the sisters were to send yearly reports of their activities, including observations about the neighborhood's demographics and conditions, to their Director, who would condense them into a single report, sent annually to the Archbishop of Paris.

The types of "evil from the immigration movement" to which Marchetti referred in 1895 included both material and religious threats to families, children, the ill, and elderly. In addition to making sure that families continued to practice Catholicism, the Sisters of Charity in Paris were also expected to investigate and intervene when migrants' sexual activities violated Church norms. The Sisters' Rule instructed them to employ "all

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<sup>162</sup> "principalmente del lato religioso e morale," "Regolamento per le Figlie della Carità addette all'Opera dell'assistenza degl'Italiani a Parigi," 1911, 1, AGS, Fondo Babini, f. 60.

diligence to prevent illegitimate unions and to legitimate those which have already happened" by referring them to Catholic organizations which specialized in these situations.<sup>163</sup> Sisters also ran orphanages which housed not only orphans but the children of single parents who could not or would not care for them.

Some male orders also established corollary female orders, a long-established practice in the Catholic Church. The Salesians had a female counterpart, the Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco or the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. Maria Domenica Mazzarello founded the group in 1872 to work alongside the Salesians and take their educational techniques to girls. She became the Sisters' first superior and presided as they established Salesian Oratories for girls in Italy and soon in the Americas, following the lead of the Salesian fathers. Like the Salesians, the Sisters did not work exclusively with Italian migrants, but their dedication to poor children and their own Italian origins meant they worked with many Italian emigrants and their children abroad.<sup>164</sup>

The Scalabrinian Sisters, like the Scalabrinian priests and brothers who preceded them, were exclusively dedicated to work with Italian emigrants and thus entirely part of the Scalabrinians' Italian nation-building network. In 1895, Father Giuseppe Marchetti, with Bishop Scalabrini's approval, co-founded the Scalabrinian Sisters with his own sister, Assunta Marchetti, who became the group's first Mother Superior. Like the Scalabrinians, the Sisters were dedicated to migrants' material and moral assistance and

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<sup>163</sup> "Metteranno ogni diligenza per impedire le unioni illegittime tante frequenti e per legittimare quelle già avvenute," "Regolamento per le Figlie della Carità addette all'Opera dell'assistenza degli'Italiani a Parigi" 1911, 1. AGS, Fondo Babini, f. 60.

<sup>164</sup> Francesco Motto, ed., *L'opera Salesiana dal 1880 al 1922: significatività e portata sociale* (Roma: LAS, 2001).



they quickly established orphanages. The Scalabrinian Sisters operated exclusively in Brazil for several decades before expanding to Europe in 1936 and North America in 1941.<sup>165</sup>

Religious sisters often provided the backbone of Italian Catholic nation-building but the overarching vision of Catholic nation-building remained under the control of male missionaries. Women and their work were crucial in spreading Catholic *italianità* abroad. Sisters often had the most sustained contact with children and families and thus played a crucial role in promoting Italian language and culture alongside Catholicism in migrant communities. However, the Church hierarchy rarely considered the religious sisters to be missionaries despite their work in migrant parishes, schools, and charitable activities. Mother Cabrini strictly adhered to Catholic doctrine and to papal authority, but even she faced objections from many male critics within the Church when she founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart as a missionary order. Cabrini responded to challenges by insisting that she and her sisters were following a mandate from the *Propaganda Fide* to work with Italian migrants. She wrote “If the mission of announcing the Lord's resurrection to his apostles had been entrusted to Mary Magdalene, it would seem a very good thing to confide to other women an evangelizing mission.”<sup>166</sup> Cabrini repeatedly fought her Catholic critics in this and other matters by claiming that she demonstrated greater orthodoxy than they did.

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<sup>165</sup> Signor, Lice Maria Signor. "Il progetto pastorale di Scalabrini e la fondazione delle Suore Missionarie Scalabriniane," in Gianfausto Rosoli, ed., *Scalabrini tra vecchio e nuovo mondo* (Rome: Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1989).

<sup>166</sup> Quoted in Mary Louise Sullivan, “Mother Cabrini: Missionary to Italian Immigrants,” *U.S. Catholic Historian*. 6, No. 4 (1987): 266.

Cabrini fully supported those Church institutions that were most directly under papal authority and derived confidence from the conviction that they, and by extension God, supported her efforts. Her work was shaped by her ultra-orthodoxy, particularly her devotion to the Pope and open performance of submission to his authority. "And don't I have the blessing of the Holy Father which accompanies me, vouches for me, comforts me?" she wrote to her sisters in 1895 while traveling between a mission she established for Italians in New Orleans to Panama, where she intended to work with indigenous people. "Oh! How fertile is the Pope's blessing! I would like everyone to know that and to put their faith in Him. But who is the Pope? He is the representative of God, the authority of God, the Majesty of God, visible in the midst of men."<sup>167</sup> Since Leo XIII had instructed her to go to the Americas in 1888 to aid Italians there, her efforts, including clashes with male and female religious order already there, were bolstered by the conviction that she had papal permission and thus, divine approval.<sup>168</sup>

Cabrini's relentless work, talents for organizing and finance, as well as her ability to cultivate both lay and Church support contributed to her missionaries' rapid growth and won her great respect during her lifetime. For these reasons, in both scholarship and contemporary Catholic discourse, Cabrini is typically the only woman named among the

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<sup>167</sup> "E poi non ho io la benedizione del Santo Padre che mi accompagna, mi corrobora, mi conforta? ...Oh! La benedizione del Papa quanto è feconda! io vorrei che tutti lo capissero, e mettessero in Lui la loro fiducia. Chi è mai il Papa? È il rappresentante di Dio, è l'autorità di Dio, è la Maestà di Dio, visibile in mezzo agli uomini," Frances Xavier Cabrini to Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, En route from New Orleans to Panama, May-June 1895. Reprinted in Frances Xavier Cabrini, *Tra un'onda e l'altra* (Milano: Ancora, 1967), 201.

<sup>168</sup> Stephen Michael DiGiovanni, "Mother Cabrini: Early Years in New York," *The Catholic Historical Review* 77, No. 1 (Jan 1991): 56-77.

founders of Catholic assistance to Italian migrants, despite the work of other women such as the Scalabrinian Sisters' Assunta Marchetti.<sup>169</sup>

Yet Cabrini's simultaneous independence and pronounced deference to patriarchal authority was neither contradictory nor unique. Historian Sarah Curtis, writing about three nineteenth-century French women who founded their own religious orders, points out that her subjects too were motivated by a conviction in their orders' spiritual mission, or charism, even when criticized by men within the Church. Curtis writes "These women believed they had a sacred responsibility to uphold the charism and rules of those orders even in disputes with members of their own church, allowing them to overcome their general acceptance of patriarchy within that same church."<sup>170</sup> Cabrini believed she had received her mission directly from the pope, she succeeded in personally opening many missions on three continents, and she inspired great devotion in fellow Catholics. Cabrini's accomplishments quickly eclipsed any Church criticism about a woman as a missionary and facilitated Cabrini's canonization in 1946, just twenty-nine years after her death in 1917.

Female missionaries thus operated within the male-dominated Church and exercised their agency within its existing authority structures. They did not challenge those structures. Female missionaries were nevertheless crucial to their male counterparts' nation-building work, especially concerning youth and the family. Hierarchy oversight, however, meant that women had less room to express difference

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<sup>169</sup> See, for example, Vincenzo Rosato, "I pionieri del servizio ai migranti italiani. Gli interventi provvidenziali di Pallotti, Bosco, Scalabrini, Bonomelli e Cabrini a partire dall'Unità d'Italia," *Studi Emigrazione* XLVIII, No. 183 (2011): 407-426.

<sup>170</sup> Sarah A. Curtis, *Civilizing Habits: Women Missionaries and the Revival of French Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 264.

from the Church hierarchy in the type of *italianità* they taught. Bishops Bonomelli and Scalabrini, by contrast, were influential members of the Church hierarchy. They had enough connections and status as men that their organizations could alienate some intransigents within the Church hierarchy through their attachment to Italy and their willingness to facilitate Italian nation-building. As we see below, even their influence and status as well-connected men did not completely protect their organizations when they came under criticism for misbehavior, but their founders' reputations helped their missionary groups to survive the earliest such challenges. Catholic *italianità* did not provide new institutional roles for women, either religious or lay, but instead drew upon Catholic gender and family norms to reinforce Italian Catholic communities.

Missionaries generally followed Catholic gender norms and promoted these among migrants, but the refusal of some male missionaries to respect and to follow the Church's rules regarding sexuality publicly embarrassed the Catholic hierarchy and motivated the hierarchy's subsequent efforts to more directly supervise missionary networks. While the sexual misbehavior of Catholic priests was nothing new, worries about male missionaries' morality also increased during migration, and concerns about the loose supervision over missionary priests grew alongside the new missionary groups' rapid growth in the late-nineteenth century. The expansion of religious orders such as the Salesians meant that priests, brothers, and sisters were assigned to posts across the world, far from their original homes, sites of training, and most of their colleagues. A missionary could, for example, work in multiple countries during his life and experience varying degrees of oversight by his local bishop and by the Rome-based superiors who

had issued missionaries' assignments. However, supervising young male religious at long distances remained difficult, and some critics repeatedly alleged that missionary groups preferred to grow quickly rather than be more discerning about which candidates they accepted and sent abroad.

Missionaries also criticized other missionaries for failing to adhere to Catholic sexual norms. Even priests who believed in an *italianità* rooted in Catholicism could be outraged when their fellow missionaries failed to fulfill Catholic expectations of morality once they were abroad. Writing from southern Brazil in 1888, for example, Italian missionary Father Pietro Corbellini complained about the conduct of some young Salesian fathers in Uruguay who had abandoned the school in which they worked. Three young priests had fled in the middle of the night, "discarding their dress and their conscience," as had two other Salesians the previous year. Corbellini wrote that the Salesians had "paid the price of great shame, not only there, but in other areas, for the imprudence of sending young men to America. The spirit of independence prevails here, where no one is in contact with either civil or ecclesiastical authorities."<sup>171</sup>

Many missionary organizations' belief that migrants urgently needed assistance may in fact have spurred them to send missionaries abroad without making sure that the men were fully dedicated the missionaries' spiritual and material work rather than seeking opportunities for mobility and self-gain. Some missionaries, both those in religious orders and priests in Italy who requested a transfer to the Americas to work with

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<sup>171</sup> "buttando l'abito e la coscienza," "ha pagato, non solo là, ma in altre parti, la imprudenza (per essa imposta dalle circostanze) a prezzo di ignominia, di mandar giovani nell'America. Lo spirito di indipendenza è quello che predomina qui, che dove nessuno si trova contatto di autorità sia in ordine civile che ecclesiastico," Pietro Corbellini to Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, Agua Verde, Curitiba, Brazil. 21 Dec. 1888. AGS, Scaffale 2, Palchetto F, Numero 476.

migrants, sought not just greater opportunities abroad but sometimes also the chance to escape scandal and censure in Italy. Such cases upset Church authorities as well as priests like Corbellini who believed that the priesthood was, as defined in Catholic doctrine, a "divine call" with a tremendous responsibility to administer sacraments, teach Catholicism, and set an example for lay people. Therefore, the priesthood was not to be "rashly imposed on anyone: to those only is it to be entrusted, who, by the sanctity of their lives, by their knowledge, their faith, and their prudence, are capable of sustaining its weight."<sup>172</sup>

In addition to missionaries' disobedience, opportunism, and their refusal to submit properly to ecclesiastical authority, missionaries who broke Catholic sexual norms abroad greatly disturbed Church officials. Priests and religious were supposed to be celibate, but migration enhanced opportunities not only to engage in sex but to do so more publicly than they could probably have in Italy. In 1888, an Italian priest and future Scalabrinian, Father Pietro Colbacchini, wrote lengthy letters to Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, the head of the *Propaganda Fide*, deploring the behavior of Italian priests in southern Brazil and the state of the Brazilian Church as a whole. Among his many complaints, he claimed that many priests had wives and children at home, participated in local political parties, neglected their religious duties including saying Mass and teaching catechism, and allowed Freemasons to be part of parish groups.<sup>173</sup> Colbacchini was particularly critical of the almost seventy Neapolitan priests who worked in the area and wrote that they

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<sup>172</sup> Roman Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, trans. James Donovan (Dublin: Duffy, 1829), 305.

<sup>173</sup> Pietro Colbacchini to Cardinal Simeoni, S. Paolo, Brazil, 12 Aug. 1886. APF, Fondo Scritture riferite nei Congressi America Meridionale- Volume 15 (1886-1889).

"seem sent by the devil."<sup>174</sup> Increasing complaints like these caught the attention of the Church hierarchy and motivated them to exert their power over missionary networks by the early twentieth century in an effort to bring missionaries and their behavior under stricter Church surveillance and control.

### **The Holy See's Early Attempts to Centralize Power over Missionary Networks**

At least since the days of early European empire building, the Church's highest levels of leadership and authority had been preoccupied with Catholicism's global success. The mass migrations of the nineteenth century meant their global concerns persisted through the era of Italian nation-building. Many influential figures in the Holy See, including nineteenth- and twentieth-century popes, were linguistically and culturally Italians, and thus sympathetic to Italian migrants' cultural needs abroad. However, the popes and officials in the Roman Curia were also committed to a universal Catholicism, unconstrained by national loyalties, and they had a greater investment than missionaries in ensuring the Holy See's position at the head of Catholicism and Church organizations' adherence to its orders. Unsurprisingly, intransigent members of the Curia were particularly critical of missionaries' Italian nation-building activities when their work seemed to escape in any way from the Holy See's authority and control. By the twentieth century, the Holy See began reasserting its control over missionaries, intervening when it felt groups had strayed from the Church's institutional authority and creating new Church bodies to centrally train and direct Italian missionaries.

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<sup>174</sup> "sembrano mandato qua dal diavolo," Colbacchini to Cardinal Simeoni, Colonia Monserrate, S. Paolo Brazil, 10 Aug. 1886. APF, Fondo Scritture riferite nei Congressi America Meridionale- Volume 15 (1886-1889).

For example, concerns over politics, ecclesiastical authority, and missionaries' obedience brought the *Opera* Bonomelli under Holy See investigation shortly after its beginning in 1900. In 1903, a group of intransigent Italian priests abroad complained to the Roman Curia about the *Opera* missionaries' political activities and independence. Their complaints found a willing listener in Cardinal Mariano Rampolla, Pope Leo XIII's Secretary of State and a committed intransigent. Rampolla had already been looking for a way to reorganize Catholic assistance to Italian migrants in Europe that would cut out the *Opera* Bonomelli and its collaborators.<sup>175</sup>

Intransigent criticism of the *Opera* and its missionaries centered upon two points. First, the *Opera* was accused of not respecting Church authority structures. Most of its missionaries were secular priests from northern Italy who could only leave their home dioceses with the permission of the local bishop and were required to answer to the receiving diocese's bishop. However, the *Opera* frequently operated independently of the bishops in the receiving society. Secondly, the *Opera* was criticized for the influence of the laity on the organization, particularly its funders the *Associazione Nazionale* and the *Opera*'s secretary, Dr. Ernesto Schiaparelli. Schiaparelli was an important member of the *Associazione Nazionale*, an autonomous lay-run organization that began in 1887. It provided funds and support for missionaries' activities, including Italian schools in the Middle East and Italian colonies. A group of influential lay Italian men, including senators, lawyers, and professors, founded the group in order to spread Christianity and Italian culture overseas, particularly in Africa and the Middle East. Though these men

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<sup>175</sup> For a detailed explanation of the crisis, see Luciano Trincia, *Emigrazione e diaspora: Chiesa e lavoratori italiani in Svizzera e in Germania fino alla prima guerra mondiale* (Rome: Studium, 1997).



were modern in many ways, they also rejected anticlericalism and were devout Catholics. But their work, including the *Associazione Nazionale's* support for the *Opera* Bonomelli, caused conflict with some members of the Church hierarchy who believed these lay men had too much influence in Church activities. Schiaparelli in particular was criticized for having too much of a say in where the *Opera's* missionaries were assigned, a power that concerned the Holy See, which had always been suspicious of independent lay initiatives within the Church.

Spurred by this criticism, Cardinal Rampolla quickly launched an investigation into the *Opera's* work. To collect more evidence, he requested testimony from Swiss bishops in whose dioceses *Opera* missionaries operated. The bishops, however, wrote back with praise for the missionaries. Even those who shared some political sympathy with the *Opera's* intransigent critics believed its work should continue. However, though the bishops liked the missionaries, many criticized the *Opera* itself for leapfrogging the bishops' authority. When the issue was examined by the Cardinals within the Roman Curia, they voted to continue the *Opera* but bring it more closely under Holy See control. They wanted to end the *Associazione Nazionale's* influence over the *Opera* because the group advocated for Italian political alliances that were contrary to the Holy See's diplomatic hopes for closer relations with France. The Holy See feared missionaries being associated with this policy of the Italian state.<sup>176</sup>

The crisis was resolved quickly but led to rapid changes in the *Opera* that brought it under greater hierarchy control and reduced lay influence. In 1903, Pope Leo XIII sent a letter to Swiss bishops, reiterating that newly-arrived missionaries would be under their

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<sup>176</sup> Trincia, *Emigrazione e diaspora*, 307-310.

control. In 1907, Schiaparelli resigned as Secretary of the *Opera*.<sup>177</sup> The archbishop of Milan became its head and the organization's seat moved from Turin, the *Associazione Nazionale's* headquarters, to Milan. Unsympathetic priests in Europe continued to keep an eye on the *Opera* and report activities they considered patriotic rather than religious or charitable. For the next two decades, struggles over modernism and the Italian nation-state's relationship to the Church played out in criticism and surveillance of the *Opera* Bonomelli.

The end of the Bonomelli crisis, however, did not completely assuage fears within the hierarchy that priests and missionary groups had ventured beyond its control by engaging in questionable behaviors. The Holy See sought to regulate what it saw as loose rules governing how Italian priests were sent abroad and supervised. On July 27, 1890, the Sacred Consistorial Congregation decreed that priests emigrating to America needed authorization from the Holy See to do so. Soon the Holy See, concerned with priests' quality and preparedness, instituted its own centralized training center by creating the Pontifical College of Italian Emigration. The College trained potential missionaries who were not in a religious order for a ministry to Italians abroad. Students were priests who spent a year or two at the college. In addition to studying religious and liturgical subjects, they also studied the language of their destination country, emigration law, and administration. Pius X founded the College on March 19, 1914, but his death months later and the outbreak of World War I delayed the College's opening until 1920. The

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<sup>177</sup> Despite Schiaparelli's withdrawal and further reforms, lay people remained involved in the *Opera*, precipitating its downfall in the 1920s. I discuss the collapse of the *Opera* in Chapter Four.

Sacred Consistorial Congregation, a department of the Holy See, administered the College, placing it under direct hierarchy control.<sup>178</sup>

The Holy See also established greater oversight of migrant missionaries when it created the Prelate for Italian Emigration in 1920. The office oversaw both the Pontifical College of Italian Emigration and as well as other secular priests working as missionaries, including priests in groups like the *Opera Bonomelli*. The Prelate was a vehicle for ensuring that priests abroad were under the control of the local bishop. It was the Prelate, not the priest, who found out about needs for missionaries by corresponding with local bishops. Once abroad, priests were subject to the local bishop's supervision and also had to make yearly reports to the Prelate. If the bishop found the priest unsatisfactory, he could write to the Prelate to request a change. The Prelate intended to make sure priests behaved appropriately in both their professional and personal lives. The Prelate sent secular priests to assist Italians in Europe and the Americas.<sup>179</sup>

As the Holy See instituted these changes, it also exerted more control over the Scalabrinians, who, by the 1920s, struggled with disobedience and a lack of adequate supervision. The Scalabrinians had already experienced difficulties in oversight under Scalabrini's leadership. Some priests worked with the Scalabrinians mainly in order to find work in the Americas, where they hoped to find more prosperity than in Italy. Some then became embroiled in personal and financial scandals abroad, and even dedicated Scalabrinians sometimes faced financial difficulties running their missions. Early

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<sup>178</sup> Antonio Perotti, *Il Pontificio collegio per l'emigrazione italiana, 1920-1970* (Roma: P. collegio per l'emigrazione, Ufficio centrale emigrazione italiana, 1972).

<sup>179</sup> See documents in "Vescovo per l'emigrazione italiana," Folder 2 (3bis), AGS. The Holy See administered the Prelate until 1952, when the landmark apostolic constitution *Exsul Familia* reorganized the Prelate and assigned it to the Scalabrinians' administration.

Scalabrinians had little common training and many did not even know each other. The Society's missionary work and the far-flung nature of its posts throughout the Americas hindered the development of a sense of community. Missionaries corresponded with one another or their superiors in receiving countries or in Italy, but day-to-day community and communication rarely existed. Historian Peter D'Agostino has observed that "Before 1924, the Society, with neither perpetual vows, clear structures of authority, nor strict boundaries separating insiders and outsiders, operated like an employment agency for clerical individualists who required affiliation with a corporation in order to leave Italy and remain in America."<sup>180</sup>

Bishop Scalabrini's vision and direction had been the organization's heart, and his 1905 death left weaker, less ambitious leadership in place, further straining the Scalabrinians' already limited degree of cohesion. The Society of St. Charles Borromeo began in 1887 as a pious society whose members made a temporary commitment to the group. Over the next two decades, the Society adopted perpetual vows under Scalabrini, then shifted to five-year promises under his successor as Superior General, Domenico Vincentini (1905-1919). Vincentini's successor, Pacifico Chenuil (1919-1923) wanted the Society to stop training priests and to send them instead to the Pontifical College of Emigration for formation instead. At the same time, Chenuil aggressively recruited new priests after a decline in new missionaries during World War I. He quickly brought 37 new priests, many of whom were unprepared and ambitious, creating further tensions

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<sup>180</sup> Peter R. D'Agostino, "The Scalabrini Fathers, the Italian Emigrant Church, and Ethnic Nationalism in America," *Religion and American Culture* 7, No. 1 (Winter, 1997): 130. See also Mary Elizabeth Brown, *The Scalabrinians in North America, 1887-1934* (Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies, 1996).

among the Scalabrinians.<sup>181</sup> This inconsistency combined with rapid growth led to conflicts among the missionaries at a time when Scalabrinian superiors had inadequate understanding of what all their missionaries were doing. Complaints about Scalabrinian financial mismanagement finally attracted the Holy See's attention and led to an investigation in 1923 led by Father Serafino Cimino, a former Franciscan Minister General. Cimino's report, issued in Rome on December 13, 1923, was damning: it recommended that the Society and its activities be placed firmly under the hierarchy's control.

The Scalabrinians had a serious problem retaining members and obtaining cooperation from the missionaries who remained. In its 37 years of existence, the Institute had sent out 191 missionaries, but there were only 101 remaining by 1923.<sup>182</sup> The Scalabrinians, Cimino claimed, were rife with infighting, and thus "I feel the obligation to denounce to the Sacred Consistorial in first place the lack of harmony among the Institute's members."<sup>183</sup> Superiors and subordinates flung bitter criticisms back and forth, as did pastors and their assistants. Even Chenuil had recognized this problem, saying in a January 1, 1921 letter that the Society needed more internal harmony and cooperation. Cimino reported that the Scalabrinians themselves had concerns about other deficiencies and irregularities. He understood that spiritual life was difficult for priests stationed abroad alone but he also criticized whole groups of priests

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<sup>181</sup> See Mario Francesconi, ed., *Storia della congregazione scalabriniana. Vol. V: il primo dopoguerra (1919-1940)* (Rome: Centro studi emigrazione, 1975).

<sup>182</sup> Serafino Cimino, "Sommaro," Rome, 13 Dec. 1923), 12. ASV, Congregazione Concistoriale, Ponzene 1924, Pos 17, Protocollo 809/20.

<sup>183</sup> "Ciò premesso sento il dovere di denunciare alla S.C. in primo luogo la mancanza di condordia di animi tra i membri dell'Istituto," Cimino, "Sommaro," 18.

for their "lack of a spirit of piety" and for failing to continue basic spiritual practices including making the sign of the Cross, ongoing studies of theology, and regular meditation.<sup>184</sup> Cimino found the finances of Scalabrinian holdings in Rome to be appropriate, but identified serious problems in the Americas. Administrators in Brazil were either sloppy or purposely vague when keeping parish financial records and, in a few United States parishes, assistants said they could not sign off on their parish's finances with a clear conscience. Cimino also mentioned accusations against several priests in the United States who supposedly took money from their ministry and bought property in Italy.<sup>185</sup>

Cimino's report also contained some veiled but serious allegations of sexual impropriety within the Society. He was distressed by some priests' conduct and flippant attitudes. "They confess to me that they go to Turkish baths, meaning public baths, 'but *in foro externo* nothing to worry about!!! [sic]"<sup>186</sup> Five missionaries had also contracted "shameful illnesses," the result, according to Cimino, of the Scalabrinians' neglect of their spirituality. "Five out of one hundred and one Missionaries says something about the moral standards, which seems beginning to descend a bit too rapidly in the Institute of the Missionaries of St. Charles."<sup>187</sup>

When the investigation confronted them, both Vincentini and Chenuil claimed the Scalabrinians had had problems with oversight and quality from the beginning, and that

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<sup>184</sup> "mancanza di spirito di piet ," Cimino, "Sommario," 19.

<sup>185</sup> Cimino, "Sommario," 20-21.

<sup>186</sup> "Per autoconfessione mi si scrive che si frequentano i bagni turchi, pubblici s'intende, senza collare ma che "pero *in foro externo* niente di male!!!" Cimino, "Sommario," 19.

<sup>187</sup> "malattie vergognose"; "Tra centuno Missionari la proporzione di cinque dice almeno qualche cosa sul livello morale, che pare incominci a discendere un po' troppo rapidamente nell'Istituto dei Missionari di S. Carlo," Cimino, "Sommario," 19.

neither man had been able to solve either problem. In a written response to Cimino's report, Chenuil admitted no fault of his own but instead insisted that "the gravest abuses, which today we deplore, have had their roots in the past."<sup>188</sup> Scalabrini, he claimed, took any interested students into his college, even if they could not pay, did poorly on their exams, or had already been thrown out of another school for their poor conduct. Early Scalabrinians had included missionaries who were removed from multiple assignments for bad conduct before they were finally dismissed from the Society. New missionaries, Chenuil wrote, instead of fixing their older confreres' defects "did nothing but increase and aggravate them."<sup>189</sup> Cimino, however, faulted the current administration for its lack of supervision, particularly Chenuil and his rushed recruitment of new missionaries after World War I. Cimino wrote "One absolutely cannot maintain that Mons. Scalabrini... intended to found nothing other than an Agency to hire priests and send them to America to make money and have greater liberty, as a very influential person in the Institute prudently observed and how unfortunately disgracefully was done in the last four years, in which about thirty priests were received and with little to no preparation were hurled into that great world which is America."<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> "i più gravi abusi, che deploriamo oggi, abbiano avuto la loro radice nel passato," Pacifico Chenuil, *Esposto del P. Chenuil Superiore Generale degli Scalabriniani*, 37. ASV, Congregazione Concistoriale, Pienze 1924, Pos 17, Protocollo 809/20.

<sup>189</sup> "... i nuovi missionari usciti da esso, invece di rimediare ai difetti dei loro confratelli più anziani, che già si trovavano in America, non fecero che aumentarli ed aggravarli," Chenuil, *Esposto del P. Chenuil*, 29.

<sup>190</sup> "Non si può assolutamente sostenere che Mons. Scalabrini fondando l'Opera dei Missionari di S. Carlo per gli emigrati italiani, abbia avuto in mente di fondare nient'altro che una Agenzia per assoldare preti e mandarli in America per fare denari ed avere più libertà, come saggiamente osservava una persona molto autorevole dell'Istituto e come purtroppo disgraziatamente si è fatto nell'ultimo quadriennio, nel quale si sono ricevuti circa una trentina di preti e con poca e nessuna preparazione sono stati lanciati in quel gran mondo che è l'America." Cimino, "Sommario," 23.

The Scalabrinians faced dire consequences, but Bishop Scalabrini's personal influence, which in a sense continued even after his death, saved the group by allowing a compromise that put the Scalabrinians more strictly under the Roman Curia's control in order to overhaul its operations. Cimino recommended that the Scalabrinians be dissolved and "[t]he administration without a doubt should pass into the hands of the Prelate for Italian Emigration."<sup>191</sup> He recommended that the seminary in Piacenza and all obedient missionaries- chosen with discernment- be placed under the authority of the Bishop for Emigration, while all others return to dioceses where they could be closely supervised. However, Pius XI, who had known Scalabrini personally, wanted the Scalabrinians to continue. Pius ordered a more thorough investigation from the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, which recommended rebuilding the Scalabrinians instead. They were, however, rebuilt under the Sacred Consistorial Congregation's authority, and the Scalabrinian Superior General was the Cardinal who directed the Congregation. Under the Church's hierarchy's direct control, the Scalabrinians slowly moved out of crisis and expanded their work into Europe during the 1930s.

The Scalabrinian crisis evinced the tension between the urgent need many missionaries felt to expand and the Holy See's desire to assert its authority over transnational missionary structures it considered out of its control. Significantly, during the Scalabrinian crisis, the Holy See did not prohibit all Italian nation-building efforts but instead sought to make the Scalabrinians subservient to the Holy See's authority. The Holy See's interventions into both the *Opera Bonomelli* and the Scalabrinians also

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<sup>191</sup> "L'amministrazione senza dubbio passerebbe nelle mani del Vescovo dell'emigrazione," Cimino, "Sommario," 24.



demonstrate how personal relationships and influence within the Church hierarchy enabled both groups to survive despite major crises. Bishops Bonomelli and Scalabrini had been well-connected within the Holy See despite their conciliationist views, and the respect they enjoyed enabled their missionary groups to maintain some degree of autonomy, although by surrendering some of the groups' independence to greater subordination within the Church hierarchy.

### **Conclusion**

From the beginning of their work in the late nineteenth century, Catholic missionaries promoted a Catholic version of *italianità* among Italian migrants in the hope of protecting migrants' Catholicism abroad by creating Italian communities overseen by Catholic clergy and religious. Italian missions catered to migrants' religious, cultural, and material needs while promoting a transnational Italian community rooted in the Catholic Church's ideals and authority structures. Though missionaries developed Catholic *italianità* to confront new social and economic realities, Catholic *italianità* did not challenge Church teachings regarding the necessity of hierarchical relations based on gender, family, and sexuality. Instead, Italian missionaries reinforced and replicated Catholic hierarchies already in place in Italy. Missionaries sought to regulate migrants' sexuality, gender roles, and reproduction of Catholicism by creating Italian migrant communities rooted in patriarchal Catholic households. Migrant families would, in turn, obey the Church and look to it for religious guidance in addition to help with their charitable and cultural needs.

The realities of migration, particularly the distances that separated family members from one another as well as missionaries from their superiors, immediately challenged these Catholic ideals. Male migrants frequently lived thousands of miles from their wives and children. Though the number of Italian missionaries' grew quickly- too quickly, according to critics within the Church hierarchy- there were not enough missionaries to create Catholic infrastructure in all Italian migrant communities. Distance from superiors and the opportunity for personal gain motivated some Italian priests to become missionaries, causing great embarrassment and crises within missionary organizations when these missionaries engaged in immoral behavior. The Holy See intervened in both the *Opera* Bonomelli and the Scalabrinians when powerful men within the Holy See believed these missionaries did not properly respect the Church's authority structures. The Holy See also created the Pontifical College of Italian Emigration and the Prelate for Italian Emigration to train and oversee new Italian missionaries. By the early twentieth century, the Holy See increasingly monitored and exerted control over Italian missionaries, bringing their individual transnational nation-building networks under the Holy See's central authority.

In the Church hierarchy's view, Catholic *italianità* was supposed to be apolitical, meaning uninvolved in secular and government attempts to increase the Italian state's power and prestige. Therefore, the Church hierarchy wanted both male and female missionaries to avoid "political" activities in their work with Italians abroad. The Italian state's imperial expansion attempts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries revealed another disconnect between the Holy See, which continued its opposition to the

Italian state, and Italian missionaries, who began to express Italian nationalism in response to the state's imperial successes. The increasingly blurred lines between Catholic *italianità* and Italian nationalism raised new questions about Catholic *italianità*'s relationship to the Italian state and concerned both the Holy See and more intransigent missionaries.

The Holy See did not end its oversight of missionaries after the 1922 Scalabrinian crisis. That same year, the Fascist Party took power in Italy. The Fascist era (1922-1943) presented new challenges to Catholic migrant *italianità*, and I use Chapter Four to examine that era's complexity. The Holy See dissolved the *Opera* Bonomelli in 1927 when the Fascists tried to control the *Opera*, an organization the Holy See already regarded with ambivalence because of previous concerns that it did not adequately respect Church authority structures and because of the involvement of lay people in the *Opera*'s direction. At the same time, Italian parishes in receiving societies around the world grew while the Salesians, Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Scalabrinians, and secular priests sent by the Prelate for Italian Emigration continued their work. The Holy See ultimately supported Italian nation-building work for Catholicism, under stricter oversight, through World War II, and the Holy See's influence over Italian missionaries would have far-reaching, if somewhat different, consequences for missionaries' work in the post-war world.

### Chapter Three: Missionaries, Catholic *Italianità*, and Italian Imperialism, 1881-1918

#### Introduction

The Italian state's attempts at imperial expansion in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries especially challenged the Holy See's insistence that Italian missionaries remain apolitical in their nation-building work with Italian migrants. The Italian state sought to an overseas colonial empire, the annexation of Mediterranean territories to the Italian state, and worldwide influence through Italian migrant communities in countries in which the state could not acquire territory. Italian missionaries remained distanced from Italian state-building, but they became increasingly enthusiastic for Italian empire-building. Italian missionaries and migrants increasingly displayed Italian nationalism and celebrated Italian imperial successes, particularly after the Italian war with Libya in 1911-1912 and Italy's entrance into World War I in 1915. Attention to missionaries and their expanding notions of *italianità* reveals the limits of Catholicism's claims to universality and demonstrates that missionaries' diaspora *italianità* began to include support for an Italian empire and the nation-state's imperial achievements before the beginning of Italy's Fascist government in 1922.

All of the Liberal Italian state's expansion attempts may be considered empire-building. Imperialists in government sought an overseas colonial empire that would bring Italy wealth, power, and influence on the world stage.<sup>192</sup> Italy began by slowly

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<sup>192</sup>The literature on Italian colonialism is small, especially when compared to well-developed fields such as British and French imperial history. The most comprehensive overview of Italian colonialism is Nicola Labanca, *Oltremare: storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002). See also Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller, eds., *Italian Colonialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Jacqueline Andall and Derek Duncan, eds., *Italian Colonialism: Legacy and Memory* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005); Giorgio Rochat, *Il colonialismo italiano* (Torino: Loescher, 1973); Claudio Segrè, *Fourth Shore: The Italian Colonization of Libya* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). Part of the reason for the

acquiring some small East African settlements, including Eritrea, in the nineteenth century before the Italian army experienced a bloody and embarrassing defeat by the Ethiopians at Adwa in 1896. The defeat temporarily ended support for Italian expansion until 1911, when Italy fought the declining Ottoman Empire for possession of Libya. Italian territorial expansion also included irredentism, a movement to annex territories to the Italian state containing many ethnic Italians and to free "unredeemed Italy" (*Italia irredenta*) from foreign control. Irredentists particularly coveted the port city of Trieste as well as territory in the Alps and in Dalmatia controlled by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Irredentist desires led Italy to join World War I and fight with the Triple Entente in the hopes of gaining these lands.

Italian empire-building was not limited to acquiring territories to colonize abroad but also included ethnographic or demographic imperialism, which I define as the Italian state's attempt to obtain financial and political benefit from the presence of large Italian migrant communities in the Americas, where Italy did not control territory.<sup>193</sup> Historian Mark Choate illustrates that Liberal-era migration and colonialism were connected, even though their historiographies remain separate. He observes that "Worldwide emigration and African settlement were closely intertwined within the ideology and practice of Italian colonialism, and fueled an ongoing debate over how to

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comparative smallness of this literature is the persistence of the myth that Italians were "good colonizers" (*brava gente*). See Angelo Del Boca, *Italiani, brava gente? un mito duro a morire* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2005).

<sup>193</sup> Defining demographic imperialism is challenging because the terms demographic imperialism and demographic colonialism are often used interchangeably in both the historiography of Italian empire as well as in primary sources. Though the field of imperialism studies is vast, demographic imperialism and colonialism are terms employed only by the small subfield of Italian imperial studies. The definition I use here is, therefore, my own. I speak of demographic imperialism rather than demographic colonialism because of the centrality of Italians in the Americas to these ideas.

protect and cultivate Italians abroad, ‘under the Italian flag’ or under foreign rule.”<sup>194</sup>

Italy's three-pronged imperial expansion was rooted in a new imperial nationalism that broke with the Risorgimento's liberal Italian nationalism. Italian liberal nationalism was an ethnic nationalism. It claimed that an “Italian” people existed and shared a history and culture, therefore constituting a nation which merited an autonomous nation-state that could protect its citizens' civil rights. By contrast, Italian imperial nationalism insisted that the nation had to expand into an empire to achieve its full greatness. Inspired by Italy's much-celebrated Roman history, Italian imperialism sought to spread Italian civilization around the world. Italian imperialists shared Western European ideas of white racial superiority, but such ideas comprised only one component of their idea of Italian civilization. Italian imperialists claimed that modern Italy was the heir of the ancient Romans and that Italians consequently possessed the intelligence, cultural superiority, and military prowess to conquer and rule abroad. Italian imperialists believed the Mediterranean, which they called *mare nostrum* (Latin for "our sea"), was Italy's natural sphere of influence dating back to the Roman Empire, and they consequently claimed territories there.

Unsurprisingly, Catholics who supported the state's expansion attempts understood Italian civilization, as they understood *italianità*, as fundamentally Catholic. Consequently, Italian missionaries (albeit ones not dedicated exclusively to Italian migrants) ran missions in Italian colonies such as Eritrea, where they worked with both Italian migrants and native peoples. Their work included evangelization and religious

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<sup>194</sup> Mark Choate, *Emigrant Nation: the Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), 16.

instruction alongside charitable work. At the same time, Italian missionaries in Italian migrant communities across the world looked approvingly on imperial efforts that claimed to bring Catholicism to places such as Libya whose populations were not Catholic.

During this period, Italian missionaries' definition of *italianità* expanded to include support for an Italian empire. Empire-building both revealed how some Italian clergy felt a nationalistic attachment to Italy, despite the political controversies caused by the Roman Question, and how the Italian state's imperial successes spurred missionaries to greater national sentiments. In the contested imperial spaces of nineteenth-century Tunisia and East Africa, some Catholic missionaries had interpersonal conflicts along national lines which trumped Catholic solidarity. Italy's imperial successes in Libya and World War I inspired Italian migrants, including missionaries, and for the first time they expressed pride in the Italian nation-state. Celebrating Italy's imperial successes did not mean that missionaries altered their belief that Catholicism was the basis of *italianità* and the Italian national community. Missionaries, like the Church hierarchy, still did not believe the Church should be subservient to the Italian state. However, Italian missionaries increasingly supported Italian empire-building, even though this implicitly meant supporting the Italian state.

### **Catholics and National Conflicts in Tunisia**

National and political clashes involving Catholic clergy predated the beginnings of both an Italian empire and missionary assistance to Italian migrants. Nineteenth-century Tunisia attracted tens of thousands of Italian migrants both before and after the

French established a protectorate over Tunisia in 1881. Nationalist tensions flared up between Catholic clergy and religious, revealing that Italian clergy already conceived of themselves as members of an Italian national community, an identification that sometimes impeded their willingness to be under the authority of other, non-Italian Catholics. The example of Tunisia, where Italian Catholics wanted their own independent institutions as France expanded its growing global empire, frequently assisted by French Catholic missionaries in Africa, foreshadowed many Italian missionaries' nationalist responses to later Italian empire-building, particularly when empire-building reflected well on Italian migrant communities.

Tunisia became one of Italy's first major colonial controversies even though Italy never governed Tunisia. The Ottoman Empire conquered Tunisia in 1574, though Tunisian ruling dynasties ruled over local affairs under the Ottomans. By the nineteenth century, the Ottomans' power waned while many Europeans, including Italians, French, and Maltese, migrated to Tunisia. Italians formed, by far, the largest European group in Tunisia. In the 1820s, exiled Carbonari, members of secret revolutionary societies which included some priests, took refuge in Tunisia. In the mid-nineteenth century, Sardinians and Sicilians migrated seasonally to Tunisia and southern Italian fisherman frequently fished in Tunisia waters. Italian expansionists eyed Tunisia soon after Italian unification. The capital, Tunis, was only a hundred miles across the Mediterranean from western Sicily. Italian dialects were commonly spoken in Tunisia and Italian was even taught in schools due to the high Italian population.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>195</sup>Mark I. Choate, "Identity Politics and Political Perception in the European Settlement of Tunisia: The French Colony Versus the Italian Colony," *French Colonial History* 8, No. 1 (2007): 97-109; Julia



Italian expansionists' hopes for Tunisian territory were dashed in 1881, when France invaded Tunisia and declared it a French protectorate. The French colonial empire already included territories on several continents, including much of north and west Africa. France had ruled neighboring Algeria since 1830, considering it not a colony but a part of France, and the French used the pretext of a supposed Tunisian invasion of Algeria to justify their Tunisian takeover.<sup>196</sup> Expansionists in Italy, including Catholic nationalists, were furious because they viewed Tunisia, situated on the Mediterranean with a large Italian population, as an Italian colonial territory. *Rassegna Nazionale*, a liberal Catholic magazine founded in 1879, printed a furious article about the new French protectorate, calling it "a resounding slap across the venerable face of Mother Italy; mud thrown on our flag."<sup>197</sup> The article disparaged the French as republicans and worried about having republican schools in Tunisia that would attack Catholicism. Italian politicians, the article insisted, had been too timid in Tunisia, and it called for new men in government who would take decisive action and aggressively pursue Italy's imperial interests.

Despite this criticism of the republican French state, Catholicism was also an important part of French expansion in Africa. The French Third Republic, established in

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Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration, C. 1800-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Marinette Pendola, *Gli italiani di Tunisia: storia di una comunità, XIX-XX secolo* (Foligno, Perugia: Editoriale umbra, 2007); Romain H. Rainero, *Les Italiens dans la Tunisie contemporaine* (Paris: Publisud, 2002); Enzo Tartamella, *Emigranti anomali: italiani in Tunisia tra Otto e Novecento* (Trapani: Maroda, 2011).

<sup>196</sup> Robert Aldrich, *Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

<sup>197</sup> "un sonoro schiaffo sul volto venerando della Madre Italia; una manata di fango sulla nostra bandiera." G. Falorsi, "Quid Agendum?" *Rassegna Nazionale*. V, Year III (1 June 1881): 578. For more on the *Rassegna Nazionale* and its politics, see Glauco Licata, *La Rassegna Nazionale : Conservatori e cattolici liberali italiani attraverso la loro rivista (1879-1915)* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e di letteratura, 1968).

1870, was fiercely anticlerical at home, but in the nineteenth century, the French government consistently supported French missionaries abroad. The contradiction was embodied in a famous remark by Léon Gambetta, a republican and anticlerical French statesman, who said that "anticlericalism was not an item for export."<sup>198</sup> Colonial policymakers in metropolitan France hoped that French missionaries would spread French influence in colonial territories. The government, therefore, supported groups like the White Fathers (*Pères blancs*, officially the Missionaries of Africa), a French Catholic missionary institute dedicated to evangelization in Africa, and their sister organization, the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (*Soeurs Missionnaires de Notre-Dame d'Afrique*). Though Catholic doctrine said that French missionaries, like Italian missionaries, were supposed to work for the salvation of souls and the Catholic Church as a whole, nationalist ties also drove some French Catholic work and conflicts.<sup>199</sup>

Nationalist conflicts divided Italian and French Catholics in Tunisia even before the establishment of the French Protectorate, and problems increased when Tunisia's Catholic leadership became French. The French White Fathers first arrived in Carthage in 1875 and found that the country's few priests were Italian Capuchins. The French government wanted to use Catholicism to assimilate Italians living in Tunisia into the French Empire. The French supported the appointment of Bishop Charles Martial Lavigerie as the Archbishop of Carthage in 1881, a position that was responsible for all of

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<sup>198</sup> J.P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 14.

<sup>199</sup> Owen White and J. P. Daughton, *In God's Empire: French Missionaries and the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Tunisia's Catholics. Lavigerie was key figure in French missionary work in Africa and the advance of French empire in the late nineteenth century. He was the founder of the missionary White Fathers and had already been Archbishop of Algiers since 1867. Lavigerie recognized the need for priests of the same nationality and language to work with Tunisia's French, Maltese, and Italian populations. Yet he moved quickly to establish French institutions and French clergy across the country. Lavigerie prevented Italian Salesian Sisters from starting a school in La Goulette, the port of Tunis. Lavigerie and the Italian Capuchins frequently clashed between over finances and their respective national influences, and the Capuchins' numbers in Tunisia dwindled until Lavigerie finally expelled them in 1891.<sup>200</sup>

Catholic disputes in Tunisia were not confined to local Europeans but involved relations among Italy, France, and the Holy See. Despite Lavigerie's difficulties with the Capuchins, he recognized that their work was important, but he believed he and the French should be the ultimate authorities in Tunisia. Throughout the fall of 1883, Lavigerie reported to Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, head of the Holy See's *Propaganda Fide*, about a crisis among the Capuchins. Several members had become ill or left the country, so the Capuchin prefect decided to remove all the Italian Capuchins from Tunis. Lavigerie worried both about the pastoral gaps their removal would cause as well as about the potential political controversy that might result in Italy and Tunisia. Abruptly removing the Italians from their parishes and putting French or Maltese priests in their places, Lavigerie warned Simeoni, would cause "resentment" in the Italian colony and

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<sup>200</sup> Joseph Dean O'Donnell, *Lavigerie in Tunisia: The Interplay of Imperialist and Missionary* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979).

"Italy's liberal newspapers would not fail to accuse the Supreme Pontiff and the *Propaganda* of once again wanting to completely sacrifice Italy's influence in Africa." Lavigerie cautioned that "The situation in Tunisia is delicate because of national competitions and ambitions. We must avoid throwing oil on this fire."<sup>201</sup>

Italian expansionists quickly shifted their attention to Italy's imperial ambitions in East Africa. Lavigerie died in 1892, and though Italians in Tunisia resisted French pressure to assimilate for decades, Tunisia did not play a major role in Italian expansionists' subsequent ambitions because of the strength of France's control. The Tunisian example revealed early Italian Catholic interest in Italy's imperial ambitions and how Italian migrant communities could be sites of imperial conflict. Italian communities in imperial spaces wanted their own clergy and institutions, the same requests made by Italian migrant communities in Europe and the Americas. Italian Catholics who harbored imperialist hopes also harbored jealousies of the French Empire, despite Catholicism's traditional role in France and present role in its empire. Imperialism incited national conflicts in which Catholics sometimes chose nationalism over Catholic universalism.

### **Italian East Africa and the Limits of Catholic Universalism**

Italy's first colonies were paltry and largely unsuccessful, but late nineteenth-century expansion into East Africa further demonstrated the limits of Catholic universalism for Italian missionaries and particularly for their lay Catholic benefactors. Italy created its first colony, Eritrea, in 1890. Eritrea never attracted large numbers of

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<sup>201</sup>“...les journaux liberaux de l'Italie ne manqueraient pas d'accuser le Souverain Pontife et la Propagande de vouloir sacrifier complètement, encore une fois, l'influence italienne en Afrique... La situation de la Tunisie est delicate, à cause des ambitions et des competitiions nationales. Il faut eviter de jeter de l'huile sur ce feu,” Cardinal Charles Lavigerie to Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, Tunis, 20 Oct. 1883. APF, *Scritti Riferite nei Congressi- Barberia* (1883-1892), Volume 22.

Italian migrants away from destinations in the Americas, as Italian expansionists hoped, and Italy's expansion into East Africa was halted by the Italian army's disastrous defeat at Adwa, Ethiopia in 1896. Lay Catholic nationalists, however, supported Italy's expansion before and after Adwa, and they jealously tried to keep French missionaries out of Italian East Africa. The *Associazione Nazionale*, the *Opera* Bonomelli's lay collaborators from 1900 to 1907, was also a vocal supporter of Italian colonial expansion. Though Italy's initial imperial conquests in East Africa failed to garner much enthusiasm from diaspora Italians, national conflicts frequently eclipsed international Catholic unity among both the Italian state and groups like the *Associazione Nazionale*, stakeholders who were also invested in Italian migrants around the globe.

Italian imperialism in East Africa began slowly. The Rubattino shipping company acquired rights over the Red Sea port of Aseb in 1869, but despite the company's desire to draw Italy into African imperialism, the Italian government did not send the military to occupy the port until 1882, when the British established a protectorate in Egypt and the year after the French began their Tunisian protectorate. Italy acquired several other Red Sea ports in the 1880s and protectorate agreements over coastal cities in Somalia. In 1890, the Italian government combined its Red Sea possession into a colony that Prime Minister Francesco Crispi named "Eritrea." Italian expansionists hoped that Eritrea would lure Italian migrants away from the territories of other nations and become a settler colony dedicated to agriculture. In 1891, Bishop Scalabrini wrote to the head of the *Propaganda Fide*, offering two of his missionaries to run a church and orphanage in Massawa whose director had recently been removed. Scalabrini received no reply, and

his missionaries worked exclusively with Italians in the Americas until the 1930s.<sup>202</sup> Ultimately few Italians settled in Eritrea during Italian possession, despite multiple government efforts to attract settlers, particularly families, to the colony, and missionaries who worked with Italian migrants focused their efforts elsewhere.

Catholic expansionists, particularly the *Associazione Nazionale*, supported the Eritrean colony because of their Italian nationalism, despite the paucity of Italian settlers who came to Eritrea. As we saw in the previous chapter, a group of influential Italian Catholic men, including senators, lawyers, and professors, had founded the *Associazione Nazionale* in 1887 to spread Christianity and Italian culture overseas, particularly in Africa and the Middle East. The autonomous, lay-run organization provided funds and support for Italian missionaries' activities, including Italian schools in the Middle East and Italian colonies which worked with both Italians and indigenous peoples.<sup>203</sup> The *Associazione Nazionale* wanted *italianità*, meaning elite Italian language and culture, spread abroad not only to promote Italian interests but also to bring Italian civilization to the peoples of Africa, whom they considered savage. The *Associazione Nazionale* regarded other European powers as threatening competitors, even when they were Catholic, and the organization's aims were belligerently nationalistic. The group stated that its goals were "to support the Italian Missionaries, to save them from the influences of foreign Governments, and to provide them with the means to spread, along with the

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<sup>202</sup> Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini to Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, Piacenza, 18 July 1891. APF, Fondo scritture riferite nei Congressi: Africa Centrale, Etiopia, Arabia Volume 10.

<sup>203</sup> Fedele Lampertico, *Indole e scope dell'Associazione nazionale per soccorrere i missionarj cattolici italiani, in relazione alla condizione presente e avvenire dell'Italia; discorso tenuto il 31 luglio nel Teatro Olimpico di Vicenza*. (Firenze: M. Cellini e c, 1887).

Faith, our language, our language, and the love of our country."<sup>204</sup> The *Associazione Nazionale* often publicly complained about the influence of French missionaries and how they spread the French language in parts of Africa and the Middle East where the Italian state sought territories or influence. In Cairo, where there were many Italian migrants but Italy controlled no territory, the *Associazione Nazionale* complained that missionaries and sisters there were not promoting *italianità*, but instead disseminating French language and culture.

The *Associazione Nazionale* monitored the national activities of missionaries in Eritrea and only supported Italian missionaries because they could spread *italianità*. As Italy began to have settlements along the Red Sea, the group lamented that only Italian troops, not the indigenous people, could speak Italian. An *Associazione Nazionale* member, Piero Gori, visited Italian schools along the Red Sea and reported the dominance of French language over Italian. French Lazarist missionaries ran the only school in Massawa. Gori lamented that the only European language that indigenous leaders could converse in was "*French*, and we must *use this language* to converse with those Chiefs although they are *dependent on us...* Oh! I must ask myself whether the French and not the Italians hold dominion over these possessions [emphasis in original]."<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> "per soccorrere i Missionari italiani, per sottrarli alle influenze dei Governi stranieri, e fornir loro i mezzi di diffondere, insieme colla Fede, la nostra lingua e l'amore per la nostra patria," "*Associazione nazionale per soccorrere i missionari cattolici italiani*," *Rassegna Nazionale* IX, Vol. XXXIV, 1 Apr 1887, 530-1. See also Licata, *La Rassegna nazionale*, 125-7.

<sup>205</sup> "...il francese, e noi si dovette usare di questa lingua per conversare con quei Capi che pure sono *alla nostra dipendenza...* Oh! che si doveva chiedere a me stesso se i Francesi e non piuttosto gli Italiani tenevano in loro dominio quei possedimenti." Piero Gori, "Relazione nobile dell Dott. Nob. Piero Gori," *Rassegna Nazionale* XI, No. XLVIII (16 July 1889): 406.

As in Tunisia, the influence of French missionaries upset Italian nationalists, but since Italy controlled Eritrea, the Italian government could remove them in favor of Italian missionaries. Late nineteenth-century Italian colonialists arrived in the Red Sea and Abyssinia to find several missions run by French priests belonging to the Congregation of the Mission, commonly called Lazarists, their religious sisters and lay collaborators, and several indigenous Lazarists. The Lazarists had operated missions in Africa since the mid-seventeenth century and Lazarists in Italian East Africa received support from a missionary organization in Lyon. The Italian government and members of the *Associazione Nazionale* quickly saw French Lazarists as an obstacle to Italian influence in Eritrea. The Italian government expelled all French Lazarists from Eritrea in 1895, and Pope Leo XIII placed Eritrea under the Capuchins' direction.<sup>206</sup>

The Italian government supported Italian missionaries' activities in Eritrea because it welcomed the cultural imperialism embedded in the missionaries' work. The government hoped that Italian Catholic schools and missions would make Italian the dominant European language and culture in the colony. In 1896, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote to the Governor of Eritrea and said that the Italian government wanted to provide financial and moral support to missionaries' schools and charitable activities in Eritrea previously run by French Lazarists. The minister warned against repeating the mistake of Italian Franciscans in Egypt. The Franciscans brought in another group of French missionaries to work in their missions. The French missionaries

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<sup>206</sup> On French missionary influence during the nineteenth century, see Philippe Boutry, "Le mouvement vers Rome et le renouveau missionnaire," In *Histoire de la France religieuse. Tome 3* (Paris: Seuil, 1991); Yannick Essertel, *L'aventure missionnaire lyonnaise: 1815-1962: de Pauline Jaricot à Jules Monchanin* (Paris: Cerf, 2001).



eventually directed the schools and erased the Italian Capuchins' cultural influence with their own. The Minister said that all schools in the apostolic prefecture in Eritrea<sup>207</sup> must "completely respond to the national aims of the government's work and be informed by the criteria of a happy modernity, according to local circumstances and our needs."<sup>208</sup>

Though few Italian migrants became settlers in Eritrea, Catholic clergy came to Eritrea to provide both religious and charitable services that mimicked those in other Italian migrant communities and in European settler colonies. Italian military chaplains did early evangelization and charitable work, including assistance to indigenous peoples. Both the government and the Church requested priests and religious from Italy. Priests and sisters built churches and ran schools and orphanages serving both Italian and local children. In 1900 Michele DaCarbonara, a Capuchin priest and the Apostolic Prefect of Eritrea, founded the *Pia Opera dei fanciulli africani*, an effort to educate and evangelize children and slaves in Eritrea. The *Associazione Nazionale* provided funds for this work and DaCarbonara traveled to Italy to promote his work and raise money.<sup>209</sup> DaCarbonara and the *Associazione Nazionale* often wrote to the Italian government to obtain free travel for priests and sisters coming from Italy to the colony. The government provided subsidies to the Sisters of St. Anna and the Capuchin fathers for their work, but it closely monitored the orders' activities and results. In 1891, the Civil and Military

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<sup>207</sup> An apostolic prefecture is a territorial administrative unit used by the Church in a missionary territory that does not have enough Catholics to merit being a diocese. The Apostolic Prefect is the bishop who runs the prefecture.

<sup>208</sup> "risponda pienamente ai fini nazionali dell'opera governativa e sia informata ai criteri di una felice modernità, a seconda delle circostanze locali e dei nostri bisogni," Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Governor of Eritrea, Rome, 6 July 1896. ASMAE, Ministero Africa Italiana (Vol. 1) Eritrea- Posizione 33/1 F.10.

<sup>209</sup> Michele Da Carbonara, "Pia Opera dei fanciulli africani- Letter ai fanciulli d'Italia," *Rassegna Nazionale* XXII, Vol. CXI (1 Feb. 1900): 594-6; Luisa Giulio Benso. "Padre Michele da Carbonara: prefetto apostolico dell'Eritrea," *Rassegna Nazionale* XXXII, Vol. CLXXV (1 Sept 1910): 44-58.

Commissioners in Asab complained to the governor of the colony that the Capuchins' work in Eritrea was "of little use to Italian influences and of even less to the teaching of the language."<sup>210</sup>

Italian missionaries continued their work despite Italy's catastrophic defeat at Adwa in 1896, which halted Italian colonial expansion for fifteen years. Italy had continued its expansion attempts in East Africa at the end of the nineteenth century, gaining additional territory in Somalia and in Abyssinia (present day Ethiopia), one of the few places on the African continent that had escaped foreign domination. Italian leaders sought to expand from Eritrea into the Abyssinian highlands and invaded Abyssinia in 1895. The war ended in March 1896, when Ethiopian troops defeated the ill-prepared Italians at the Battle of Adwa, causing between four and seven thousand Italian casualties. The defeat triggered fierce resistance to Italian imperialism among many Italians and politicians, embarrassed Italy (the first European power defeated by an African army), ended the career of Italian Prime Minister Francesco Crispi, and prevented Italy from seeking additional imperial conquests until the Italian invasion of Libya in 1911.<sup>211</sup> Italy did not, however, abandon its other colonies in East Africa. As the interests of the *Associazione Nazionale* and many missionaries attested, Italian Catholic missionaries continued to work in East Africa, supported by the Italian government, in their efforts to spread *italianità* alongside Catholicism.

### **Italian Demographic Imperialism in the Americas**

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<sup>210</sup> "...è poco utile all'influenza italiana e ancora meno all'insegnamento della lingua," R. Commissariato Civile in Assab to Governatore Civile e Militare della Colonia Italiana, Massaua, Assab, Eritrea, 20 Mar 1891. ASMAE, Ministero Africa Italiana (Vol. 1)- Eritrea- Posizione 33/2 f. 25 .

<sup>211</sup> Italy did acquire a commercial concession in Tientsin, China (today known as Tianjin) in 1901, but this was not a military conquest.

The Italian state undertook no imperial invasions between the 1896 Adwa defeat and the invasion of Libya in 1911. During these years, Italian emigration, already substantial, swelled. Between 1901 and 1915, 8,769,680 Italians emigrated across the globe, an average of 584,645 per year, an average that was double the period 1876-1901.<sup>212</sup> Expansionists were disappointed that few migrants showed interest in Eritrea, but they also believed migrant communities abroad could drive another type of Italian expansion: demographic imperialism. Demographic imperialism sought to utilize Italy's enormous transnational migrant population by redirecting it to Italy's colonial territories, and, when that failed, tying Italian communities abroad to Italy for financial and political gain. Catholic expansionists, such as members of the missionary federation *Italica Gens*, comfortably supported demographic imperialism as an extension of the Italian nation-building work in which they were already engaged.

Colonialism and Italian migration were entwined in both Italian thinking and as political problems even before Italy acquired an overseas empire. Leone Carpi wrote one of the first studies of Italian colonialism in 1874, and he noted that, in the Italian language, the word *colonia* (colony) meant both emigrant settlements and overseas possessions. Carpi argued that emigration was a form of colonialism and that Italy should prefer permanent over temporary migration because permanent migration gave Italy deep-rooted markets and political influence in another country. Historian Mark Choate has shown how the Liberal Italian government attempted to utilize emigrants as part of an "ethnographic empire." In the 1880s, Prime Minister Crispi supported Italian

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<sup>212</sup> Gianfausto Rosoli, *Un Secolo Di Emigrazione Italiana: 1876-1976* (Roma: Centro studi emigrazione, 1978), 27.

schools, state-funded charities, and diplomatic networks connecting Italian emigrant communities to Italy. At the same time, he encouraged migrants to go to Italy's African colonies, mimicking the colonization undertaken by ancient Roman legions. When transatlantic migration continued to eclipse settlement in Italy's colonies, the economist Luigi Einaudi argued instead for a model of economic colonization that echoed the power of medieval Italy's wealthy merchant republics. Expansionists adopted his belief that Italian settlements in the Americas, not in Italy's African colonies, offered the real opportunity for Italian financial gain and cultural influence. Shortly after the turn of the century, the Italian government passed a series of measures which supported transnational commerce, agriculture in migrant settlements, migrant banks which allowed migrants to safely transfer remittances back to Italy, and information and travel assistance so that migrants could travel safely and find employment.<sup>213</sup>

*Italica Gens*, a federation of religious orders and missionaries aiding Italians, coordinated transnational missionary networks in support of demographic imperialism. Ernesto Schiaparelli, an *Associazione Nazionale* officer and former *Opera Bonomelli* collaborator, founded *Italica Gens* in 1909. *Italica Gens* sought the cooperation of all Italian missionaries as well as religious of other nationalities who "with high sentiment of Christian charity grew fond of Italian emigrants like people of their own nation."<sup>214</sup> *Italica Gens* quickly grew into a global federation which did not provide its own services but instead connected work already being done across the world. Missions joined the

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<sup>213</sup> Mark Choate, "From Territorial to Ethnographic Colonies and Back Again: The Politics of Italian Expansion, 1890-1912," *Modern Italy* 8, No. 1 (2003): 65-75. See also Mark Choate, *Emigrant Nation*.

<sup>214</sup> "... con alto sentimento di carità cristiana si sono affezionati agli emigranti italiani come a gente della loro nazione..." "L'Italica Gens," *Italica Gens*. 1, Vol. 1 (February 1910): 5.

federation in the form of a simple secretariat headed by a priest or religious who maintained contact with *Italica Gens*. Large cities such as New York, Buenos Aires, and Chicago had many secretariats that corresponded with *Italica Gens*'s central office in Turin. The secretariats were located in Italian communities around the world as well as in transit points. *Italica Gens* had busy secretariats at the ports of Naples and Genoa, and the Italian St. Raphael Society in New York and Boston were members. Catholic Missionaries rapidly joined *Italica Gens*. The Salesians were among the first to join *Italica Gens*, and many Scalabrinians, Franciscans, and several *Opera Bonomelli* priests added their missions to the *Italica Gens* network.

While *Italica Gens*' lay directors shared Catholic missionary groups' desire to foster migrants' *italianità*, *Italica Gens* had the explicitly political goal of harnessing migrants' resources and loyalty for the Italian state. Instead of the promotion of Catholicism and Catholic influence over Italian migrants, *Italica Gens* sought to turn migration, which it considered a "crisis," into a source of financial and cultural strength and influence. In its first bulletin, *Italica Gens* argued that emigration could be a "peaceful and secure means of vast colonial expansion." The article warned that if Italy did not act swiftly and ably, it would lose a "favorable occasion, envied by other nations, to take a considerable step up in political and economic power."<sup>215</sup> *Italica Gens* encouraged an Italian imperial nationalism that would bolster Italian finances and international prestige.

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<sup>215</sup>“un mezzo pacific e sicuro di vasta espansione colonial....un’occasione favorevole e da altre nazioni invidiata, di salire un gradino considerevole nella potenza economica e politica,” “L’Italica Gens,” 5.

Catholicism was deeply ingrained in *Italica Gens* and the imperial nationalism it extolled. The organization claimed to be motivated by Italian patriotism and "Christian charity" and did not claim a specific allegiance to the Catholic Church. Instead, *Italica Gens* claimed to be an "apolitical and nondenominational institution open to all, whatever party and whatever faith they belong to."<sup>216</sup> In reality, Catholic Italian missionaries headed most of its secretariats. *Italica Gens* did not tolerate anticlericalism and warned those who did not like religion (and thus might interfere with the federation's work) that "any action hostile to *Italica Gens* would be considered contrary to national and social interests."<sup>217</sup> Despite the federation's claim to be apolitical, this claim was a clear political stance in the fraught Italian politics of the early twentieth century. Such a statement set *Italica Gens* in immediate opposition to anticlerical groups such as the socialist *Umanitaria* which assisted Italian migrants in Europe. At the same time, *Italica Gens*'s proud Italian nationalism made it suspicious to intransigent Catholics who, as the previous chapter showed, worked to diminish its influence within the *Opera Bonomelli*.

*Italica Gens* encouraged missionaries' paternalistic supervision of migrants, believing that the organization and its members knew what migrants needed to learn and avoid. In its inaugural magazine article about the organization, *Italica Gens* identified three major problems for migrants: "poverty, lack of culture, [and] lack of a ruling class."<sup>218</sup> Only a small proportion of Italian migrants- "a more cultured, more capable element" - had the ability to help the other migrants and ensure that the community had a

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<sup>216</sup> "istituzione apolitical ed aconfessionale, aperta a tutti, a qualsiasi partito ed a qualsiasi fede appartengano," "L'Italica Gens," 15.

<sup>217</sup> "ogni azione ostile all'*Italica Gens* sarebbe contraria agli interessi nazionali e sociali," "L'Italica Gens," 15.

<sup>218</sup> "la povertà, la poca cultura, la mancanza di un ceto dirigente," "L'Italica Gens," 7.

better future.<sup>219</sup> *Italica Gens* hoped to appeal to this element to support its work and the way it believed the Italian community should be organized. Members were supposed to support *Italica Gens's* goals of Italians' material and moral development abroad. For *Italica Gens*, improving migrants' material position meant helping them to avoid poverty and exploitation through charitable assistance and reliable information about work opportunities. Moral development did not explicitly mean the promotion of Catholicism, as it did for individual missionary orders. Instead, *Italica Gens* was deeply concerned that most Italian migrants lacked an Italian national consciousness because they had little to no education or exposure to *italianità* in their home communities in Italy. *Italica Gens* therefore supported the spread of Italian language and high culture abroad through Italian schools that would develop *italianità* abroad and support Italian political and cultural expansion.

Catholic proponents of Italian demographic imperialism such as the members of *Italica Gens* argued that Italian agricultural settlements were the best destination for Italian migrants because they could become oases of Catholic *italianità*. While the biggest Italian communities were in urban areas, missionaries believed that Italians would do best living in Italian agricultural communities similar to the Italian communities they left behind. In rural communities, migrants could avoid the temptations of cities and people there who would exploit Italian migrants or treat them with prejudice. Pietro Pisani, a priest who participated in the founding of the *Opera Bonomelli* and was active in *Italica Gens*, wrote a lengthy piece in *Italica Gens* urging Italians to settle their own

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<sup>219</sup>“un elemento più colto, più capace,” “I problemi dell'emigrazione al Parlamento italiano,” *Italica Gens*. 1, Vol. 7-8 (August-September 1910): 295.

farms in rural areas of the United States and Canada. He envisioned "...homogenous groups capable of marching in good order to the peaceful conquest of lands, on which to plant if not the flag at least the national character, founding villages and cities that remember the name of the motherland."<sup>220</sup> Pisani also noted that several American bishops had founded Catholic colonization societies which had "colonizing priests of various nationalities" who were creating new rural communities.

The most famous of the few organized Italian colonization attempts was Tontitown, an agricultural colony in northwestern Arkansas. Scalabrinian Father Pietro Bandini, who had established the Italian St. Raphael Society in New York in 1892, founded Tontitown in 1898. Tontitown was an agricultural settlement for several dozen Italian families who left a plantation in southeastern Arkansas which had attracted them with promises of landownership that were never fulfilled. Bandini organized the community, led it across the state, organized the purchase of land and its distribution to families, developed local farming and businesses, and founded the community's church and parochial school, where he taught Italian. Though the early years were difficult, Bandini led Tontitown until his death in 1917. He put the tiny community on a path to sustainability and earned the populace's affection. Bandini retained deep affection for Italy but also fought for the people of Tontitown's place and rights in the United States, even under threat of xenophobic violence from nearby communities.<sup>221</sup>

Both secular and religious Italian authorities recognized Bandini's work. The

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<sup>220</sup>“gruppi omogenei capaci di marciare in buon ordine alla conquista pacifica sulle terre, su cui trapiantare se non la bandiera, almeno il carattere nazionale, fondando villaggi e città che ricordino nel nome di madre patria,” Pietro Pisani, “Emigrati, alla terra!” *Italica Gens* 1, No. 6 (June 1910): 322.

<sup>221</sup>Jeffrey Lewellen, “Sheep Amidst the Wolves: Father Bandini and the Colony at Tontitown, 1898-1917,” *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*. 45, No. 1 (Spring, 1986): 19-40.



Italian ambassador to the United States visited Tontitown with great fanfare in 1905, and in 1911 Bandini received recognition from the Italian Queen Margherita. That same year, Bandini also received a pontifical award, an award which had been delayed because the local American bishop viewed Bandini distastefully because he had heard that Bandini admired Garibaldi. In the *Italica Gens* bulletin, Pisani described Tontitown as "a wonderful example of what can be done through a priest's energy supported by the good will of honest and attentive workers, determined to build their future with their own hands."<sup>222</sup> While lauded, Tontitown remained a small, isolated settlement. Tontitown demonstrated that great work, knowledge, leadership, and perseverance were crucial to such an agricultural settlement's survival, and this model proved neither practical or appealing for the millions of Italian who emigrated before World War I.

While Tontitown is the best known example of an Italian agricultural settlement in the Americas, South America became the object of both secular and Catholic hopes for Italian demographic imperialism. Many South American nations such as Brazil and Argentina encouraged Italian colonization with policies intended to populate rural areas with European immigrants, simultaneous exercises in nation-building and racial whitening projects that lasted well into the twentieth century. Italian migrants could obtain lands in rural South America much more easily than in the United States or Europe. In 1911, Ranieri Venerosi, editor of *Italica Gens*, proposed increased and directed Italian settlement to areas of southern Argentina and Brazil where the land was

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<sup>222</sup> "...un mirabile esempio di quello che possa l'energia d'un sacerdote secondata dalla buona volontà di lavoratori onesti e consci, deliberati di fabbricarsi colle proprie mani il loro avvenire," Pietro Pisani, "Un pioniere della colonizzazione italiana negli Stati Uniti d'America," *Italica Gens*. 1, Vol. 1, (February 1910): 37.

good and there were already small, stable Italian communities. Venerosi believed that a flow of Italian capital into "some serious and important colonization ventures" there could provide the colonies with "desired economic independence" and would promote "appropriate ethnic grouping."<sup>223</sup> He believed that if Italians were encouraged to settle there and received such support from Italians in other areas of Argentina or from Italy, Italians in the agricultural colonies would prosper and develop any infrastructure they currently lacked. Salesians, Venerosi noted, were already in the region assisting and teaching Italians both religion and effective farming methods.

Most agricultural waged labor, however, did not fit into these idealized scenarios. Catholic missionaries wanted Italians to own their own small pieces of land near other Italians doing the same. Missionaries did not want migrants to be itinerant wage laborers (*braccianti*), a difficult and unstable life migrants had left Italy to escape. Unfortunately, the agricultural work most Italians found in South America was temporary work on plantations, including Brazil's notorious *fazendas* (farms) where work was brutal and poorly paid. Most Italian migrants continued migrating to urban centers around the world or worked in construction and other types of manual labor where they lived in camps with other workers.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> "Una buona soluzione per un avviamento conveniente della nostra emigrazione nel Sud si potrebbe avere se il capital italiano si facesse guida e sostegno delle nostre forze di lavoro provvedendo alla costituzione in quelle regioni di qualche seria ed importante impresa di colonizzazione, capace di procurare ai coloni italiani la desiderata indipendenza economica e di promuoverne il conveniente raggruppamento etnico." Ranieri Venerosi, "La colonizzazione della Patagonia e l'emigrazione italiana," *Italica Gens* II, No. 12 (December 191): 476.

<sup>224</sup> Fernando Devoto and Roberto Benencia, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Ed. Sudamericana, 2009); Jeffrey Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Catholic expansionists' plans to direct migrants toward isolated Italian communities abroad had little more success than the Italian state's efforts to redirect migrants to Italian colonial possessions such as Eritrea. Both Catholic and secular Italian demographic imperialism more effectively supported migrants' emotional and cultural ties to Italy. Italian Catholic missionaries like the Scalabrinians and the *Opera Bonomelli* had promoted migrants' identification as part of an Italian national community since their beginnings. Both groups hoped Italian migrants would preserve an Italian culture that the missionaries considered intrinsically Catholic, and while many of these missionaries interacted with agents of the Italian state, they did not publicly advocate for migrants to benefit the state. By contrast, *Italica Gens* and some Catholic imperialists wanted migrants to support both the Italian state and the Catholic Church for the benefit of both institutions. They saw no contradiction in this position, though such ideas were repugnant to the Holy See, which remained estranged from the Italian state and tried to prevent all lay influence over Church institutions. Catholic imperialists' support for the Italian states led them to celebrate when the Italian state launched new attempts at military expansion in 1911.

### **Diaspora Enthusiasm for the Italian Invasion of Libya**

Italy's 1911-1912 colonial war in Libya was the first time that diaspora Italians supported Italian imperialism and some missionaries publicly embraced Italian imperial nationalism. Pride in the Italian state's accomplishments as opposed to a singularly apolitical idea of a "national community" now increasingly entered into missionaries' *italianità*. Missionaries remained dedicated to an *italianità* rooted in Catholicism, but

they were sympathetic to an imperial conquest that claimed to bring Catholic civilization to Muslim Libya. Many missionaries and Italian migrants also welcomed an Italian imperial success which reflected well on Italy and, by extension, Italian migrants. During the Libyan War, Italian imperial nationalism provided a tangible benefit to Italian migrants and did not conflict with Catholicism, unlike Italian liberal nationalism which was often anticlerical.

A positive portrayal of the war as a clear Italian triumph over backward Arabs captured much support from Italians around the world. By the 1910s, a new generation of Italian nationalists emerged in Italy and built enthusiasm for Italian imperialism within the government. They argued that empire-building was in Italy's national interests both as a source of prestige and a destination for Italy's millions of migrants. Italian imperialists continued to envision the Mediterranean as *mare nostrum* and sought the tenuously-held Ottoman regions of Tripolitana and Cyrenaica (Libya)<sup>225</sup> to prevent France and Britain from gaining complete control of the Mediterranean. Italy invaded Libya and declared victory in 1912, but until the 1920s, Italy had little real control over Libya with the exception of some cities and the coast. The Italian military faced a fierce anti-colonial resistance through the 1930s. To crush it, the Italian military employed brutal methods including chemical weapons, massive incarceration in internment camps, and bloody reprisals against rebels and, on occasion, civilians.<sup>226</sup>

Catholic enthusiasts for the "victory" in Libya did not mention (and perhaps were

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<sup>225</sup> Italian administrators soon began calling the area Libya, but this name was not official until 1934. The present-day Libyan nation-state includes these two regions as well as a third southwestern region, Fezzan.

<sup>226</sup> See Labanca, *Oltremare*, 109-121.

not aware of) these conditions. Instead, Italy's attempt to conquer Libya began an important period of patriotic nation-building in the Italian diaspora. For the first time, Italians abroad felt part of an Italian nation and became invested in the state's success. Stefano Luconi terms this feeling “war-induced nationalism” and argues it was a contributing factor to Italian-Americans' initial elaboration of an ethnic identity.<sup>227</sup> He finds that the Libyan war began a process which would reach its high point in 1935-1936 during the Second Italo-Ethiopian War.

Catholic clergy also celebrated Italy's military action because they hoped Italy would displace the Muslim Ottoman Empire and restore North Africa to the Christianity, as it had been in Late Antiquity. Father Domenico Belliotti of Providence, influential in the Italian-American community there, described the war as against “barbarous, unchristian, terrible Turkey, one of the first countries that had the opportunity to become Christianized, one of the lands for which the blood of our Savior was shed; but which is today only an uncivilized country.”<sup>228</sup> In Italy, Bishop Bonomelli wrote a widely-publicized letter in support of the war. He wrote “Next to the Italian tricolor I see the cross raised; alongside the spread of civilization I see the spread of religion, which ended the world's slavery and brought it life, benefitting the Christian nations.”<sup>229</sup> He exhorted both priests and the faithful to support the war.

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<sup>227</sup>Stefano Luconi, “The Impact of Italy's Twentieth-Century Wars on Italian Americans' Ethnic Identity,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 13, No. 3 (2007): 465-491.

<sup>228</sup> Quoted in Luconi, “The Impact of Italy's Twentieth-Century Wars,” 11.

<sup>229</sup> “Accanto al tricolore italiano io veggo innalzarsi la croce; accanto alla benefica eloquenza dell'opere civili io veggo distendersi l'eloquenza della religione, che ha tratto di servitù il mondo e portato quel mirabile incremento di vita, di che s'avvantaggiano le nazioni cristiane,” Geremia Bonomelli, “Per i nostri soldati in guerra contro la Turchia,” *Rassegna Nazionale* XXXIII, Vol. CLXXXI (16 October 1911): 545.

*Italica Gens* welcomed the Italian invasion as a return to Italy's historic greatness. In the first article on Libya in its magazine, *Italica Gens* portrayed the Italian victory as proof of Italians' historic, religious, and racial superiority. Italy was "reconquering" territory it "already possessed in the time of the Roman Empire" and bringing the area's Muslims "the light of progress."<sup>230</sup> The article celebrated the Italian military's strength and success, never mentioning any Italian atrocities. *Italica Gens* declared that "Now, fifty years after its unification, strengthened and enriched, Italy begins to be able to follow and support the inevitable expansion movement produced by the exuberance of the life of its people."<sup>231</sup> *Italica Gens* believed Italy would now profit from migrants' successes abroad instead of losing its human resources to receiving countries. *Italica Gens* looked forward to seeing Italians in areas once colonized by Romans, and while the article admitted that much of the Roman infrastructure was in disrepair, it blamed this on centuries of the "Arabs' indolence and bad governance."<sup>232</sup>

Catholic imperialists entwined *italianità's* claims of Italy's historic accomplishments with contemporary notions of Western racial superiority, and in this way, justified Italy's imperial rule over non-Western peoples. For *Italica Gens*, like other Italian patriotic organizations, the Libyan victory meant that Italy had arrived on the world stage and proved itself a European Great Power. It opined "A country which possesses such an armada, displays the virile attitudes and high patriotic spirit of its

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<sup>230</sup> "l'Italia riconquista quelle provincie che già possedè ai tempi dell'Impero Romano, e si accinge a redimerle dal triste decadimento in cui le ha portate la signoria Mussulmana e ad irradiarvi la luce del suo progresso civile," "La Libia Italiana," *Italica Gens* II, No. 10. (Oct 1911): 361.

<sup>231</sup> "Ora, cinquant'anni dopo la sua unificazione, rafforzata ed arricchita, l'Italia comincia ad essere in grado di seguire e secondare il movimento di espansione ineluttabilmente prodotto dall'esuberanza di vita della sua gente." "La Libia Italiana," 364.

<sup>232</sup> "indolenza e al mal governo delle popolazioni arabe," "La Libia Italiana," 362.

people, can look confidently toward the future because it has in itself the vital force of superior races."<sup>233</sup> *Italica Gens* and others shared racist European beliefs that imperialism was a reflection of the world's natural order in which superior races ruled those which were weaker. Italian migrants' desperation did not make these Catholic imperialists more sympathetic to other peoples. Instead, Bishop Bonomelli argued that it was the Ottomans who were the tyrants because they deprived the Libyans of civilization. He cited the "indisputable law on the part of the oppressed, the right to a government that best provides for their moral and economic interests" which he claimed the colonized peoples of northern and southern Africa had already obtained. "This civilizing mission," he wrote "will be accomplished by Italy."<sup>234</sup>

For Italian Catholic missionaries, the Libyan War began a period in which many missionaries increasingly adopted Italian imperial nationalism alongside their Catholic *italianità*. Despite its difficulties establishing control over Libya, the Italian government considered Italy a success, and this confidence motivated its drives for further expansion in the Balkans and Mediterranean. Italy then took the Dodecanese Islands, a chain of Greek-speaking islands in the Aegean Sea, from the Ottomans in 1912. When World War I broke out in 1914, imperialists in the government sought additional lands in Europe. For missionaries serving in countries not at war with Italy during World War I, the war

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<sup>233</sup> "Un paese che possiede una tale armata, esponente delle attitudini virili e dell'alto spirit patriottico del suo popolo, può guardare fiduciosamente all'avvenire, perchè ha in sè il germe vitale delle razze superiori," "La Libia Italiana," 362.

<sup>234</sup> "diritto indiscutibile da parte degli oppressi, il diritto a un governo, che meglio provveda ai loro interessi economici e morali....Questa missione di civiltà verrà compiuta dall'Italia." Bonomelli, "Per i nostri soldati in guerra contro la Turchia," 544.

provided an opportunity to further develop this new sense of nationalism as they celebrated Italy's victory.

### **Catholic Nationalism and World War I**

The Italian nationalism displayed by Italian missionaries during World War I highlights the limits of Catholic universalism for missionaries throughout the Italian diaspora. Hopes of imperialist expansion in Europe incited the Liberal Italian government to enter the war and to change its diplomatic alliance to the Entente Powers. Missionaries in Italian communities around the world cheered Italy's victory and provided humanitarian assistance to Italian soldiers and refugees. The war also changed the activities of missionaries in Europe who now helped thousands of Italian refugees trying to return to Italy. Although the Holy See remained neutral and repeatedly called for peace, celebrating Italian missionaries' work when it was supposedly neutral, Italian missionaries, like much of the Italian Church, usually supported the war effort and chose Italian nationalism over pan-Catholic solidarity.

Irredentism, another form of Italian imperialism, drove Italy's entrance into World War I. Irredentism was a movement during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to annex territories to the Italian state. These territories contained many ethnic Italians, and irredentists sought to free "unredeemed Italy" (*Italia irredenta*) from foreign control. Irredentists particularly coveted the region of Trentino, the seaport of Trieste, and territory around the Alps and in Dalmatia. The Austro-Hungarian Empire, a longtime Italian foe and major obstacle to Italian Unification in the mid-nineteenth century, ruled these areas and drew irredentists' particular ire. Irredentists also eyed several



Mediterranean islands. Irredentist desires motivated many Italian political and military machinations, most notably during World War I, and their calls for annexation were taken up by the Fascist state after 1922.<sup>235</sup>

Like previous Italian attempts at imperial expansion, World War I demonstrated the gap between Italian imperial dreams and the reality of frequent Italian missteps and disunity. Though Italy first renewed its Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1912, Italian irredentists continued to covet Austrian-controlled lands. After the war's outbreak in 1914, Prime Minister Antonio Salandra kept Italy neutral and secretly negotiated with both the Triple Alliance and its opponents, the Triple Entente of Britain, France, and Russia. Salandra wanted the greatest promise of territory, and, in May 1915, he entered Italy into the war on the side of the Triple Entente in exchange for future Austrian territory. The Italian government did not, however, ensure that Italy had adequate supplies or preparation: the military first learned of the change in alliance three weeks before Italy declared war. However, King Victor Emmanuel III, Salandra, famed irredentist Gabriele D'Annunzio, and mobs whipped into frenzies clamored for war and expansion. Italy's new alliance was more palatable to the Italian public because the Italians were fighting Austria-Hungary, the historical enemy of Italian Unification and irredentism, and the Ottoman Empire, which Italy had already fought for territories in the

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<sup>235</sup>While irredentism was a separate political movement that took place after the Risorgimento, the Risorgimento was also predicated on the idea that certain areas belonged to an Italian state and should be taken from the power that ruled them. The Papal States, Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire all lost territories during Italian Unification, with the two former powers disappearing entirely when their lands were annexed by the Kingdom of Sardinia-Piedmont. When the Kingdom of Italy was declared in 1861, Rome and the Veneto were not part of the new state, though they were added by military force during the ensuing decade. Many of the *terre irredente* that Italian nationalists coveted at the beginning of the twentieth century had been desired since the Risorgimento. See Luciano Monzali, *The Italians of Dalmatia: From Italian Unification to World War I* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

Mediterranean. The war proved much longer and more difficult than anyone had anticipated. By 1917, Italy was weak and disorganized: morale was low, exacerbated by the Italian army's defeat at Caporetto, Austria-Hungary, and many soldiers defected. However, a year later, as the Triple Alliance collapsed, the Italians pushed into Trieste and won the Battle of Vittorio Veneto which became a source of national pride. Italy emerged from the war among the victors, but it did not receive all the territories the Entente Powers initially promised, creating resentment that would feed postwar discontent and disunity.<sup>236</sup>

Predictably, Catholic proponents of Italian imperialism and irredentism had energetically welcomed the war and with it, possible territorial gains. *Italica Gens* supported the war, publishing an article saying "We give this fervent greeting to Italy's entry in the war thinking of the extraordinary advantage that our emigrants, our colonies, and our workers abroad will receive, whose morale will be greatly raised..." *Italica Gens* confidently predicted an Italian victory that would raise the profile of Italians around the world. "During and after the war we will not longer be a weak people...Our emigrants, held in the respect and consideration they should be, will be desired and sought-after everywhere."<sup>237</sup> *Italica Gens* included Italians in *Italia irredenta* as part of the global Italian national community and insisted that "all [Italy's] children must be reunited to it, along with its six million emigrants, of whom many wait for the war and fight in it so that

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<sup>236</sup> Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig. "Italy," In *The Origins of World War I*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>237</sup> "E questo fervido saluto all'entrata dell'Italia in guerra lo diamo pure pensando al vantaggio straordinario, che ne riceveranno i nostri emigrati, i nostri coloni e lavoratori all'estero, il cui morale sarà fortemente rialzato... Con la guerra e dopo la guerra non saremo più un popolo debole... I nostri emigranti, tenuti nel rispetto e nella considerazione dovuta, saranno ovunque desiderati e ricercati." "La nostra Guerra," *Italica Gens* 4, No. 3-6. (March-June 1915): 145-146.

their dispersion ends and the formation of our colonies in regions not far from native soil begins."<sup>238</sup> The organization considered itself the "natural Institution" for Italians in Trieste, Trento, and Dalmatia and said they would find a "fraternal aid" at secretariats in the United States, Brazil, Argentina, Australia, and New Zealand.

By contrast, the Holy See remained neutral throughout the war and consistently pushed all belligerents for peace. Pius X died on August 20, 1914 and Benedict XV became pope on September 3, 1914, only weeks after the war began. Benedict adopted a policy of neutrality for the Holy See and tried to use his diplomatic influence to keep Italy out of the war and broker peace among all combatants. As the war dragged on, Benedict did grant the Italian government's request to allow Italian bishops and priests to support the war effort, but he continued to work for peace. On August 1, 1917, Benedict issued a seven-point proposal to obtain a "just and lasting peace." The pope claimed "complete impartiality in relation to all the belligerents," and that he worked throughout the war to "do all the most possible good, without personal exceptions and without national and religious distinctions." He called for a "lasting peace with disarmament" and for territorial disputes, including the dispute between Italy and Austria, to be decided through negotiation, not armed conflict.<sup>239</sup> Benedict's proposal infuriated the Italian military and earned him even more criticism from Italian anticlericals. Despite its efforts, the Holy See was excluded from peace negotiations after the war. Though the pope and

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<sup>238</sup> "tutti i suoi figli devono essere riuniti a Lei, anche i sei milioni d'emigranti, dei quali molti attendono dalla guerra, nella quale combatteranno, che cessi la loro dispersione e s'inizi la formazione di colonie nostre in regioni poco discoste dal suolo natio." "La nostra guerra," 148.

<sup>239</sup> Benedict XV, "Pope Benedict XV's Peace Proposal, August 1, 1917," Reproduced in *Historic Documents of World War I*. Louis L. Snyder, ed. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977), 156-158. See also John F. Pollard. *The Unknown Pope: Benedict XV (1914-1922) and the Pursuit of Peace*. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999).

many priests in the upper echelons of the Holy See were Italian, they were primarily concerned with exerting the Church's global influence to promote peace, not the international power of a state that the Holy See still did not recognize.

In addition to its diplomatic efforts, the Holy See was heavily involved in humanitarian efforts during the war, particularly concerning prisoners of war and children. However, its assistance to Italians was the same offered to people of many other European nationalities. Priests and Holy See diplomats visited Italian prisoners, delivered letters, provided religious services, and sent reports back through religious and secular channels. Priests were often asked to track down prisoners abroad. The Holy See collaborated with many charitable groups, including the *Opera Bonomelli*, for this work.<sup>240</sup>

Though the Italian Church and clergy undoubtedly shared the Holy See's humanitarian concerns, they did not share the Holy See's ambivalence about the war and Italy's role in it. Historian John Pollard argues that World War I “revealed the fundamental conflict between the international, diplomatic interests of the papacy on one hand, and the domestic priority of the Italian Church and the essentially national loyalty of the Catholic movement on the other.”<sup>241</sup> Some members of the Roman Curia may have had special sympathies for Italian suffering, and some priests even claimed Benedict XV had a particular interest in the plight of Italian prisoners. Pollard characterizes Italian bishops as more committed to the war effort than the war itself while individual Catholics increasingly became patriotic. Pollard writes that "Italy's experience of the First World

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<sup>240</sup> See documents in ASV, Segreteria di Stato, Guerra, Anno 1914-1918, Rubrica 24, Fasc. 138.

<sup>241</sup> John F. Pollard, *Catholicism in Modern Italy: Religion, Society and Politics Since 1861* (London: Routledge, 2008), 69.

War significantly narrowed the gap between Catholics and the rest of Italian society, and between the Italian State and the institutional church.”<sup>242</sup>

Many Italian clergy, including a few Italian missionaries, privileged Italy's national interests over the Church's universal concerns through their direct participation in the war. During the war, Italy's mandatory military service did not exclude clergy. Roberto Morozzo Della Rocca estimates at least 22,000 Catholic religious served in the Italian military in non-religious roles. Della Rocca claims 2,701 served as chaplains, with 1,350 working on the front lines.<sup>243</sup> Being a chaplain was a voluntary position, attractive to patriotic priests, and it also carried some prestige; many chaplains would go on to positions in the Church hierarchy. Chaplains usually led mass religious services, rather than providing spiritual care to individuals. Priests generally urged the soldiers to obey the tenets of Catholicism as well as to demonstrate Italian patriotism and keep up their morale. Some priests even disapproved of Benedict XV's 1917 call for peace, though few chaplains publicly discussed the note. A few Italian missionaries in the diaspora also wanted to directly support Italy's war effort, even though the Italian state exempted missionaries serving abroad from military service. Father Giacomo Gambera, an aging Scalabrinian who was in Italy when the war broke out, wrote in his memoir that he went to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to volunteer his service. He did so despite that fact that Italy had not yet entered the war and it was still unclear which side

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<sup>242</sup> Pollard, *Catholicism in Modern Italy*, 69.

<sup>243</sup> Roberto Morozzo Della Rocca, *La fede e la guerra: cappellani militari e preti-soldati (1915-1919)* (Roma: Studium, 1980), 13, 125.

Italy would enter.<sup>244</sup> The Ministry rejected his offer because of his age and he returned to work in the United States, but another U.S.-based Scalabrinian, Claudio Morelli, returned to Italy to serve in the military.

Scalabrinians abroad energetically supported Italy during World War I. Historian Mary Elizabeth Brown observes that “No U.S. Scalabrinians left any record of questioning Italy's war effort. Instead, they found various ways to support it.”<sup>245</sup> Their activities included blessing men drafted to fight, saying Masses for the dead, sponsoring military pageants, and raising money for war-related charities and the families of men serving in the military. After the US joined the war on the side of the Entente in 1917, the Scalabrinians supported the American war effort too. Gambera later wrote that, in his American parish, World War I was “nothing short of an unending series of functions for victory, for the fallen, for peace. And then there followed the subscriptions, loans, and offerings for the allied nations, the widows, the orphans, the wounded, the Red Cross, the Green Cross, the White Cross, etc. requested by the civil and religious authorities of America and Italy.”<sup>246</sup> These efforts did not end with the war, and Scalabrinian parishes in the United States continued to collect money for Italian war veterans.

The war disrupted Italian missionaries' usual activities in Europe, and missionary groups expanded the services they provided to help refugees and prisoners of war. The *Opera Bonomelli*, with its benefactors in Italy and missions throughout Western Europe, was well positioned to aid Italian migrants. After Italy declared war, Italians left

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<sup>244</sup> Giacomo Gambera, *A Migrant Missionary Story: The Autobiography of Giacomo Gambera* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1994), 183.

<sup>245</sup> Mary Elizabeth Brown, *The Scalabrinians in North America (1887-1934)* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1996), 274.

<sup>246</sup> Gambera, *A Migrant Missionary Story*, 161.

belligerent countries to return to Italy. Working-age Italian men in France and Switzerland also headed back to Italy. *Opera* Bonomelli secretariats provided refugees and repatriates with food and lodging as they traveled, distributed subsidies from the Italian government, and assisted migrants with travel documents and arrangements. The *Opera* missionaries used diplomatic and religious networks to help Italians locate family members in Germany and Austria and forwarded migrants' correspondence.<sup>247</sup>

The *Opera* Bonomelli's transnational network allowed it to raise funds and distribute supplies directly to Italians abroad affected by the war. In February 1916, *La Patria*, the *Opera*'s official newspaper, printed an *Opera* circular from the organization's Secretary-General. He asked for sponsorships that would pay for four weeks of bread for an Italian prisoner of war in Austria-Hungary. The article urged the *Opera*'s Sections and Correspondence office to help publicize its work. The *Opera*'s Secretary General in Milan organized the efforts and *Opera* mission in Bern, Switzerland handled the distribution, an effort which, according to the newspaper, was done with "the greatest haste and care."<sup>248</sup>

The Italian state was pleased with the *Opera*'s wartime work because it felt the *Opera* not only provided needed assistance in a humanitarian crisis but bolstered migrants' pride and sense of being cared for as Italians. The Italian Consul in St. Gallen, Switzerland, Tamburini, praised the *Opera* Bonomelli for its work before and during the war. He approved of all the *Opera*'s "patriotic institutions" which were "founded and

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<sup>247</sup> *Opera* Bonomelli di Assistenza agli Italiani Emigrati in Europa, *Relazione del lavoro compiuto dall'Opera durante il triennio di guerra 1916-1918. Compilata dal Segretario Generale Prof. Umberto Pestalozza* (Milano: Tipografia Fratelli Lanzani: 1919).

<sup>248</sup> "con la maggior sollecitudine e diligenza," "Per i nostri prigionieri in Austria," *La Patria*, 27 Feb. 1916.

intended to spread instruction among our emigrants and nourish and safeguard the highest sense of love of country and *italianità*."<sup>249</sup> In St. Gallen, the war had reduced the Italian community from approximately 10,000 to 2500 people, but the *Opera* continued its school though it only had 70% of its previous student population. Emanuele Greppi, an Italian senator and President of the *Opera*, praised the group's work to both Italian Parliament and the Holy See, telling the pope that "the *Opera* Bonomelli wrote one of the finest pages in its history."<sup>250</sup>

Unsurprisingly, such praise from the Italian government created problems for the *Opera* Bonomelli because the Holy See was still suspicious of liberal Italian nationalism and Italian missionaries who worked closely with the Italian state. Intransigents within the Church hierarchy still accused *Opera* missionaries of being more attached to the Italian state than the Church and ignoring local bishops' authority, echoing similar criticism since the *Opera's* birth. In February 1917, Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, the Holy See's Secretary of State, wrote to Father Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani in Bern, Switzerland asking for more information about the *Opera* Bonomelli and one of its missionaries, Father Domenico Mozzicarelli, who had written to the pope requesting funds to support his work with Italian prisoners in Austria-Hungary. Marchetti-Selvaggiani's reply was scathing. He disparaged the *Opera* as "liberal" and its work as "civil rather than religious" and criticized the *Opera* for collaborating with Senator Greppi and Italian consulates. Marchetti-Selvaggiani gave mixed reports about

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<sup>249</sup> *Opera* Bonomelli, *Relazione del lavoro compiuto dall'Opera durante il triennio di guerra 1916-1918*, 52.

<sup>250</sup> Emanuele Greppi to Benedict XV, Milan, 21 Jan. 1918. ASV, Segreteria di Stato, Guerra, Anno 1914-1918, Rubrica 244, Fasc 479, 2.



individual *Opera* missionaries but claimed almost all of them strayed too far from their local bishop's authority. He claimed that regarding Mozzicarelli "I would not know how to definitively explain his ideas; sometime he acts *italianissimo* and other times he says that, as a priest, he must be for peace, etc."<sup>251</sup>

Many Italian missionaries' interest in an Italian empire led them to support the Italian state during World War I while the Holy See remained distant from the liberal state and fixated on the war's human cost. By the early twentieth century, the Roman Question had faded in importance. Even intransigent members of the Church hierarchy understood that no European nation would stand against the Italian state on the Holy See's behalf. This political reality did not mean, however, that the Holy See approved of liberalism or would allow Italian missionaries to collaborate, unsupervised, with the Italian state. The Holy See, horrified by World War I's carnage, welcomed Italian missionaries' humanitarian efforts during the war. Nevertheless, the Holy See preferred work like that of the Salesians of Zurich, who kept their mission open during the war and insisted their work was not just for Italians but universal. After the war, Cardinal Gaetano De Lai, a bitter opponent of modernism and an influential member of the Roman Curia, applauded them for staying out of politics.<sup>252</sup> Yet the work of several Italian missionary networks, including *Italica Gens*, the *Opera* Bonomelli, and the Scalabrinians,

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<sup>251</sup> "Sulle sue idee non saprei esprimermi assolutamente, qualche volta fa 'l'italianissimo,' altre volte dice che come prete è e deve esser per la pace. ecc." Father Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani to Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, Bern, 6 Feb. 1917. ASV, Segreteria di Stato, Guerra, Anno 1914-1918, Rubrica 244. Fasc 479, 2.

<sup>252</sup> Luciano Trincia, *Per la fede, per la patria: i salesiani e l'emigrazione italiana in Svizzera fino alla prima guerra mondiale* (Roma: LAS, 2002), 200.

increasingly blurred the line between supporting the Italian nation and the Italian state, establishing a precedent for the tumultuous postwar period.

### **Conclusion**

The era of Liberal Italian imperial expansion challenged the Holy See's insistence that Italian missionaries' work remain apolitical and distant from the Italian state. Liberal nationalism had been problematic for many missionaries because of its implicit support for the Liberal nation-state which had seized the Papal States and still remained estranged from the Holy See. Imperial nationalism, by contrast, appealed to missionaries who already engaged in Italian nation-building in the Italian diaspora and embraced the idea of an Italian nation, though not the anticlerical state. Italian missionaries welcomed territorial gains as potential destinations for migrants and a source of international prestige that would reflect well on all Italians, including migrants. Missionaries especially embraced the idea that Italian imperialism spread Catholic civilization because they already viewed Catholicism as the heart of *italianità*. The Holy See wanted to protect the power and influence of the institutional Church, so it remained hostile to the Italian state. But Italian Catholic expansionists and Italian missionaries, who felt part of a global Italian national community, did not feel a greater connection to other Catholics than to other Italians, and did not always promote Catholic interests over Italian national interests.

Italian missionary groups' increasing participation in Italian imperial nationalism threatened the Holy See's authority. As discussed in Chapter Two, the Holy See monitored and disciplined Italian missionary groups during this period to make sure they

followed the Holy See's directives. The Holy See placed the Catholic Church above all national interests, but particularly above those of the Italian state which the popes regarded as usurpers of papal territory. The nationalistic activities of the *Associazione Nazionale*, whose members were lay men who often held important positions in the Italian government, and *Italica Gens*, a federation outside traditional Church structures, concerned the Holy See, especially when these groups called on Catholics to support the Italian government. Such concerns finally led the Holy See to dissolve the *Opera Bonomelli* in 1927 during a conflict with the Fascist government, an event I will discuss in Chapter Four.

Italian missionaries who worked with Italian migrants began vocally supporting Italian imperialism, and by extension, the Italian state, in the early twentieth century when Italy invaded Libya and entered World War I. Historian Emilio Gentile identifies the Libyan war as the beginning of a decade (1912-1922) that served as the highpoint of the national “myth,” a term he uses to describe “a constellation of beliefs, ideas, ideals, and values combined and compacted into a symbolic image that arouses in the individual and the masses strong conviction, enthusiasm, and the desire to act.”<sup>253</sup> Gentile perceives this period as both the high point of the Risorgimento idea of Italy as the fatherland of all Italians as well as a period of political radicalization that broke with Risorgimento ideals and eventually paved the way for Fascism. Both Libya and World War I (1914-1918) incited increased patriotic fervor and competition among different versions of *italianità*

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<sup>253</sup> Emilio Gentile, *La Grande Italia: The Myth of the Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), xiii.

and nationalism.<sup>254</sup> Gentile's observation may also be applied to missionaries in the diaspora who began, in large numbers, to be swept into Italian imperial nationalism based on their pride in the Italian nation and their identification with an Italian national community.

The victories that the Italian state claimed in Libya and World War I introduced pride for empire-building and new excitement about Catholicism's civilizing mission into missionaries' *italianità*, and it became the origin of missionaries' limited support for the Italian state, a support that would continue to grow but remain contentious throughout the period of Fascist rule (1922-1943). While Italian nationalism did, as Gentile observes, fracture in the tumultuous years after World War I, Italian missionaries continued their Italian nation-building efforts rooted in Catholicism. Their interest in Italian expansion during this period made them quicker to cheer Fascist Italy's imperial successes, though the relationship between Fascists and Italian missionaries remained complicated, even after the 1929 Lateran Accords reconciled the Holy See and the Italian state.

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<sup>254</sup> Gentile, *La Grande Italia*, 66-68.

## Chapter Four: Catholic Missionaries, Italian Fascists, and Struggles over the Meaning of *Italianità* Abroad, 1922-1945

### Introduction

From 1922 to 1943, Benito Mussolini and his National Fascist Party (*Partito Nazionale Fascista*) held power in Italy.<sup>255</sup> A key part of the Fascist project was remaking Italians- including diaspora Italians- as Fascists. The Fascists' attempt to control and transform *italianità* was one of the many ways in which the Fascists broke with the Risorgimento ideologies of Italy's previous Liberal government. The Risorgimento's Italian national community was inclusive, embracing the people of the new nation-state who supposedly shared a common descent and *italianità*. Risorgimento thinkers and the Liberal government defined *italianità* as a standard Italian language, high culture, and shared history, but defined Italians as all those people who *should* share *italianità*, even when most Italian citizens did not. In sharp contrast, Fascist *italianità* was exclusive and coercive. Fascists limited the Italian national community to those who supported Fascism and obeyed Mussolini. Fascist *italianità* emphasized militarism, expansion, and, above all, loyalty to the Fascist Party. Despite this major change, Italian missionaries understood *italianità* as they had before: rooted in Catholicism. Missionaries continued to include all people from the Italian nation and their descendants in their conception of the Italian national community. Throughout Fascist rule, Catholic missionaries insisted upon their independence from the Italian government even as missionaries often collaborated with and supported the Fascist state. However, this period was not a watershed moment in missionaries' relations to the state because, as we

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<sup>255</sup> Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini*, 6 vols. (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1966-2010); Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini* (New York: Knopf, 1982).

have seen, their collaboration predated the Fascist government and it was Liberal imperial expansion, not Fascist actions, that inspired missionaries' first public support for the Italian state.

Observing the continuities between the Liberal and Fascist periods does not ignore the fact that many Catholics, including Church leaders, missionaries, and Italians in the diaspora, became sympathetic to Fascism. There were three main reasons that many Catholics grew to embrace Fascism. First, Catholics, like many Liberals, were so preoccupied by the threat of revolution from the far-left that they underestimated the power and ruthlessness of the far-right. Their fears were not unfounded. After the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the professed goal of the Soviet-led Comintern (1919-1943) was to foment worldwide communist revolution and overthrow traditional powers it deemed oppressive, powers that included the Catholic Church. Second, the success of Mussolini and Fascism before World War II inspired pride in many diaspora Italians, as had Italian victories during World War I and Liberal-era colonialism. Finally, after years of negotiation, Mussolini signed the Lateran Accords with the Church in 1929 and ended the Roman Question. The Catholic Church recognized the Italian state's sovereignty and Vatican City became an independent city-state.

I argue that the Lateran Accords did not fundamentally alter Catholic missionaries' understandings of *italianità*. Scholar David Kertzer writes of the Accords "For most Italians, the end of the decades-long hostility came as a huge relief. There was no longer any conflict between being a loyal Italian and being a good Catholic."<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> David I. Kertzer, *The Pope and Mussolini: The Secret History of Pius XI and the Rise of Fascism in Europe* (New York: Random House, 2014), 112.

However, Italian missionaries had argued since the nineteenth century that there was no contradiction between being a loyal Italian and a good Catholic, and they had based their Italian nation-building work on this distinction. For missionaries, being an Italian did not necessarily mean supporting the Italian government, though as we have seen, missionaries had collaborated with the state to aid migrants for decades. Missionaries first began nationalistic displays of support for the Italian government's imperial expansion during the Liberal government. The Lateran Accords did allow Italian missionaries and their institutions to express direct approval for Mussolini and his government, but missionaries reserved their ultimate loyalty for the pope and the Catholic Church, not Mussolini and the Italian state.

The Accords were an important political moment for Italian Catholics, but they did not end tensions between the (now Fascist) Italian government and the Catholic Church. The two entities continued to struggle for influence over Italians, including diaspora Italians, throughout the period of Fascist rule. Asking whether missionaries were Fascists is not an effective way to judge Catholic enthusiasm for Italian Fascism or how Fascism affected Catholic *italianità*. Almost no missionaries were truly Fascist, that is, fitting Mussolini's definition of a Fascist: loyal to Mussolini and the party above all other allegiances. Most missionaries with clear Fascist sympathies were priests first and loyal to the Church hierarchy. Antifascism was also an ideologically uncomfortable fit for many missionaries. By the time of the Lateran Accords, Italian antifascists had been forced into exile for several years. With the notable exception of Don Luigi Sturzo, the best-known Catholic antifascist, antifascist movements and organizations were

synonymous with leftists, particularly anarchists, socialists, and communists. Their movements were also hostile toward Italian missionaries, sometimes violently so.

Key continuities in migrant Catholic *italianità* bridged the transition from Liberal to Fascist Italy. Missionaries' work and message stayed the same, and the Italian state continued to provide funds and other forms of support for missionaries' work. The Fascist period's major break was in the (attempted) level of state involvement with missionaries' activities. While previously intransigent Catholics had worried that merely accepting state funds compromised their work, the Fascist state actively sought to shape Catholic work. It did not necessarily dictate the terms of each mission, but the state wanted to make Catholic work an extension of Fascist aims. Fascist interference in Catholic work alarmed the Holy See, even after the Lateran Accords. Fascists and Catholics frequently battled for influence in the diaspora, and one of their conflicts' biggest casualties was the *Opera Bonomelli* in 1927. Yet their friction did not diminish missionaries' expressions of Italian nationalism which began during the Liberal era. Throughout this period both the Holy See and Fascist government insisted that the missionaries' work should be apolitical, but both expected missionaries to promote a vision of *italianità* that placed their own institutions and ideologies at *italianità*'s center.

### **Fascism, *Italianità*, and Migration**

Mussolini and his Fascist Party governed Italy from 1922-1943, during which time they belligerently attempted to co-opt *italianità* for Fascism. Italian Fascism reified the nation in the person and will of Mussolini and, though Mussolini was ideologically inconsistent, extreme nationalism, militarism, totalitarianism, and mass mobilization in



support of state power were fundamental components of Fascism. Like the governments of Liberal Italy, the Fascists engaged in nation-building projects, but the Italian nation they sought to build was a Fascist nation, dedicated to the support of a Fascist state. Mussolini was upset when Italian emigration resumed after World War I because emigration contradicted the image he tried to project of Italy's strength and capability. Mussolini was, at his core, an opportunist, and he worked with Italian migrant communities and the Catholic Church to strengthen his power and influence in Italy and abroad.

Mussolini and the Fascists came to power in the political and economic unrest that followed the end of World War I. The peace settlement did not give Italy all the territories Britain and France had promised Italy when it entered the war in 1915, and Italian expansionists were furious. In September 1919, Italian war hero and writer Gabriele D'Annunzio led a small group of Italians who seized the formerly Austrian-held city of Fiume, holding it for fifteen months. The Italian state refused D'Annunzio's calls to annex the city, and D'Annunzio eventually declared Fiume's independence and declared war on Italy. The Italian military attacked the city in December 1920, ending D'Annunzio's rule and establishing the short-lived Free State of Fiume. Back in Italy, major economic problems, including high unemployment, immediately followed the war, and war veterans were particularly embittered by the difficulties they faced. For two years, the so-called "Red Years" of 1919-1920, strikes and social turmoil rocked Italy, particularly in the north. Both agricultural and factory workers held strikes and workers

occupied many factories.<sup>257</sup>

Mussolini took advantage of this unrest to build a movement and seize power. He founded the first of his *fasci di combattimento* (Fascist combat leagues) in Milan in 1919. The *fasci* initially attracted little support, and only a single Fascist Party deputy was elected to the Italian Parliament in the 1919 election. However, squads of Fascist blackshirts (*squadristi*) violently attacked socialists, Catholic unions, and political figures across northern Italy in 1921 and 1922, effectively controlling many areas. The 35 Fascist deputies were elected to Parliament in 1921 as part of a government coalition led by Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti, the longtime Italian politician recently returned to power. Giolitti, fearful of Italian socialism, invited the Fascists into his coalition believing that their violence would diminish once Fascists became part of the parliamentary system. Mussolini, however, soon abandoned both the coalition and the parliamentary system with the March on Rome in October 1922. Fascists from across the country converged on Rome in a spectacle that was more symbolic than truly threatening. King Vittorio Emanuele III, however, worried about civil war, and he asked Mussolini to form a government. Over the next three years, Mussolini and the Fascists steadily strengthened their power and eliminated opponents, and by 1925 Mussolini ruled as a dictator.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>257</sup>Renzo De Felice, *D'Annunzio politico, 1918-1938* (Roma: Laterza, 1978); Ferdinando Gerra, *L'impresa di Fiume: nelle parole e nell'azione di Gabriele d'Annunzio* (Milano: Longanesi, 1966); Michael Arthur Ledeen, *The First Duce: D'Annunzio at Fiume* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); Giuseppe Maione, *Il biennio rosso: autonomia e spontaneità operaia nel 1919-1920* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1975); Paolo Spriano, *L'occupazione delle fabbriche: settembre 1920* (Torino: Einaudi, 1964).

<sup>258</sup> Adrian Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy, 1919-1929*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004).

Mussolini's totalitarian government was an ideological and political break with Liberal Italy. His dictatorship replaced a system of unstable parliamentary coalitions and lasted until 1943. The Fascist party became the Italian state, and one had to be loyal to the part in order to work for the state, much less have a position of authority. Mussolini abolished free speech, free association, and real elections, only allowing voters to vote for or against a list of Fascist candidates. The Fascists Party pressured the Italian media to follow the party line and did not tolerate opposition in government. Fascists suppressed political opposition with violence, most famously in 1924 by murdering Giacomo Matteotti, a Socialist member of Parliament who publicly denounced the 1924 elections as a sham. Mussolini jailed many political opponents, most notably Antonio Gramsci in 1926.<sup>259</sup> Antifascists fled Italy, but Fascists agents monitored and sometimes murdered them, as famously happened to Nello and Carlo Rosselli, anti-fascist intellectuals, in France in 1937.<sup>260</sup> Fascist and antifascist groups clashed violently within the Italian diaspora, particularly in France, though Fascist violence was greater, more organized, and better equipped.

The Fascist approach to *italianità* and nation-building was also a serious departure from earlier ideas. While Fascism evolved throughout Mussolini's twenty-year rule, one of its central tenets was that Italy was a Fascist nation. For the Fascists, *italianità* was the Fascist culture. As historian Emilio Gentile explains:

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<sup>259</sup> Gramsci was imprisoned from 1926 to 1934, when he was conditionally released for health reasons. Gramsci composed his famous *Prison Notebooks* (*Quaderni dal Carcere*) while imprisoned. When he died, he was considered an anti-fascist martyr.

<sup>260</sup> Stanislao G. Pugliese, "Death in Exile: The Assassination of Carlo Rosselli," *Journal of Contemporary History* 32, No. 3 (1997): 305-319. France was a particularly bitter battleground from Fascism, because of its high Italian population and Paris' position as the center of anti-fascist resistance.

The idea of a “fatherland for all Italians” conceived by the Risorgimento and liberal Italy was replaced by the ideal of a Fascist nation- a country where only the Fascists were recognized as having *italianità*, while Italians who opposed Fascism were expelled from the national community, excommunicated and rejected.<sup>261</sup>

The Liberal state had justified its own existence as the political embodiment of a nation, that is, an "Italian" people. Its proponents had not viewed *italianità*'s limited relevance to most Italian as evidence of their ideal's weakness. Instead, they believed that most newly-minted Italians simply lacked the political and cultural education to recognize their shared heritage in the nation-state and the history, culture, and language with which Italian nationalists sought to identify the nation-state. To Liberal politicians and intellectuals, the main problem was that people whom they considered Italians, who lived in Italy and abroad, rejected or cared little for the Italian nation and its values. Conversely, according to Fascists, the party defined *italianità* and who possessed it. Fascists rejected claims to Italian identity by anyone who did not share Fascist beliefs, even when someone claimed Italian identity or even patriotism.

The Fascist state engaged in nation-building not only by funding educational and cultural institutions, as the Liberal state had, but also by using propaganda, paramilitary training, and even violence to create loyal Fascists. The Italian state sponsored Fascist organizations to indoctrinate the Italian people, and it pressured Italians to join them. The Fascists organized leisure activities and sports to promote physical fitness, encourage an aggressive masculinity, and embed the Party into all aspects of Italian life. Fascist ideology limited women to the domestic sphere and publicly rewarded women who raised large families. Mussolini also placed importance on Fascist training for Italian youth.

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<sup>261</sup> Emilio Gentile, *La Grande Italia: The Myth of the Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 145.

Children as young as four participated in Fascist youth groups which instructed them in the Fascist culture which they were expected to share with their families. Fascists produced new school textbooks, including textbooks for diaspora Italians, which taught Fascist culture, presented Fascism as the culmination of Italian achievements, and promoted a belligerent nationalism that justified Italian colonialism and irredentism. Italian universities created professorships in Fascist economic and political philosophy and dissident intellectuals lost their jobs.<sup>262</sup>

Mussolini unsuccessfully sought to curtail Italian migration and to instead channel Italy's people into building his ideal Fascist society. He tried to legislate the end of internal, rural-to-urban migration in the hopes of keeping Italians in rural areas where they could support Italian agriculture and raise large families. However, as the work of Anna Treves has shown, the state often ignored its own laws or tacitly encouraged internal migration when convenient.<sup>263</sup> Similarly, Mussolini wanted to end emigration. He was embarrassed, as Liberal Italian politicians had been, by Italy's inability to provide opportunities for millions of its people even as he tried to promote Italy as an international power. Yet when the United States virtually ended Italian immigration after 1924, Mussolini lobbied the U.S. government to increase its small Italian quota.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922 - 1945* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1993); Gigliola Gori, "Model of Masculinity: Mussolini, the 'New Italian' of the Fascist Era," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 16, No. 4 (1999): 27-61; Tracy H. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight: Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy, 1922-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985).

<sup>263</sup> Anna Treves, *Le migrazioni interne nell'Italia fascista: politica e realtà demografica* (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1976).

<sup>264</sup> Philip V. Cannistraro and Gianfausto Rosoli, "Fascist Emigration Policy in the 1920s: an Interpretive Framework," *The International Migration Review* 13, No. 4 (1979): 673-692; Monte S. Finkelstein, "The Johnson Act, Mussolini and Fascist Emigration Policy: 1921-1930," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 8, No. 1 (1988): 38-55.

Mussolini initially encouraged the spread of Fascist groups abroad, the *fasci all'estero*, in order to harness Italian communities abroad for the Fascist cause. Italian migrants, particularly war veterans, founded the first *fasci all'estero* in Europe and North America 1920-1921. Mussolini paid them little attention at the beginning, though he was pleased that they could help his propaganda efforts, but from 1921 to 1925 he encouraged their growth. After he became prime minister, Mussolini wanted to dampen the *fasci's* extremism. Violent clashes between Fascists and antifascists around the world alarmed receiving societies, and Mussolini could not afford the resulting negative public opinion when he claimed that he had restored order to Italy. *Fasci* leaders often clashed with members of the Italian diplomatic corps who were career bureaucrats originally hired by the Liberal Italian government. Mussolini tried to integrate the *fasci* into councils and then into the Italian Foreign Ministry by appointing Fascists to the Ministry, particularly noted *squadrista* Dino Grandi. While he reduced the *fasci's* role, Mussolini continued to encourage Fascist sympathy in Italian communities around the world.<sup>265</sup>

### **The Catholic Church and Italian Fascism**

The Church hierarchy demonstrated sympathy for Italian Fascism well before the reconciliation of the Italian state and Church in 1929 in large part because of a shared opposition to socialism and communism. Pius XI, pope from 1922 and 1939, was serving as papal nuncio (the Church's equivalent of an ambassador) to Poland in 1919 when the Soviet Army invaded over a territorial dispute. The Soviets reached Warsaw

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<sup>265</sup> Luca de Caprariis, "Fascism for Export? The Rise and Eclipse of the Fasci Italiani all'Estero," *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, No. 2 (April 2000): 151-183; Emilio Franzina and Matteo Sanfilippo, eds., *Il fascismo e gli emigrati: la parabola dei Fasci italiani all'estero (1920-1943)* (Roma: GLF editori Laterza, 2003); Emilio Gentile, "La politica estera del partito fascista. Ideologia e organizzazione dei Fasci italiani all'estero (1920-1930)," *Storia contemporanea* 26, No. 6 (1995): 897-956.

before Polish forces could begin pushing them back. For the rest of his life, Pius argued that Communism posed a grave threat to the west.<sup>266</sup> The Fascist Party tried to create a corporatist economy in which the state directed the economy by organizing industries into state-controlled "corporations," which combined trade unions and employer associations to negotiate working conditions and contracts.<sup>267</sup> Fascist corporatism posited itself as a "third way" between socialism and unbridled capitalism, two systems which the Church had criticized since Pope Leo XIII's famous encyclical *Rerum novarum* in 1891. Though Fascist violence frightened many Catholics, especially when directed at Catholics, its authoritarianism did not conflict with Church beliefs and practices. Many conservative Catholics, lay people and clergy alike, remained deeply suspicious of democracy and popular movements, believing such movements often led to anticlericalism and radicalism. The Church hierarchy was comfortable with the Fascist state's hierarchical structures and authoritarianism because the Church was also a rigid hierarchy. As Chapter Two demonstrated, the Holy See also attempted to exert centralized control over all its operations, including missionaries in the Italian diaspora.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Yves Chiron, *Pio XI: il papa dei Patti Lateranensi e dell'opposizione ai totalitarismi* (Cinisello Balsamo (MI): Edizioni Paoline, 2006), 111-112.

<sup>267</sup> Italian corporatism, unsurprisingly, intended to destroy leftist-backed trade unions and prevent the social dissent and political opposition of the "Red Years" before Mussolini came to power. The Fascists replaced the old unions with government-controlled unions and outlawed strikes. Peter J. Williamson, "Corporatism and Fascist Italy, 1922-39," In *Varieties of Corporatism: A Conceptual Discussion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 83-103.

<sup>268</sup> The Church's suspicion of leftist movements and its approval of hierarchical governments that gave the Church a prominent and protected place in society frequently led the Church to be sympathetic to Fascist and similar movements in Iberia and South America in the 1930s and 1940s. Support from the Church hierarchy and the local clergy's collaboration varied by regime and its conception of the Church's role in society. See, for example, William J. Callahan, *Catholic Church in Spain, 1875-1998* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2012).

The Fascist government publicly claimed that the Church should have a position of influence and respect in Italian society, something that was unthinkable under the Liberal government. The change was a calculated move by Mussolini, who had been irreligious and publicly critical of the Church before coming to power. The Fascist Party's leadership included both devout Catholics as well as fierce anticlericals throughout the period of Fascist rule. However, Mussolini and the Party publicly extolled Catholicism, a world religion centered in Rome, as proof of Italy's global importance. Nevertheless, Fascists gave their ultimate loyalty to the Party, so while individual Fascists might be practicing Catholics, they had to obey Mussolini over the pope.

Pius XI and many influential men inside the Holy See often overlooked Fascist violence, even against Catholics, because they preferred to focus on how Fascism could restore the Church's prestige and influence in Italy. David Kertzer's research demonstrates how Pius XI, fearing Italian socialists' political influence after World War I, quietly supported Mussolini throughout the 1920s. In 1926, the Church and Fascist government secretly began talks that produced the Lateran Accords in 1929. The pope looked favorably on Mussolini and believed him when he claimed that Fascist extremists who attacked Catholics, particularly members of Catholic Action groups,<sup>269</sup> operated outside of Mussolini's authority and approval. When Fascist *squadristi* attacked socialist politicians and newspapers, the Holy See did not criticize the violence. The Holy See

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<sup>269</sup> Catholic Action (*Azione Cattolica*) groups were Church-sponsored groups for lay Catholics. Members engaged in both religious and recreational activities. Catholic Action groups spread across Catholic countries in Europe during the nineteenth century, and Pope Pius X (reigned 1903-1914) was a particularly strong supporter of Catholic Action. Since these groups were firmly under ecclesiastical control, successive popes embraced Catholic Action- and resented state interference in their activities- because the popes hoped they would contribute to a Catholic renewal in lay society. See Gianfranco Poggi, *Catholic Action in Italy: The Sociology of a Sponsored Organization* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1967).



supported Mussolini's government at its weakest moment, the uncertain months in late 1924 that followed the Fascist murder of Matteotti. Pius even ordered the Holy See-controlled newspapers *L'Osservatore romano* and *Civiltà Cattolica* to print articles telling Italians to support the current government.<sup>270</sup>

The relationship between the Church and Fascist government, however, had many tensions, and the Church jealously guarded its influence from Fascist encroachment. Italian Fascism used religious imagery, often clearly borrowed from Catholicism, to inculcate state loyalty. Historian Emilio Gentile has observed that Italian Fascism went beyond mere propaganda, instead attempting to institute a lay religion by "sacralizing the state and spreading a political cult of the masses that aimed at creating a virile and virtuous citizenry, dedicated body and soul to the nation."<sup>271</sup> The state celebrated people who had died for Fascism with elaborate memorials and martyrologies, regular commemorations of a list of Fascist martyrs, an idea clearly borrowed from Catholicism. The idea of a Fascist religion was also influential in the diaspora. A 1926 article in *Il Legionario*, the official Fascist newspaper of the *fasci all'estero*, claimed that the *fasci all'estero* had been able to create a new Italian consciousness in the diaspora because Fascism moved people more than earlier patriotic ideas. "Without the fascist religion," the article explained "such a situation which is expressed today in discipline, in work, in elevation, in progress, could not have occurred."<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> Kertzer, *The Pope and Mussolini*, 74-75.

<sup>271</sup> Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996), 159.

<sup>272</sup> "Senza la religione fascista, tale fatto il quale si esprime oggi in disciplina, in lavorare, in elevazione, in progresso, non avrebbe potuto verificarsi." Renzetti, "Il Fascismo all'estero," *Il Legionario* 6 Nov. 1926, 28.

The Church hierarchy considered this appropriation of religion as idolatrous and particularly feared Fascist conditioning of youth. In his 1931 encyclical *Non abbiamo bisogno* (*On Catholic Action in Italy*), issued two years after the Lateran Accords, Pius condemned the Fascist government for closing Catholic Action groups in Italy and for criticizing the Church in the Italian press. The pope criticized the state's attempt to "completely monopolize the young... for the exclusive advantage of a party and of a regime based on an ideology which clearly resolves itself into a true, a real pagan worship of the State - the "Statolatry" which is no less in contrast with the natural rights of the family than it is in contradiction with the supernatural rights of the Church."<sup>273</sup> The pope did not dispute the state's right to educate children but asserted it had no right to interfere with the Church's religious education of youth. The pope claimed the Lateran Accords had not ended anti-clericalism, and the Italian government still fomented such sentiments when convenient. "...[O]rders from high personages have switched anticlericalism on or off, and this has been plain to all. There can be no doubt that a mere hundredth or even a thousandth part of the force used against Catholic Action will suffice to keep anticlericalism in its place."<sup>274</sup>

Tracing the vicissitudes of the Church and state's complex relationship during this period reveals how both entities thought that they had the upper hand in the relationship and that the Catholic hierarchy always sought to maintain its independence, a continuity

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<sup>273</sup> Pius XI. *Non abbiamo bisogno*, par. 44, June 29, 1931. Accessed December 7, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_29061931\\_non-abbiamo-bisogno\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_29061931_non-abbiamo-bisogno_en.html)

<sup>274</sup> Pius XI, *Non abbiamo bisogno*, par. 65. For more on this turbulent period of Church-state relations, see John F. Pollard, *The Vatican and Italian Fascism, 1929-32: A Study in Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

from the Church's interactions with the Italian state before Fascism. Therefore, the Holy See also sought independence for Italian clergy and religious on the ground, including Italian missionaries working in the Italian diaspora. Missionaries were obligated to follow the Holy See's directives, and missionaries were pleased when the state and Church reconciled in 1929. Missionaries enjoyed the success Fascism initially garnered on the world stage, and they celebrated Fascist successes as they had celebrated Liberal imperial victories. Antifascist hostility and violence, including attacks on priests, further alienated some Catholics and pushed them toward Fascism in the hope of stability. But throughout the Fascist period, missionaries continued to assert their previous understanding of *italianità* which placed Catholicism, and not the Fascist Party, at its center. Unsurprisingly, clashing ideologies led to mistrust and sometimes conflicts between Fascists and missionaries in the Italian diaspora, as the end of the *Opera Bonomelli* in 1927 made clear.

### **The End of the *Opera Bonomelli***

The *Opera Bonomelli*'s missionaries became early victims of the struggle for influence over Italians abroad. Mussolini wanted to bring all work with Italian migrants under Fascist control, so the Italian government replaced the *Opera*'s board members with Fascists or people who the Fascists could easily manipulate. Pius XI dissolved the *Opera* in 1927, even though the Holy See was in the midst of secret negotiations with the Italian state to end the Roman Question. The end of the *Opera* demonstrated that the Holy See would not cede its authority over migrants to the Italian state, but an important factor in the Holy See's decisions was that the Holy See had always had an ambivalent

attitude toward the *Opera* because of lay influence within it. The conflict over the *Opera* was ultimately a struggle over control of the organization, and so the Holy See dissolved the *Opera* and reorganized its missionaries rather than see the *Opera* slip from its control into Fascist, and therefore secular, hands.

After coming to power, Mussolini moved quickly to place the state's migration policy and apparatuses under Fascist control. He moved the *Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione* (Office of the Commissioner General of Emigration), the state body in charge of migration-related legislation and activities, into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>275</sup> Over the next several years, the Fascists sought to make migration policy part of the government's foreign policy. As historians Philip Cannistraro and Gianfausto Rosoli observed, the Fascist government, like the government of the Liberal era, recognized the importance of assisting migrants, but it wanted to control charitable organizations' work, not merely fund it.<sup>276</sup> The *Commissariato* placed financial pressure on the *Opera* Bonomelli, beginning increased state interference that soon caused the *Opera*'s demise.

The Fascist state was jealous of the influence that assistance organizations, including the *Opera* Bonomelli as well as socialist organizations, had among Italians abroad, and the state moved quickly to exert control over these organizations' work. The *Opera* missionaries had direct contact with thousands of workers who were uninterested in the *fasci all'estero*. In 1923, the *Commissariato* announced it would examine the

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<sup>275</sup> The government closed the *Commissariato* in 1927, the same year Mussolini changed the state's policy to discourage permanent emigration. See Cannistraro and Rosoli, "Fascist Emigration Policy in the 1920s."

<sup>276</sup> Philip V. Cannistraro and Gianfausto Rosoli, *Emigrazione, Chiesa e fascismo: lo scioglimento dell'Opera Bonomelli, 1922-1928* (Roma: Studium, 1979).

budgets of any emigrant assistance organization requesting state funds and only grant special subsidies to groups the state determined were in line with its goals. The new policy affected the *Opera*, which had never been self-sufficient and needed money from the Church, Italian government, and other governments. To better evaluate the *Opera's* work, the Italian government launched an investigation by asking government officials to report on the work of local *Opera* missions. The reports were mixed, either extremely critical or supportive of the *Opera's* work, but all agreed that assistance to Italian migrants was necessary.<sup>277</sup>

Fascists steadily replaced the *Opera's* Liberal-era lay collaborators and exerted increasing control over its work. Giuseppe De Michelis, the head of the *Commissariato* from 1919 through 1927, was not a Fascist but he steadily paved the way for Fascist infiltration. De Michelis acknowledged that the *Opera's* work was important to the preservation of migrants' Catholicism, Italian language, and attachment to Italy, but he said the *Opera* should limit itself to religious activities. Like Mussolini, he thought that the Italian government needed greater control over the *Opera's* work. De Michelis reduced the *Opera's* funding and kept a closer eye on its work. Many of the *Opera's* missionaries resented the state's intrusion into the *Opera* and their work. Some missionaries were opposed to Fascism, particularly the missionaries who had been serving since before World War I. These missionaries complained to the Holy See about continued state interference, prompting the Holy See, which had always resented lay influence in the *Opera*, to recommend that the missionaries report directly to the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, and thus to the bishops who ran it, instead of to the *Opera* and

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<sup>277</sup> See the reports contained in ASMAE, Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione Italiana, b. 29, f.6.

its lay leadership.<sup>278</sup> De Michelis soon moved again to assert control over the *Opera*, provoking more clashes with the missionaries and Church hierarchy. On December 29, 1925, four Fascists picked by De Michelis joined the *Opera's* board of directors. The Fascists also threatened to replace the missionaries with lay people if they did not cooperate.

At the same time, the highest levels of the Church worked to assert the missionaries' dependence on the Church hierarchy rather than the Fascist state. Cardinal De Lai, head of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, wrote new rules for the missionaries, approved by Pope Pius XI and published on March 26, 1926. The rules did not include any lay or government approval of missionaries. Instead, they ordered that priests whom the *Opera* Bonomelli selected and sent abroad needed to be approved by the Sacred Consistorial Congregation and the Prelate for Italian Emigration and that missionaries were under the local bishop's authority when abroad. The regulations forbade missionaries from engaging in several activities outside the scope of their priestly duties, including sponsorship of feasts and celebrations that were not "strictly religious." The missionaries, the regulations said, "will absolutely and always refrain from any political or party demonstration, remembering that they are sent to everyone to care above all for their spiritual interests: and they will therefore refrain from participating in political newspapers or periodicals."<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Cannistraro and Rosoli, *Emigrazione, Chiesa e fascismo*, 109-110.

<sup>279</sup> "Si asterranno quindi in modo assoluto e sempre da ogni manifestazione politica o di partito, ricordando che essi sono mandati a tutti per curare di tutti specialmente gli interessi spirituali: e si asterranno pure a collaborare comunque in giornali o periodici di carattere politico." "Norme particolari pei missionari dell'*Opera* Bonomelli," 26 Mar. 1926, AGS, S.C. Concistoriale 1918-29, f. 5 sf. 1.

In May 1926, Mussolini himself intervened, saying the *Opera's* work must be in line with state action and all its non-religious activities must have government approval. The *Opera's* bulletin was transformed into *L'Italia e Il Mondo*, publishing only things in line with Fascism. For a time, the Holy See and regime went back and forth, but neither Church nor state would cede control over the *Opera*. The Church hierarchy failed to take decisive action until 1927, when Pius XI finally dissolved the *Opera*. The *Opera's* missionaries had the choice of returning to their home dioceses in Italy or waiting for instructions about how their work would be reorganized in a successor organization.<sup>280</sup> Some missionaries did leave. The Italian state took over the lodgings that the *Opera* ran in many northern Italian cities for internal migrants, institutions that had received funding from the Italian Ministry of the Interior since 1926. Many *Opera* missionaries, however, remained with the successor organization and in their missions, where they continued to perform religious, civil, and charitable functions.<sup>281</sup> The organization was transformed but the missionaries' work did not end. The *Opera* Bonomelli, whose patriotism and lay influence had, from the beginning, vexed many conservatives within the Church hierarchy was finally replaced by an organization firmly under hierarchy control and free from lay or state direction.

The Church reorganized the former *Opera* Bonomelli missionaries into the Missionaries of Emigration in Europe (*Missionari d'emigrazione in Europa*), an organization which reported directly to the Sacred Consistorial Congregation. Constantino Babini, a former *Opera* missionary, directed the group until 1948 and

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<sup>280</sup> Costantino Babini to Norradino Torricella, Rome, 7 June 1928, AGS, Fondo Babini, f. 93, sf. 2.

<sup>281</sup> For financial and personnel changes after the *Opera's* demise, see ACS, Presidenza Consiglio dei Ministri, 1931-1933, fasc. 1/6-2 n.1496.

reported to Cardinal Raffaele Carlo Rossi, the Sacred Consistorial Congregation's head.<sup>282</sup> The first provision of the new organization's norms called for the missionaries to be "totally dependent on ecclesiastical authority, and free of the influence of any lay authority."<sup>283</sup> The new organizations' work and rules were essentially the same as they had been under the *Opera Bonomelli*, but the hierarchy hoped that removing all lay direction would avoid the controversies that frequently occurred during the *Opera*'s twenty-eight years of activity. The Holy See also hoped to prevent the Missionaries from engaging in Fascist politics abroad. The group's norms required Missionaries to follow the same political restrictions placed on priests in Italy: they could not join a political party or participate in political events. They were also forbidden to accept invitations to "celebrations and events opposed to the Priest's proper objectives."<sup>284</sup> The battle over the *Opera Bonomelli* demonstrates that, even as the Italian state and Catholic Church moved toward official reconciliation through the 1929 Lateran Accords, both insisted that they should direct Catholic missionaries' work in diaspora communities. Such tensions were constant in work involving migrant *italianità* in the Fascist era, both before and after the Accords.

### **The Lateran Accords and Diaspora *Italianità***

Negotiations to solve the Roman Question began in 1926, and the Conciliation, or the reconciliation between the Italian state and Holy See, was finally achieved by the

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<sup>282</sup> Paolo Borruso, *Missioni cattoliche ed emigrazione italiana in Europa: 1922-1958* (Roma: Istituto Storico Scalabriniano, 1994).

<sup>283</sup> "I Missionari debbono essere assolutamente dipendenti dall'Autorità Ecclesiastica, esclusa qualunque ingerenza di qualunque Autorità laica." Sacred Concistorial Congregation, "Norme per i Missionari d'emigrazione in Europa" 1928, AGS, Fondo Babini, *Opera Bonomelli* 1923-30. f. 1

<sup>284</sup> "feste o manifestazioni aliene agli scopi proprii del Sacerdote," Sacred Concistorial Congregation. "Norme per i Missionari d'emigrazione in Europa."



1929 signing of the Lateran Accords. On February 11, 1929, Mussolini and Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, the Holy See's Secretary of State, signed the Lateran Accords. The Accords included a political treaty, a concordat, and a financial agreement. While the Accords ended the Roman Question and made it acceptable for Catholics to publicly support the Italian state and Mussolini, the Accords did not cause the Italian state and the Holy See to promote identical or entwined versions of migrant *italianità*. Both continued to assert their independence when directing assistance to Italian migrants.

The Accords settled the territorial Roman Question and delineated relations between Italy and the newly-recognized Vatican City as separate states. In the political treaty, the Holy See declared "the 'Roman Question' to be definitely and irrevocably settled and therefore eliminated" and recognized the legitimacy of the Kingdom of Italy, the ruling House of Savoy, and Rome as the nation's capital.<sup>285</sup> In turn, the Italian government recognized the sovereignty of Vatican City and the Pope's rule (Article 26). The political treaty also re-affirmed Catholicism as the "State's only religion"<sup>286</sup> (Article 1), and Italy recognized the Holy See's sovereignty over Vatican City and in international relations (Articles 2-3). The financial agreement also compensated the Church for the loss of the Papal States during Italian unification with 750,000,000 lire and Italian bonds (Article 1). Most important, the concordat regulated Church-state relations in Italy.

Negotiations had been lengthy and sometimes tense, and the final version of the

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<sup>285</sup> "dichiara definitivamente ed irrevocabilmente composta e quindi eliminata la 'questione romana,'" "Trattato fra la Santa Sede e l'Italia," Signed at Rome 11 Feb. 1929, Article 26. Printed in *Acta Sanctae Sedis*. XXI, Volume XXI (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1929), 221. The accords are reprinted in English in Appendix II of Pollard, *The Vatican and Italian Fascism*, 197-215.

<sup>286</sup> "la religione cattolica, apostolica e romana è la sola religione dello Stato," "Trattato fra la Santa Sede e l'Italia," 210.

Accords required both the Italian state and Holy See to make some compromises that proved controversial, even though both sides also derived major benefits. Provisions of the concordat were especially controversial. Catholicism became officially ingrained in state institutions. Catholicism and the state had not, however, been completely separate before 1929. Mussolini sought the Church's support for his regime in its early days, and Mussolini gave the Church privileges such as allowing crucifixes into public schools, ordering that only Church-approved books could be using in religious instruction in state schools, and adding Catholic holidays to the Italian civil calendar.<sup>287</sup> After the concordat, civil marriages reflected Catholic Canon Law (Article 34), public schools provided instruction in Catholicism with teachers approved by ecclesiastical authorities (Articles 36), and the state recognized Catholic holidays, including Sundays and major Catholic feast days (Article 11).

The Italian state claimed oversight over Catholic clergy to prevent them from challenging the state. While the concordat guaranteed that the Holy See could freely appoint bishops and archbishops, the Holy See needed to notify the Italian government of all appointments in case the government objected for "political reasons" (Article 19).<sup>288</sup> All bishops had to swear an oath promising "loyalty to the Italian State" before taking office. The bishop asserted that he and the clergy he oversaw would respect the King, the government, and the "well-being and interests of the Italian State" while trying to avoid "any harm that could threaten it" (Article 20).<sup>289</sup> The state could also object to the

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<sup>287</sup> Kertzer, *The Pope and Mussolini*, 63.

<sup>288</sup> "ragioni di carattere politico," "Trattato fra la Santa Sede e l'Italia," 282.

<sup>289</sup> "fedeltà allo Stato italiano"; "Preoccupandomi del bene e dell'interesse dello Stato italiano, cercherò di evitare ogni danno che possa minacciarlo," "Trattato fra la Santa Sede e l'Italia," 283.

appointment of parish priests (Article 21), and no priest could work for the state or any political party (Article 5).

However, some of the Concordat's other provisions reflected the state's attempt to harness the Catholic Church in its effort to make Italians loyal to the state and spread *italianità* to cement its power. Article 12 stated that the celebrant of a cathedral's Mass on Sunday and holy days would "sing a prayer for the prosperity of the King of Italy and the Italian State."<sup>290</sup> Article 16 said that a mixed commission would redraw the boundaries of Catholic dioceses to prevent them from including territory in more than one Italian province, a state administrative unit. It also said no parish or diocese could include territory beyond the Kingdom of Italy. Article 22 said that priests who directed Italian parishes or dioceses needed to be Italian subjects and speak Italian. If another language was spoken in the diocese, they could have an assistant who spoke the local language as well as Italian.

Italian migrants around the world greeted news of the Conciliation with great joy. Historian Peter D'Agostino explained that in the United States, "Unprecedented cooperation between consuls and Italian immigrant clergy followed upon the heels of the Lateran Pacts of 1929."<sup>291</sup> Excitement over the Accords, however, was not limited to Italians around the world. D'Agostino demonstrated that Catholics in the United States, not just Italians, cheered the accords and lauded Mussolini as a good Catholic and defender against bolshevism. This enthusiasm translated into broad Catholic support for

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<sup>290</sup> "una preghiera per la prosperità del Re d'Italia e dello Stato italiano," "Trattato fra la Santa Sede e l'Italia," 280.

<sup>291</sup> Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 252.

Mussolini's regime in the 1930s as the government which had finally resolved the Roman Question, and D'Agostino argued that Italian-American Catholics who supported Fascism did not do so for solely ethnic reasons but for its success in resolving the Roman Question.<sup>292</sup>

In Europe, the highest levels of the missionary organizations also celebrated, though, as we will see, the Conciliation did not dramatically alter their relations with the Italian state. The day after the Accords were signed, Babini wrote to Rocco Beltrami, then Prelate of Italian Emigration, with his usual updates about the Missionaries of Emigration in Europe. This time, Babini began his letter with a burst of joy, thanking God for the "great historic era of conciliation between the Church and our Italy." He went on: "We Missionaries and the great mass of our good emigrants, in joy and great exultation, repeat the song of rejoicing that today resounds from one end of Italy to the other: 'Viva the Pope, viva the King, viva Card. Gasparri, viva Mussolini, il Duce.'<sup>293</sup> The rest of the letter, however, contained routine items of administration, including an update on ongoing conflict that Babini and the Italian ambassador in Paris were mediating between an Italian missionary and the local Italian consul in southwest France.<sup>294</sup>

Despite initial enthusiasm by Italian Catholics, the relationship between Fascist Italy and the Catholic Church never became uncontentious. The Accords had no sooner

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<sup>292</sup> D'Agostino, *Rome in America*, 252, 258.

<sup>293</sup> "Nella grande era storica della conciliazione della Chiesa e dell'Italia nostra al SIGNORE il ringraziamento vivissimo, l'onore e la gloria; ed onore e gloria a Chi in terra esegui ed attuo' il Divino volere. Noi Missionari tutti e la ingente massa dei nostri buoni emigrati nella gioia ed esultanza vivissima ripetiamo i pure i canti di giubilo che risuonano oggi d' un capo all'altro d'Italia: 'Viva il Papa, viva il Re, viva il Card. Gasparri, viva Mussolini, il Duce,'" Rocco Beltrami to the Prelate of Italian Emigration, Paris, 12 Feb. 1929, AGS, Fondo Babini, Prelato dell'Emigrazione, f. 2, sf. 5.

<sup>294</sup> I discuss this conflict between Torricella and Galleani later in this chapter.

been signed than Mussolini and Pius each had to justify their concessions to their supporters and claim that he had obtained greater benefits from the Accords. Anticlerical Fascists were predictably unhappy, as were some of Mussolini's Liberal supporters. Few criticized Mussolini publicly, but Mussolini felt it necessary to deliver a lengthy, rambling speech to the Italian chamber of Deputies on May 13 in support of the Accords' ratification. He claimed the Church was not a threat to the Italian state but evidence of Italy's historic influence and global importance. "Italy" he said, "has the singular privilege, of which we must be proud, to be the only European Nation which is the seat of a universal religion."<sup>295</sup> Mussolini said that the Church was not sovereign within the Italian state, the Church gained no new territories in the agreement, and that he had and would continue to monitor Catholic political activities. Mussolini famously asserted "We have not resurrected papal temporal power: we have buried it."<sup>296</sup>

Mussolini also continued to use Catholic figures to prop up Fascism. In his speech, Mussolini talked at length about Bishop Bonomelli, calling him a "glimmer of light" who appeared after the beginning of the Roman Question and called the pope's temporal power out of date. Mussolini said he had ordered the reprinting of Bonomelli's 1889 *Rassegna Nazionale* article, "Rome and the Reality of Things," in which Bonomelli anonymously argued that the Roman Question was out of date and that the pope should have a small piece of land in Rome (now Vatican City) from which he would be an independent moral force in the world. Mussolini said that "even we Fascists must

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<sup>295</sup> "l'Italia ha il privilegio singolare, di cui dobbiamo andare orgogliosi, di essere l'unica Nazione europea che è sede di una religione universale," Benito Mussolini. *Gli accordi del Laterano. Discorsi al Parlamento. Seconda edizione con appendice* (Rome: Libreria del Littorio, 1929), 5.

<sup>296</sup> "non abbiamo risuscitato il potere temporale dei Papi: lo abbiamo sepolto," Mussolini, *Gli accordi del Laterano*, 71.

remember with much fondness this beautiful, most dignified example of a patriot and priest."<sup>297</sup>

Pope Pius XI also quickly found himself having to defend the Accords to his own supporters. In a "letter" to Cardinal Gasparri published in the influential Church periodical *Civiltà Cattolica*, Pius insisted that the Church had not lost its independence. Instead, Catholicism was resuming its rightful influence in Italian society. Pius insisted that "the Fascist State, in its ideas, doctrine, and practical action, includes nothing that is not in agreement with Catholic doctrine and practice; without this it could not be a Catholic State."<sup>298</sup> He claimed that the concordat only allowed the state to confirm, not nominate, bishops, and that the concordat's marriage provision "gives a benefit to the family, the Italian people, the country even more than to the Church that is so great that [I] would voluntarily sacrifice my own life for it."<sup>299</sup> Pius defended the lack of freedom of religion and speech under Fascism because he believed this prevented "ignorant" listeners from falling sway to anti-Catholic propaganda while the Church still enjoyed the ability- which he interpreted as a right which trumped that of the state- to educate children.

The Church, from the hierarchy to individual missionaries in Italian migrant communities, continued to be fixated on the threat to Catholicism from socialism,

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<sup>297</sup> "Bisogna ricordare con molta simpatia, anche noi Fascisti, quella bella, degnissima figura di patriota e di sacerdote!" Mussolini, *Gli accordi del Laterano*, 40.

<sup>298</sup> "...lo Stato fascista, tanto nell'ordine delle idee e delle dottrine quanto nell'ordine della pratica azione, nulla vuol ammettere che non s'accordi con la dottrina e con la pratica cattolica; senza di che Stato cattolico non sarebbe nè potrebbe essere." Pius XI, "Lettera di S.S. Pio XI all'E.mo Card. Segretario di Stato," *Civiltà Cattolica* (7 June 1929): 486-7.

<sup>299</sup> "procura alla famiglia, al popolo italiano, al paese ancora più che alla Chiesa un beneficio così grande che per esso solo avremmo volentieri sacrificato la vita stessa," Pius XI, "Lettera di S.S. Pio XI all'E.mo Card. Segretario di Stato," 487.

communism, and Freemasonry. The fact that the Fascist government was totalitarian did not bother the Church hierarchy, itself authoritarian and often suspicious of democracy around the world because many in the hierarchy believed democracy paved the way for radicalism and secularism. Like former Prime Minister Giolitti and the Liberal politicians who had underestimated Mussolini's ambition and ruthlessness, the Holy See thought Mussolini could be used to block the left's political power. Historian John Pollard observes that "Pius XI and his collaborators were rather inclined to view Mussolini's rule as a conservative-authoritarian regime, not dissimilar from many others in Europe in the 1930s, and one that would conveniently assist in the reconstruction of that Christian, Catholic society that had been destroyed, or at least seriously weakened in some of its essentials, by the 'Liberal Revolution' of the preceding century."<sup>300</sup> Pollard says that it was not until the late 1930s, after the Fascist state implemented policies alarming to the Church, such as the anti-Jewish Racial Law of 1938, that the difference between Fascism and other conservative-authoritarian regimes, particularly Nazism, became clear.

### **Fascist Surveillance of Diaspora Salesians**

The Fascist state remained distrustful of Catholic clergy and religious, including Italian missionaries. The Fascists constructed a large surveillance network which operated even inside the Holy See,<sup>301</sup> and the Fascists also monitored the activities of Italian missionaries when abroad. In the 1930s, Italian police spied on Catholic Action in

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<sup>300</sup> John F. Pollard, *Catholicism in Modern Italy: Religion, Society and Politics Since 1861* (London: Routledge, 2008), 88.

<sup>301</sup> The expansive network of Fascist informants provides historians with much material on Catholic activities during this period. Such reports are crucial to David Kertzer's account of the Holy See during this period. See Kertzer, *The Pope and Mussolini*.

Italy, even tapping the phones of important leaders, to determine who was and was not sympathetic to the regime. In 1930, the police also reported on a conference in Turin of the Congress of Italian Union of Missionaries. The group was dedicated to many different kinds of missionary work, not exclusively work with Italians, and the Salesians attended. The police report lauded the Salesians' work, and how Italian they were.<sup>302</sup> Nevertheless, no Italian missionary group, including the Salesians, avoided continued Fascist surveillance and criticism. In 1933 Piero Parini, director of the *fasci all'estero*, complained directly to Don Pietro Ricaldone, the Salesians' Rector Major from 1932 to 1951, about the Salesians' *italianità*, and Parini forwarded their correspondence to Mussolini. "The Salesians," Parini wrote "act like Italian patriots where it takes little sacrifice and is convenient, that is, in the Mediterranean and Europe, because they are helped there by great deals of money from the Government, but in America they act as agents of local nationalism for their own gain."<sup>303</sup>

The state used its diplomatic corps and the *fasci all'estero* to report on local missions across the Americas during the 1930s, and these informants were particularly concerned with how missionaries taught Italian. They sent largely negative reports back to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome. A 1934 report from Venezuela described the Salesian fathers in Venezuela as of "good Italian sentiments" but worried that the Italian language was fading from their communities. The fathers were drifting away from their

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<sup>302</sup> See reports in ACS, Ministero dell'Interno, Pubblica sicurezza, G1 Associazioni in Italia e all'estero II. Affari generali, 1920-1943, b. 9, f. 127.

<sup>303</sup> "I Salesiani fanno insomma i patrioti italiani dove costa poco sacrificio e dove è conveniente e cioè nel Mediterraneo e in Europa perchè sono aiutati con forti somme del R. Governo, ma in America fanno gli agenti del nazionalismo locale pur tornaconto." ASMAE, Piero Parini to Pietro Ricaldone, Rome, 1933, Archivio Scuole, 1929-1935 b. 969.



own rules than ensured they spoke Italian within their communities on particular days, and their schools did not teach Italian. The author lamented that in South America "the Salesian fathers are Argentines, Bolivians, Venezuelans, etc, before being Italians, in the areas in which they live and operate."<sup>304</sup> Such criticism was not only ideological but also reflected the fact that many Italian Salesians were in fact second-generation migrants, the children of Italian migrants to South America, like most of their students. They had been raised outside Italy and possessed local citizenships. The same report from Venezuela noted that some Salesians were "admirers of the Duce, more so than the Regime" but claimed that "their admiration goes no farther than that of any priest who recognizes in Fascism above all the particular merit of having returned Christ's religion to a position of respect that, in a time so calamitous for Catholicism, it should have."<sup>305</sup>

Several reports found the Salesian Sisters to be doing a better job of preserving *italianità* because of how they taught the Italian language to children. The Royal Legation in Columbia reported that Salesians there, "from the point of view of *italianità*, leave much to be desired" but the writer added that he needed to make an "immediate distinction" between the Salesian Fathers and Salesian Sisters. The Sisters, he wrote, alongside their religious and educational missions "follow a lofty mission of *italianità*,

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<sup>304</sup> "...i salesiani sono argentini, boliviani, venezueliani, ecc, primo d'essere italiani, a seconda della località in cui vivono ed operano," Bruno Gemelli to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Caracas, 10 Jan. 1934, ASMAE, Archivio Scuole, 1929-1935 b. 969.

<sup>305</sup> "E vero che sono ammiratori del Duce, più che del Regime, e mi si intenda, che poco o nulla conoscono, ne le loro ammirazione non va più in là di quella di un qualsiasi sacerdote che al fascismo riconosce soprattutto la particolare benemeranza di avere ridato alla religione di Cristo il posto di rispetto, in tempo tanto calamitosi per il cattolicesimo, dovutole." Bruno Gemelli to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Caracas, 10 Jan. 1934, ASMAE, Archivio Scuole, 1929-1935 b. 969.

never forgetting their origin or that of their order."<sup>306</sup> The Sisters often received such praise because they taught regular Italian classes to many students and instructed students in Italian culture.

Fascist state agents in the Americas wanted to know if and how missionaries transmitted *italianità* through Italian language, celebrations, and symbols. The government was particularly concerned about the quality of Italian language instruction, including class size, the time spent learning Italian, and how well students learned to speak. Respondents, however, also looked at the way Italy was treated in the classroom as evidence of the missionaries' attachment to and dissemination of Fascist *italianità*. In 1933, diplomatic personnel in Cuba reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about "the poor sense of *italianità* that the Salesian Fathers' current Cuban direction fosters," a complaint they had made previously.<sup>307</sup> The letter recounted how the Salesian school in Guanabacoa displayed two large flags outside the school, a Cuban flag and a Vatican flag, but the only Italian flag was smaller and placed inside the building. The report also mentioned that the Salesians had again refused to celebrate Garibaldi Day, a common response for Italian missionaries in South America who continued to associate such holidays with anticlericalism they had experienced in South America, even after such celebrations became permissible for Catholics in Italy after the Lateran Accords. Throughout the 1930s, Fascists remained distrustful of Salesians in South America and their commitment to *italianità*.

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<sup>306</sup> "dal punto di vista d'italianità, lasciano molto a desiderare" ; "professano un'alta missione d'italianità, mai dimenticando la loro origine e quella del loro ordine," Regia Legazione d'Italia in Columbia to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bogotá, 12 Dec. 1933. ASMAE, Archivio Scuole, 1929-1935 b. 969.

<sup>307</sup> "lo scarso senso d'italianità che anima l'attuale direzione cubana dei Padri Salesiani," R. Boscarella to Dino Grandi, Havana, 13 June 1932. ASMAE, Archivio Scuole, 1929-1935, b. 969.

## The Murder of Don Cesare Caravadossi

The situation was even more fraught for missionaries in France, where the battle between Fascists and antifascists was especially intense and frequently violent. Fascists, antifascists, and Italian missionaries all had their own competing versions of *italianità*. One of the most striking examples of the situation's complexity was the 1928 murder *Opera* Bonomelli missionary Don Cesare Caravadossi by antifascists. Catholics, Fascists, and antifascists all interpreted his life and death according to their own political projects. Missionaries occupied a symbolic position to Fascists and antifascists both because of their social position and ties to the institutional Catholic Church.

The *Opera* Bonomelli assigned Caravadossi to its mission in Joeuf, France in 1924. The small town in northeastern France attracted a community of approximately 20,000 Italians to work in mining and industry. Caravadossi worked in a small mission where he provided religious services to Italian Catholics, including saying an Italian Mass in a local church. He also assisted workers with bureaucracy including passports and civil forms, and he helped Italians write to both French and Italian authorities.<sup>308</sup> On November 17, 1928 Caravadossi was receiving Italian workers as usual when a young man, Angelo Bartolmei, arrived, shot Caravadossi, and fled to Belgium. After several days of searching, Bartolmei was found on November 21 and arrested. Antonio Gamberi, a vocal antifascist, was soon arrested as a coconspirator. Caravadossi's murder and funeral on November 21 attracted widespread attention and debate. The murder and search for his killer were covered in Fascist, republican, communist, socialist, and

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<sup>308</sup> "L'abbé Caravadossi aurait bien été assassiné par un Italien antifasciste," *L'Est Republicain* 19 Nov. 1928, 1.

Catholic papers in France, Italy, and Vatican City. Antifascists threatened violence if Caravadossi's funeral was conducted according to Fascist rites. French police were present at the funeral, but no violence took place.

The limited archival evidence does not provide much insight into Caravadossi's personal beliefs. However, it does not appear that Caravadossi had any particular Fascist sympathies. Like all the *Opera's* missionaries, Caravadossi worked with Italian government officials to process paperwork and to advocate for Italians in France, and the government provided funds for the Joeuf mission. After his death, though Italian Fascists tried to represent Caravadossi as a Fascist martyr, Caravadossi himself provided them with little grounds for doing so. Instead, Fascists represented him as a good Italian, dedicated to his fellow Italians, but apolitical. An Italian Catholic paper, *L'Avvenire d'Italia*, quoted the Italian Consul General in Nancy, France, Gaetano Vecchiotti, who claimed he had been a close friend of Caravadossi: "The murder is a true injustice also because the reverend was not a militant Fascist,"<sup>309</sup> and he stressed Caravadossi was not political but had an "impartial attitude" toward the Italian government. Vecchiotti criticized the anticlericalism of Bartolomei and Gamberi and promised that "As for the rest of us, true Italians, we will give Cesare Caravadossi a Fascist funeral."<sup>310</sup> The Consul General's words are striking because Fascists had always equated being a Fascist with being a good Italian. Yet the Consul General argued Caravadossi merited Fascist

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<sup>309</sup> "Il delitto è una vera ingiustizia anche perché il reverenda non era un fascista militante..." "Imminente arresto dell'autore: Dichiarazioni del Console d'Italia," *L'avvenire d'Italia*, 22 Nov. 1928.

<sup>310</sup> "Quanto a noi altri, veri italiani, faremo a Cesare Caravadossi funerali fascisti," "Imminente arresto dell'autore: Dichiarazioni del Console d'Italia," *L'avvenire d'Italia*, 22 Nov. 1928.

admiration for assisting other Italians and his murder at the hands of Fascist opponents. Fascist explanations of the event also portrayed Caravadossi in this manner.

Caravadossi's status as a missionary and his work with the Italian government put him in danger with antifascists who conflated missionaries with the Fascist state even before the Lateran Accords. Caravadossi and other *Opera* missionaries were occasionally threatened by antifascists. An Italian paper, sympathetic to Caravadossi and critical of antifascist "banditry," claimed to quote an anonymous Italian communist who had been forced to flee to France, where he lived in Joeuf and had interacted with Caravadossi. The man said that Caravadossi "was a Fascist because he was a friend of the government."<sup>311</sup> The man went on to recount how Caravadossi aided all Italians, even the speaker, regardless of their known political opinions. Though the man's story was in line with the sympathetic portrait of Caravadossi the paper wanted to present, the comment also echoed more critical appraisals of Caravadossi and the missionaries' work.

Since the French Revolution, French republicans, joined in the nineteenth century by socialists and communists, had fought against the Catholic Church as institution of repression aligned with the French monarchy that they sought to destroy. In the 1920s and 1930s, French leftist movements, bolstered by a global collection of political refugees, including Italians, continued to battle the Catholic Church and see its agents as allies of conservative and oppressive regimes which claimed the support of Catholicism. *L'Humanité*, the French communist newspaper, called Caravadossi's murder a "political crime." It claimed that Caravadossi was an agent of the *fascio* of Lorraine and worked

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<sup>311</sup> "Egli era fascista perché era amico della disciplina," "La nobile figura del sacerdote Cesare Caravadossi vittima del banditismo antifascista a Lorena," *Il secolo*, 20 Nov. 1928.

with the French police to hunt down political refugees in France. *L'Humanité* claimed that the police hunting for Bartolomei and Gamberi had no proof of their involvement in the crime. Caravadossi's death was an act of "vengeance" for Italian Fascist and French violence against radical foreign workers in France, "the certain result of the Union Nationale's politics of oppression against foreign workers and its complicity with Mussolini's government."<sup>312</sup>

Caravadossi's funeral attracted large crowds and many dignitaries, evidence of the missionaries' social and political importance, even though Caravadossi had worked in a small mission far away from major cities. The small church was crowded (one newspaper estimated 2000 people attended)<sup>313</sup> for the Wednesday morning funeral. French and Italian dignitaries attended the funeral, including the local mayor, the head of the local police, Italian diplomatic officials, and Piero Parini, the head of the *fasci all'estero*, who flew in from Rome. Also in attendance were representatives of the local French diocese, other priests, and Babini, Caravadossi's superior, who gave Caravadossi's eulogy in Italian. Caravadossi, already a priest, had been drafted during World War I, worked in a hospital, and been a prisoner of war for several months in 1918, so some mourners came as part of Italian veterans' groups. Though the Italian Consul General had promised the Fascists would not wear their uniforms, a few men did wear blackshirts, and some mourners came with pennants from *fasci* in France and nearby Luxembourg. The presence of veterans' groups and local *fasci*, who often processed along with the body,

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<sup>312</sup> "est le resultat certain de la politique de répression contre les travailleurs étrangers de l'Union Nationale, et de sa complicité à l'égard du gouvernement du Mussolini," "C'est la politique de l'Union Nationale qui est la cause du meurtre de Dom Caravadossi," *L'Humanité*, 21 Nov. 1928, 1.

<sup>313</sup> "Les ouvriers italiens de Joeuf ont fait d'émouvantes funérailles à l'abbé Caravadossi," *Le Messin*, 22 Nov. 1928, 1.

was standard in Fascist funerals. After the funeral, Caravadossi's body was taken to Verdun, where additional mourners paid their respects before he was buried there.

Fascists also engaged in their Fascist rituals and made other claims on Caravadossi. At the funeral, speaking on behalf of Mussolini, Parini called Caravadossi a Fascist martyr and gave his body a Fascist salute. He also led a standard Fascist funeral ritual, the roll call. When Parini called Caravadossi's name, the Fascists in attendance raised their arm in a salute and yelled "present!"<sup>314</sup> The Fascist press highlighted these Fascist rituals, though some of these stories were notably absent from non-Fascist coverage of the same event. For example, only the Fascist-controlled *Gazzetta del Popolo* claimed that at the end of Caravadossi's funeral "all the officials, workers, women, children, and priests passed in front of the casket giving the Roman salute."<sup>315</sup> Fascists continued to commemorate Caravadossi as a Fascist martyr after his death. In the days after his funeral, a new *fascio* for Italian miners in Chaumont, France formed and was named after Caravadossi. Newspapers reported that it was formed in Parini's presence. When interviewed in France, Parini portrayed the new *fascio* as further evidence of Italians' affection for Caravadossi.<sup>316</sup> The next month, the *fascio* of Palermo held a memorial mass for Caravadossi in which he was remembered as a "Fascist martyr."<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> "L'assassin de l'abbé Caravadossi a été arrêté mercredi matin à Liège," *L'Est Republicain*, 22 Nov. 1928, 1.

<sup>315</sup> "tutte le autorità, gli operai, le donne, i bambini, e i sacerdoti sono passati davanti alla bara salutando romanamente," "La sfilata davanti alla salma," *Gazzetta del Popolo*, 22 Nov. 1928.

<sup>316</sup> "Un fascio intitolato al nome della vittima," *Corriere d'Italia*, 23 Nov. 1928; "L'istigatore dell'assassinio di Don Caravadossi arrestato nel Lussemburgo," *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 23 Nov. 1928, 1.

<sup>317</sup> "Martire Fascista," "La solenne Messa in suffragio di D. Cesare Caravadossi," *L'ora*, 31 Dec. 1928-1 Jan. 1929.

The Fascists continued their commemoration and appropriation of Caravadossi with the booklet *Don Cesare Caravadossi: A Martyr for the Faith and Fatherland (Don Cesare Caravadossi: un martire della fede e dalla patria)*, which the *Fasci all'estero* published in the 1930s. The thirty pages ostensibly commemorated a devout, selfless life and a shocking murder. It memorialized Caravadossi as an innocent victim of antifascist violence, and the booklet was part of a series called *Antifascist Crimes (I crimini dell'antifascismo)*. Like earlier Fascist press coverage, it claimed Caravadossi loved both Italy and Catholicism, though it made it clear he was never a Fascist, saying "in Don Cesare Caravadossi beat, not a clear-cut political faith, which he did not have, but the love of country, which, naturally close to the love of God, filled all his heart."<sup>318</sup> The booklet also echoed the quotes about Caravadossi's apolitical nature that Vecchiotti and Parini gave to newspapers at the time of Caravadossi's death. The book recounted how his family had passed down both patriotism and faith to him, and how Caravadossi became an *Opera* missionary because of his great love for his countrymen. By emphasizing his kindness and friendship to all, the booklet subtly demonized the antifascists who had murdered Caravadossi and who fought against Fascists in Italian diaspora communities.

Though Caravadossi's fellow missionaries remained distant from Fascist propaganda activities, they did collaborate with some members of the Italian government: Caravadossi's family members. Caravadossi came from a noble Italian family that was well-connected even before the Fascists took power. His older brother, Colonel

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<sup>318</sup> "...in Don Cesare Caravadossi si colpì non una precisa fede politica, che egli non aveva, ma l'amor di Patria, che naturalmente vicino a quello di Dio, riempiva tutto il suo cuore," *Don Cesare Caravadossi: un martire della fede e dalla patria* (Roma: Segreteria Generale dei Fasci all'Estero, 1930.)



Alessandro Caravadossi, Count of Aspromonte, led the carabinieri (Italian military police) in Palermo and later Trieste. Colonel Caravadossi was also active in a charity benefitting the family of wounded and dead Fascists. The Missionaries of Emigration in Europe, the *Opera's* successor organization, remembered Caravadossi for years afterwards and kept Caravadossi's family apprised of these events. Each year, some missionaries said a memorial Mass for Caravadossi in Verdun where Don Caravadossi was buried next to his mother. Throughout the 1930s, the Caravadossi family wrote to Babini, thanking him for that year's Mass. Babini even received an invitation to the wedding of Colonel Caravadossi's daughter Lea in 1934.<sup>319</sup>

As an Italian Catholic missionary, Caravadossi occupied an important symbolic position for both Fascists and antifascists. Antifascists viewed him as an agent of the Fascist state and thus an appropriate target for assassination. Fascists considered Caravadossi a martyr because his murder supported a narrative of uncontrolled antifascist violence, a narrative that the Fascists were spreading in the hopes of gaining other countries' support. Caravadossi became a symbol, not a man, and his beliefs were irrelevant to how Fascists and antifascists understood him.

### **Eugenio Noradino Torricella**

The longer and very public missionary career of Monsignor Eugenio Noradino Torricella, another former *Opera* missionary who worked in France, demonstrated that, even after the Lateran Accords, missionaries' expressions of Italian nationalism remained contested. Torricella was a proud Italian but also a strong personality who clashed with local Fascists who tried to control Italian activities in the region. Torricella was an Italian

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<sup>319</sup> See correspondence in AGS, Fondo Babini, b. 132, "Missione Jœuf, 1928-38, P. Caravadossi."

patriot and fierce in his defense of Italians and their capabilities, but he was not a Fascist. At the same time, antifascists were fiercely opposed to Torricella. Torricella was born in Bergamo in 1887 and ordained a priest in Rome in 1907. He spent most of his early career working for the Holy See's diplomatic service, mainly on behalf of prisoners of war in Europe during World War I. Torricella was a member of the Partito Popolare and directed a Popolare newspaper in northern Italy. In 1924, he joined the *Opera Bonomelli* and was sent to its mission in Agen, in southwest France. From Agen, Torricella used the Italian Catholic press to support and advocate for Italian migrants throughout Fascist rule.

Torricella's religious work was always tied to the press. He first worked with Italian newspapers and then with the *Opera Bonomelli's* newspaper *La Patria*. In November 1926, Torricella began publishing the weekly newspaper *Il Corriere* for Italian migrants in southwest France. Torricella argued that the Italian community in southwestern France was very different from that of northern France and so it needed its own paper. In the southwest, Italians engaged mainly in agricultural work and lived spread across the region instead of in dense Italian communities, as in the north. *Il Corriere* achieved an estimated circulation of 12,000 copies in 1933,<sup>320</sup> and in 1934, it became the official news organ of the Missionaries of Emigration in Europe and circulated in several European countries. The Italian-language paper printed religious items, including Papal speeches and explanations of the Gospel, Italian and international news, and information about business, economics, agriculture, and law useful for Italian migrants.

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<sup>320</sup> Ministero della Cultura Popolare to Sindacato Interprovinciale Fascista dei Giornalisti, 8 June 1938, ASMAE, Fondo Minculpop, b. 512.

In *Il Corriere*, Torricella sought to create an alternative to the vocal antifascist Italian press currently operating in France. Torricella wrote to Babini the day after Caravadossi's death, saying "You see that there is a rallying crying against the missionary because the anticlerical papers- *Libertà*, etc.- always spoke of the Missionaries as Fascism's vanguard."<sup>321</sup> Torricella was frustrated because, throughout his career, antifascists refused to believe that the Missionaries of Emigration reported directly to the Holy See, not the Italian government, and did not participate in any political party. Antifascists were suspicious both because the newspaper was Catholic and because it obtained crucial funds from the Italian government. While the Banca Commerciale Franco Italiana provided *Il Corriere's* initial funding, the bank quickly failed. Torricella was forced to look for funding elsewhere from both the Church and the Italian government, and he even entertained the idea of funds offered by the local *fascio*. The Fascists wanted a paper in southwest France that could counteract radical influences, and some local Italian consuls offered funds to *Il Corriere*. However, Torricella did not get all the funds promised to him by various diplomatic officials, and this led to bitter conflicts in the late 1920s that highlighted how Torricella's personal Italian nationalism was separate from Fascism and, more importantly, from its control by Fascist authorities.<sup>322</sup>

Torricella was motivated by an Italian patriotism which he interpreted as apolitical, but since both antifascists and Fascists politicized *italianità* in this era,

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<sup>321</sup> "Si vede che c'è una parola d'ordine contro il missionario perchè i giornali anti-clericali- *Libertà* ecc.- parlava sempre dei Missionari come le avanguardie del fascismo," Noradino Torricella to Costantino Babini, Agen, 18 Nov. 1928, AGS, Fondo Babini. f. 93.

<sup>322</sup> See Noradino Torricella to Rocco Beltrami, Agen, 11 January 1929, AGS, Fondo Babini, f. 93, sf. 3.

Torricella clashed with both. Torricella was a strong personality, and in the late 1920s, he had an ongoing conflict over Fascist influence in *Il Corriere* with the local consul, Count Galleani. In an angry letter to Galleani, Torricella insisted the *Il Corriere* "is not a political newspaper: it is a newspaper of a religious-patriotic character, because only on this ground can one do some good and keep the sense of the Religion and Fatherland alive."<sup>323</sup> He refused to make propaganda for the government or let it dictate what he talked about. Torricella claimed he did not publish things that were critical of the government or its policy because the paper's purpose was to help migrants, not to engage in political debates: "But I have not done it because my newspaper- maybe you do not know this- is written by me to be useful to conationals, not for fighting Consuls or Consulates [emphasis in original]."<sup>324</sup> Torricella's conflict with Galleani was unusual. Though Torricella fired back at critics throughout his tenure, this particular dispute was so bitter that both Torricella's superior, Babini, and the Italian Ambassador in Paris met to resolve it.<sup>325</sup> Both Torricella and Galleani were embedded in separate hierarchies that, while they sought to preserve their own power and independence, both benefitted from *italianità* and the collaboration between the Church and state to assist Italian migrants. Therefore, both men's superiors tried to mediate the Agen conflict and its clashing personalities in order to continue assisting Italians in the region.

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<sup>323</sup> "E poi il 'Corriere' non è un giornale politico: è un giornale a carattere religioso patriottico, perchè su questo terreno soltanto può fare qualche come si bene e mantenere vivo il senso della Religione e della Patria," Noradino Torricella to Conte Galleani d'Agliano, Agen, 6 Feb. 1929, AGS, Fondo Babini, f. 93, sf. 3.

<sup>324</sup> "Ma non l'ho fatto perchè il mio giornale- forse Lei ancora non lo conosce- è scritto da me per essere utile ai connazionali, non per combattere Consoli o Consolati." Noradino Torricella to Conte Galleani d'Agliano, Agen, 6 Feb. 1929, AGS, Fondo Babini, f. 93, sf. 3.

<sup>325</sup> Rocco Beltrami to the Prelate of Italian Emigration, Paris, 12 Feb. 1929, AGS, Fondo Babini, Prelato dell' Emigrazione, f. 2, sf. 5.

Torricella vigorously defended his own patriotism and that of *Il Corriere*, insisting that he was "always ready to confront my detractors; all without exception." Torricella interpreted Italian patriotism as pride and celebration of Italy's history and accomplishments, and he argued that he was a better Italian patriot than government officials because he had fostered Italian patriotism in southwest France before the Italian consulates or the *fasci all'estero*. "It will be easy to demonstrate," he wrote to Galleani, "that in 1924-1925 when they ignored the Southwest's existence or maybe did not burn with great civic virtues... when neither Consulates nor *Fasci* existed, patriotic ceremonies for the Victory and for the Sovereign's 25th Anniversary were celebrated by me; the first Italian flag in the Southwest was mine."<sup>326</sup> Torricella's self-professed patriotism reflected the Catholic *italianità* that missionaries had promoted before Fascism, and Torricella was unwilling to make it subservient to Fascist direction.

The coming of World War II brought further criticism of Torricella's *italianità*, this time from antifascists who interpreted his *italianità* as sympathy for Fascism. In 1939, as tensions increased between Italy and France, an Italian antifascist wrote a seething editorial about Torricella in *Le Travailleur du Sud Ouest*, a French communist newspaper. The writer accused Torricella of trying to sway Italian Catholics toward Fascism, a movement which the writer considered against the interests of the French people. The writer lambasted a recent article Torricella had written claiming that Italians would not fight against their fatherland (*patria*) if Italy and France went to war but would instead go back to Italy. "In a sly form, it is the same substance of **Farinacci's** article

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<sup>326</sup> "Noradino Torricella to Conte Galleani d'Agliano," Agen, 6 Feb. 1929, AGS, Fondo Babini, f. 93, sf. 3.

calling from the emigrants to stab the French people in the back. Monsignor is an agent of the **Fifth Column**” [emphasis in original].<sup>327</sup> Roberto Farinacci was a key figure in the Fascist government and a vocal anti-Semite. In 1939 Farinacci declared that Italians were a fifth column in France and would fight against France if the two nations went to war.

Despite his efforts on behalf of Italian migrants and antifascists' criticism of his *italianità*, World War II did not end Torricella's conflicts with Italian government officials. In August 1941, Torricella published an editorial in *Il Corriere* urging any Italians in France who were thinking about repatriating to carefully consider the advantage and drawbacks of both countries, including the job market and the currency's value. Officials in a government agency that dealt with repatriation thought Torricella was deliberately undermining their work and trying to slow down repatriations. One official wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that it was not Torricella's first article which showed his "suspicious obstructionism" of an issue of national interest. The official asked the Italian Ambassador to the Holy See to bring the matter to the Church hierarchy's attention in the hopes that they would intervene and "end a campaign of decided hostility against the official work for the repatriation of Italians in France."<sup>328</sup>

Torricella considered his calls for caution to be part of his job to give sound advice to Italian migrants, not an attempt to thwart the Italian government's repatriation

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<sup>327</sup> “Sous une forme sournoise, c'est la substance même de l'article de **Farinacci** appelant les émigrés à tirer dans le dos du peuple français. Monsignor est un agent de la **Ve colonne**.” Un Emigré, “Démasons la 5me Colonne,” *Le Travailleur du Sud Ouest*, 8 July 1939.

<sup>328</sup> “equivoco obstruzionismo”; “termine ad una campagna di decisa ostilità verso quanto costituisce l'azione ufficiale di rimpatrio degli Italiani in Francia,” L'Ufficio Coordinamento per gli Italiani all'Estero in Lione to Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 6 Sept. 1941, ASMAE.

efforts. Many migrants approached Torricella for news and advice because he was *Il Corriere's* editor and had information relevant to Italian communities in France. Torricella had been careful in considering migrants' options and making sure that his information was accurate. The previous October, Torricella had written to Monsignor Erminio Viganò, the head of the Prelate for Italian Emigration, about the dilemma Italians facing in France. "The most important argument- at least among the Italians, no one doubts the final Italian victory- is that of repatriation."<sup>329</sup> Torricella reported that newspapers in both occupied and unoccupied France had been reporting for days that Italians would be repatriated, but Torricella had refrained from publishing anything, despite receiving inquiring letters from Italian migrants, because he could not confirm the news.

World War II changed and expanded Torricella's work with Italian migrants. Torricella did not go back to Italy when war reached France, but he did advise and assist Italians repatriating to Italy. Though Agen was not occupied by the Germans, *Il Corriere* was temporarily shut down as Torricella waited for the new French government to authorize its reopening. Torricella and his fellow missionaries also provided migrants with additional assistance navigating wartime bureaucracies. Like other Church representatives, Torricella was contacted by many people looking for news of relatives

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<sup>329</sup> "L'argomento più importante- poichè tra gli italiani almeno, nessuno dubita della vittoria finale italiana- è quello del rimpatrio," Noradino Torricella to Erminio Viganò, Agen, 21 Oct. 1940, AGS, Fondo, Vescovo per l'Emigrazione Italiana, f. 802.

and friends. In early 1941, he wrote to German authorities to argue for the freedom of two Italian workers with French citizenship who were prisoners of war in Germany.<sup>330</sup>

Torricella vigorously insisted that he was a true Italian patriot, despite criticism from both Fascists and antifascists, until the end of his life. Despite the complexities of Torricella's relationship with the Italian government and his consistent public assertions that his newspaper was not political, Torricella, like Caravadossi, fell victim to the era's conflicting interpretations of *italianità*. Torricella was murdered by two communist youths in Agen, France on January 7, 1944. His death was not much different from that of Caravadossi: Torricella was working on *Il Corriere* in his office when the two youths came to see him. Torricella's housekeeper let them in and they shot Torricella, mortally wounding him, and then fled. The bishop of Agen celebrated Torricella's funeral in the Cathedral of Agen, and it was attended by many French and Italian dignitaries.<sup>331</sup> The Scalabrinians had expanded into France in 1936, their first missions outside the Americas, and two Scalabrinians replaced Torricella in the Agen mission. One of the Scalabrinians, Father Giovanni Triacca resumed publishing *Il Corriere* in 1946, changing its title to *L'Eco*, but the newspaper remained the official organ of the Missionaries of Emigration.<sup>332</sup>

The vocal Torricella did not fit neatly into antifascists' or Fascists' definition of an Italian. Torricella insisted his love for Italy as a nation (his homeland, or *patria*) was

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<sup>330</sup> R. Ambasciata d'Italia presso la Santa Sede to il Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome, 5 Mar. 1941, ASMAE, Ambasciata d'Italia presso la Santa Sede (1929-46), b. 183.

<sup>331</sup> "Nella trigesima della tragica morte di Monsignor E. N. Torricella." *Il Corriere*. 3 Feb. 1944, 1; "Mons. Eugenio Torricella" *Le Missioni Scalabriniane* XXXIII, No.1-4 (Jan-Sept 1944): 13-14.

<sup>332</sup> Costantino Babini, "L'Eco, Settimanale per gli italiani in Europa, compie i trent'anni," *L'emigrato italiano* XLVI, No. 1 (Jan. 1957), 6-8.



apolitical, but as we have already seen, *italianità* had deep political implications for both antifascists and Fascists, particularly when it was expressed by an Italian missionary. Torricella's missionary responsibilities required frequent work with agents of the Italian state, particularly diplomatic personnel, to assist Italians with civil matters and to obtain information for his newspaper. Such work and his status as a Catholic priest was enough to convince many antifascists that he was a Fascist, or at least a collaborator, and therefore an appropriate target for assassination. Fascist government officials, however, criticized Torricella throughout his life for refusing to print Fascist propaganda in *Il Corriere*.

### **Migrant *Italianità* and World War II**

World War II was the culmination and disastrous end of Fascist *italianità* and nation-building attempts. While Fascism obtained its most vocal support from diaspora Italians, including Catholic missionaries, during its (this time, successful) invasion of Ethiopia in 1935-6, World War II strained and ultimately broke Catholic support for Mussolini's regime and for the conflation of *italianità* with Fascism and the Italian state. Many Italian Catholics interpreted Italy's war with Ethiopia as a morally just movement to bring civilization to part of Africa, and they explained away the League of Nations' condemnation of Mussolini as the hypocritical and jealous reaction of other imperial powers that did not want to see Italy join their ranks.<sup>333</sup> Mussolini, however, became

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<sup>333</sup> Lucia Ceci, *Il papa non deve parlare: Chiesa, fascismo e guerra d'Etiopia* (Roma: Laterza, 2010); Stefano Luconi, *La "diplomazia parallela": il regime fascista e la mobilitazione politica degli italo-americani* (Milano, Italy: F. Angeli, 2000); Fiorello B. Ventresco, "Italian-Americans and the Ethiopian Crisis," *Italian Americana* 6, No. 1 (1980): 4-27.

increasingly delusional and he aggressively sought further Italian expansion, eventually leading to an alliance with Nazi Germany and Italy's entrance into World War II in 1940.

Most diaspora Italians finally turned against Mussolini after his declaration of war against countries in which many Italians resided, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and France,<sup>334</sup> but the Holy See remained neutral throughout the war. The Holy See's often fraught relationship with Mussolini grew more distant in the late 1930s, when it became clear that Mussolini was growing closer to Adolph Hitler, instead of functioning as a Catholic alternative to Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, as Pius XI had hoped. When Pius XI died in February 1939, the Holy See's secretary of state, Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, was elected in March and became Pope Pius XII. Pius XII kept the Holy See officially neutral throughout the war and publicly advocated for peace, prisoners of war, and refugees.<sup>335</sup> Neither pope, however, condemned the Fascist regime while it was still in power. Italian missionaries abroad, however, had to choose a side. By the end of the war, missionaries across the world cheered the war's end and the end of the Fascist dictatorship, but missionaries' public positions in the war's uncertain early years demonstrated that missionaries remained dedicated to the welfare of an Italian national community abroad but differed in their stance on Mussolini and the Fascist government depending on the country in which they resided and their understanding of the political situation therein.

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<sup>334</sup> On June 10, 1940, the Canadian government declared war on Italy in response to Italy's declaration of war against Britain and France earlier that day.

<sup>335</sup> The actions (and inaction) of Pius XII and the Holy See during the Holocaust remain continuously debated in both historiography and public discourse. While understanding this is crucial to the history of both Italy and the Catholic Church, I do not discuss this controversy here because the Holocaust, or the plight of Jews more broadly, did not shape diaspora Italians' conception of the Italian war effort or their *italianità* during this period.

Nine Missionaries of Emigration were briefly interned in France in 1940 and wrote accounts of their experience that showed their continued commitment to the Italian community and revealed their deep hostility to the French for their mistreatment.<sup>336</sup> German forces finally invaded France in May 1940, quickly overwhelming French forces, and the French government signed an armistice on June 22, 1940. Italy declared war on France on June 10, when the conflict was nearly over, but that decision had immediate repercussions for the Italians in France. Within hours of Italy's declaration, French police arrested thousands of Italians in southwest France and sent them to internment camps near the Spanish border. Police arrested only a small portion of the Italians in the region, and the missionaries were angry at what seemed to be arbitrary criteria for deportation. In his account, Father Giuseppe Luigi Brondolo, a missionary in Toulouse, wrote rhetorically to the French police who had arrested him, angry that in Toulouse there were "Italians more intellectual than me whom you have left free; there are other Italians who have engaged in all manner of political activities, from socialist and communist propaganda of all types to Fascist extremism... and all these you have left free on the streets of Toulouse."<sup>337</sup>

The difficulties they faced heightened the missionaries' sense of a shared Italian community in the camps and their connection to Italy. The missionaries derived great

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<sup>336</sup> Historian Gianfausto Rosoli pointed out that these accounts were written either for the missionaries' superior, Costantino Babini, or for the Prelate of Italian Emigration and were likely influenced by similar accounts published at the time, hence some of the accounts' dramatic structure and patriotic assertions. See Gianfausto Rosoli, "Gli emigrati italiani nei campi di concentramento francesi del 1940. Considerazioni su alcuni diari di prigionia," *Studi Emigrazione* XVII, No. 59 (Sept. 1980): 304-330.

<sup>337</sup> "...ci sono italiani più intellettuali di me, che avete lasciato liberi; ci sono altri italiani che hanno vissuto tutte le attività politiche, dal propagandista del Comunismo e quel del socialismo di tutte le affinità tinte e colori e del estremismo fascista più o meno ben compreso... e questi li avete lasciati liberi per le vie di Tolone," Giuseppe Luigi Brondolo, "Memorie: sugli Italiani internati Civili: 10 giugno 1940- luglio 1940," 14, AGS. Fondo Babini, f. 264.

comfort from the sense of a shared suffering among the internees and from the religious celebrations they shared. The Italians were freed in July, several weeks after the armistice, after much diplomatic negotiation between the French and Italian governments. Brondolo reported that in the camp of St. Cyprien more than 3,000 Italians chose to be repatriated to Italy or turned over to Italian authorities while only a few hundred chose to be turned over to French authorities "for personal reasons, which I accept." Brondolo gloated that the French officer who oversaw the Italians as they chose their fate did not foresee this result. "Almost all the Italians have faith in the Italian Authorities. The poor Colonel did not understand anything! To his French patriotism, it seemed impossible that the Italians could love...their ITALY. Such a French mentality!"<sup>338</sup>

This moment was the high point of the Missionaries of Emigration's expression of Italian nationalism, but it was muted by the organization's official position of neutrality. Several missionaries asserted great pride in Italy and Mussolini for freeing them. Their reaction was likely due to the fact that they wrote their accounts in 1940 or 1941 when the war was going well for Italy and the memory of the indignities Italian internees suffered at French hands was fresh. Officially, however, Italian missionary groups remained neutral, both because of the Holy See's neutrality and because they were transnational organizations operating in warring countries. Missionaries' accounts of their incarceration stayed within the Church, and missionaries and their superiors were careful in public to avoid repercussions for their work or the people whom they assisted.

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<sup>338</sup> "La quasi totalità degli Italiani ha confidenza fiducia nelle Autorità italiane. Il pover'uomo di colonnello non capiscò nulla! Nel suo patriottismo francese, gli pare impossibile che gli Italiani possono amare... la loro ITALIA. Mentalità tutta francese!" Brondolo, "Memorie: sugli Italiani internati Civili," 37.

The Missionaries' superior, Costantino Babini, continued to take care to maintain good relations with officials from all governments with which the Missionaries of Emigration worked.<sup>339</sup>

Italian missionaries in other countries at war with Italy, especially Canada and the United States, enthusiastically supported the Allied war effort, particularly in older communities tied more strongly to the nation in which they resided than to Italy. Diaspora Italians and their descendants fought for Allied nations, blessed by Italian missionaries and supported by their home parishes. For example, more than 1200 of the parishioners at New York City's Our Lady of Pompei, a Scalabrinian parish founded in 1892, served in the United States military during the war. Father Ugo Cavicchio notified families when one of their relatives was killed in action, and the parish inscribed the names of these deceased parishioners in the church's shrine.<sup>340</sup>

Italian missionaries participated in the Holy See's efforts to aid prisoners of war by providing religious services to Italian prisoners in Allied countries. Missionaries ministered to Italian prisoners in several camps in the United States, visiting the sick, performing religious services, and delivering money and messages from prisoners' family members. Italian-speaking priests, including several Scalabrinians, visited camps near

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<sup>339</sup> Very small numbers of Italians were also interned in Canada, the United States, Great Britain, and Australia, but no Scalabrinians were incarcerated. La Direzione, "I nostri missionary," *Le Missione Scalabriniane* XXX, No. 1 (Jan. 1941): 1. For more on Italian internment, see Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, and Angelo Principe, eds., *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

<sup>340</sup> The Archdiocese of New York estimated that Our Lady of Pompei had 12,000 total parishioners. Mary Elizabeth Brown. *From Italian Villages to Greenwich Village: Our Lady of Pompei, 1892-1992* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1992), 109.

Kansas City, Missouri in efforts organized by American bishops and the Holy See.<sup>341</sup> Missionaries did not view the prisoners as enemies or Fascists but as fellow Italians and Catholics. An article in the Scalabrinians' bulletin described missionaries' work among Italian prisoners in France. Missionaries provided religious services to inmates and delivered packages from the Italian Red Cross. The author encouraged readers to think of these Italian prisoners as migrants. "And are not they too Emigrants, these prisoners of war, forced emigrants, who more than any other breathe the air of the faraway Fatherland, where parents, wives, children, brothers, and sisters anxiously await them?" The writer portrayed these soldiers as men of honor who faced an impossible position after the Italian government signed an armistice with the Allies in September 1943, after the Allies invaded Italy, and German troops continued a ferocious resistance against Allied forces. "And here we must give them the credit they deserve. As soldiers, obeying their leader, they laid down their arms."<sup>342</sup>

Mussolini's fall from power erased any Italian Catholic conflation of *italianità* with Fascism. World War II quickly became a steady stream of Italian defeats. Italy lost its East African empire to British and Ethiopian forces in 1941. Italian troops were steadily pushed back across North Africa beginning in 1941-1942, despite German support, and surrendered in May 1943, while Italian forces on the Eastern Front lost tens of thousands of troops. In July 1943, the Allies landed in Sicily, beginning a bitter

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<sup>341</sup> F.M. "Assistenza religiosa ai prigionieri italiani negli Stati Uniti," *Le Missioni Scalabriniane* XXXIII, No. 1-4 (Jan.-Sept. 1944): 5-6.

<sup>342</sup> A non sono forse anche loro Emigrati, i prigionieri di guerra, emigrati forzati, che più di ogni altro respiravano il cielo della Patria lontana, dove li attendevano nell'ansia, genitori, spose, figli, fratelli e sorelle?...E qui bisogna loro tributare l'onore che si meritano. Da militari, obbedendo al loro capo supremo, deposero le armi." "Dalla France per i prigionieri di Guerra," *Le Missioni Scalabriniane* XXXV, No. 1-2 (Jan.-Feb. 1946): 2.

invasion of Italy. That July, King Victor Emanuel III and the Fascist Grand Council deposed Mussolini, dissolved the Fascist Party, and signed an armistice with the Allies in September. The Germans then took over northern Italy while the Allies controlled the south, slowly fighting their way up the peninsula until May 1945. Meanwhile, Germans rescued Mussolini from imprisonment in September 1943 and installed him as the puppet ruler of the Italian Social Republic (*Repubblica Sociale Italiana*) in Salò, where he was powerless as civil war raged in Italy. Mussolini escaped in April 1945 and was shot by Communist partisans as he tried to flee into Switzerland.<sup>343</sup>

The Italian armistice and later Allied victory ended not only missionaries' sympathy for Fascism but any conflation of *italianità* with Italian imperial expansion. Before the armistice, some missionaries and the Italian migrants viewed the Fascist state as their protector in a time of war, as did the Missionaries of Emigration in France when they were interned. However, missionary organizations were transnational bodies whose members lived in warring countries, and they, like the Holy See, remained officially neutral to protect Italian missionaries and the Catholics they helped. The Fascist alliance with Nazi Germany alienated many Catholics, and after the Italian armistice, missionaries throughout the diaspora joined other Italians in supporting the Allies and claiming that the Fascist government had abused and betrayed the Italian people, who were good people suffering under Nazi rule after Mussolini's regime collapsed. Since the nineteenth century, missionaries had asserted that *italianità* was apolitical and the Italian national community was separate from the Italian government and its beliefs. The continuity of

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<sup>343</sup> Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943-1988* (London, England: Penguin Books, 1990), 8-71.; Denis Mack Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 404-421.

these claims allowed missionaries to continue their ministry with Italian migrants before and after the war without confronting the ways in which they had supported and sympathized with Italian Fascism.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout the Fascist era, Italian missionaries continued their Italian nation-building work based on the idea that an *italianità* centered in Catholicism, not Italian Fascism, united the people of the Italian diaspora and tied them to both the Catholic Church and to Italy. The Church hierarchy believed lay people should not influence missionaries' activities, as demonstrated by the Holy See's investigation into the *Opera Bonomelli* in Chapter Two, and so the Holy See chose to end the *Opera Bonomelli* in 1927 rather than allow Fascists to exert increasing control over the organization's administration. The 1929 Lateran Accords established an official relationship between the Holy See and the Italian state, freeing Italian missionaries to vocalize support for the Italian state, but the Accords did not end conflict between missionaries and Fascist agents over the regime's attempt to co-opt *italianità* for Fascism. Missionaries persisted in defining *italianità* as a shared Italian language, history, and culture with Catholicism- not the Italian government or Fascism- at its heart. This fundamental difference led to both Fascist criticism of Italian Salesians' missions in South America as well as to former *Opera* missionary Noradino Torricella's continued insistence that his Italian patriotism was unimpeachable but he should not take orders from the local Italian consul and print Fascist propaganda in his newspaper.



At the same time, missionaries publicly expressed enthusiasm for the Fascist state and its success on the world stage up until- and in some cases, well into- World War II. Missionaries were thrilled when the Lateran Accords ended the Roman Question, restoring dignity to the Holy See and ending the tensions between their affection for their Italian homeland and loyalty to the Catholic Church. For the first time, missionaries could unreservedly praise the Italian government, instead of an abstract Italian nation, and they did. Missionaries, like the Church hierarchy, were further sympathetic to Fascism because of its fierce hatred of socialism and bolshevism. Most of the Italian antifascist movement, which operated in exile, was hostile to the Catholic Church, sometimes violently so. Some missionaries had already celebrated Italy's imperial successes under the Liberal government because they bolstered Italy's world image. Unsurprisingly, missionaries were even more inclined to support Fascist expansion after the Lateran Accords until World War II, when Mussolini's imperial ambitions pitted Italy against several nations in which missionaries and large Italian communities resided.

Italian missionaries continued to root their assistance work in Catholic *italianità* after the war. Missionaries' longstanding claims that their *italianità* was apolitical as well as their status as members of the Church, not as Fascist operatives, were crucial to *italianità's* continued legitimacy in their postwar work. Missionaries could conveniently forget their enthusiasm for Mussolini while maintaining that their *italianità* had been apolitical since the nineteenth century and was an expression of a common fatherland, language, culture, and religion. Missionaries could not leave Italy during the war, but once overseas travel was again possible in 1946, missionaries migrated across the globe,

and Italian migrant communities grew with a new wave of postwar emigration. Though the Fascist era was the period in which Catholic missionaries most directly expressed their approval of the Italian government, Catholic resistance to Fascists' claims that *italianità* was limited to Fascism enabled Catholic *italianità*'s survival. Italian missionaries only gradually abandoned Catholic *italianità* in the postwar period. In the decades after the war, demographic changes in Italian migrant communities combined with more expansive Catholic interest in migration issues decentered *italianità* as the organizing principle of Italian missionaries' work, and Catholics began to think about migration as a universal social justice issue, not a concern of individual national communities.

**Chapter Five: From Italian Nation-Building to Universal Social Justice Issue:  
Catholic Migrant Assistance in Transition, 1945-1990**

**Introduction**

The decades following World War II were a tumultuous time of transition for Italians in Italy and abroad. During this time Catholics, like all Italians, had to redefine what it meant to be Italian during a period of renewed emigration, demographic change,

and major ideological shifts following the end of Fascism. Italian emigration resumed after World War II, and almost 7.5 million Italians emigrated between 1946 and 1976.<sup>344</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, Catholic missionaries assisted Italians who migrated to new destinations, including European countries instituting guest worker programs and as well as to more distant nations like Canada and Australia. When Italian missionaries resumed their work with Italian migrants after World War II, missionaries dedicated themselves to Italian migrants on the basis of a shared Catholic *italianità*, the same Catholic *italianità* that missionaries such as the Scalabrinians had embraced since the late nineteenth century. Missionaries believed that these most recent waves of Italian emigrants still needed assistance from clergy and religious who were fellow Italians and thus shared their language and customs. Missionaries believed their shared *italianità* continued to be important in nations like Canada and Australia, where Italians still faced discrimination, and in European countries like Belgium, where Italians encountered radical labor organizing.

Support for Italian empire-building, imperial nationalism, and any acknowledgment that missionaries had ever been sympathetic to the Fascist state were completely absent in missionaries' work during the postwar period. Missionaries, like Italian society as a whole in the decades after World War II, ignored examining their engagement with the Fascist government in favor of focusing on pressing issues like the devastation caused by World War II and the resulting economic problems, including the

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<sup>344</sup> Gianfausto Rosoli, *Un Secolo Di Emigrazione Italiana: 1876-1976* (Roma: Centro studi emigrazione, 1978), 39. Of these migrants, 5 million migrated to European nations, particularly France, Germany, and Switzerland. More than half of those who migrated to Europe returned, and 4.3 million Italians total returned to Italy between 1946 and 1976.

need for many Italians to migrate in search of work. Missionaries had consistently insisted upon Catholic *italianità*'s independence from the Italian state, despite the frequent interactions between missionaries and agents of the Italian government, for decades before Fascism. Missionaries considered the Catholic Church, not the Italian state or any particular Italian political regime, as their *italianità*'s core. Consequently, missionaries felt comfortable continuing to disseminate their Catholic version of *italianità* and using it to defend migrants' Catholicism from the influence of leftist political movements, particularly communism during the Cold War. At the same time, the transformation of long-established migrant communities and refugee crises caused by World War II and the Cold War helped broaden Catholic approaches to migration.

Italian missionaries, particularly the Scalabrinians, reevaluated their ongoing work in migrant communities whose ties to Italy grew weaker when their populations included increasing numbers of third- and four-generation “Italians.” At the same time, the Scalabrinians gradually took on missions dedicated to non-Italian Catholic migrants. The Scalabrinians' shift was encouraged by Catholics' increasingly global migration concerns during World War II and subsequent Cold War refugee crises. Catholic involvement in migration issues shifted from nationally-specific assistance to work based on migration as a universal social justice issue, a concern not limited to Catholic migrants. By the late twentieth century, the Italian nation-building concerns that originally undergird the work of groups like the Scalabrinians gave way to migrant assistance that was not limited by national origins or a commitment to *italianità*.

### **Catholic *Italianità* and Postwar Italian Emigration**

Italian missionaries resumed their Italian nation-building efforts after World War II in both new and established Italian migrant communities. An additional wave of emigration began in the late 1940s as Italy struggled to recover from World War II and Fascist and wartime obstacles to migration ended. Missionaries continued to foster Italian Catholic spaces in which Italian migrants could practice their Catholicism, receive assistance, and celebrate their *italianità* in order to reinforce their Italian Catholic identities. The *italianità* that missionaries encouraged after World War II was a return to missionaries' original nineteenth-century idea of a shared language and a culture that was fundamentally Catholic. Support for Italian empire-building and imperial nationalism vanished. Italian missionaries, like many Europeans after World War II, avoided grappling with Fascism's legacy, and missionaries' distance from Fascism was facilitated by their support for the war effort in Allied nations such as the United States and Canada. Both *Italica Gens* and the *Associazione Nazionale*, whose lay members included ardent Fascists by the time of Mussolini's fall, had ended. The Missionaries of Emigration, the *Opera Bonomelli's* successor organization, was incorporated into the Scalabrinians in 1936, bringing all clergy and religious who assisted Italian migrants under completely religious control.

Italian emigration was again sizeable and global in the postwar period though migration patterns shifted in response to new opportunities. Guest worker agreements between the Italian government and other nations facilitated Italian emigration, and 75% of Italian emigrants after 1955 were European guest workers. More than five million Italians migrated to other European nations between 1946 and 1976, and at least 3.6

million of these migrants eventually returned to Italy.<sup>345</sup> Italy began bilateral agreements with European countries in the late 1940s to fill labor shortages abroad. Migrants worked temporary contracts of six months or a year in sectors such as mining and agriculture. Often Italy agreed to prescreen migrants while receiving countries covered transport costs. Italy signed guest worker agreements with France, Britain, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Belgium as well as with Australia, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil. These agreements made Italians a significant presence in many countries. Between 1955 and 1965, Italians were the largest group among West Germany's multinational *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers).<sup>346</sup>

Australia quickly became an important destination for Italian migrants and missionaries.<sup>347</sup> Italian missionaries began working with Italians in Australia in the early twentieth century, but missionaries increased their efforts substantially after World War II in response to greater migration to Australia. Australia encouraged European immigration after the war because it had not had a large enough population to resist Japanese forces during the war and relied on American military power to avoid a Japanese conquest. The Australian government decided it needed to "populate or perish," and it encouraged Europeans to immigrate to Australia as part of its so-called White Australia policy, in place since 1901. The Australian government sought to populate the continent with non-Aboriginal peoples, preferably British immigrants, and specifically

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<sup>345</sup> Rosoli, *Un Secolo Di Emigrazione Italiana*, 39.

<sup>346</sup> Donna R. Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 162-163.

<sup>347</sup> For an overview of Italian migration to Australia, see Gianfranco Cresciani, *The Italians in Australia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

excluded Asians as racially inferior and dangerous.<sup>348</sup> Australia resettled large numbers of European displaced persons and signed immigration agreements with several European nations, including Italy in 1952. Italians and other southern and eastern Europeans experienced discrimination in Australia because they were not Australia's preferred British migrants, and Italians were often stereotyped as criminals and criticized for living in ethnic ghettos. Italian Capuchins first arrived in Australia in October 1945 and took over some Italian parishes over the next few years. The Scalabrinians began working in Australia for the first time in 1952 and began their work in rural and provincial Australia. Religious sisters also arrived in Australia, including the Canossians and the Pastorelle sisters.<sup>349</sup>

In Australia, Italian missionaries provided religious assistance and engaged in Italian nation-building to keep migrants involved with the Church, but missionaries had to adapt their strategies for doing so in response to hostility against Italians in Australia, multiethnic parishes, and the country's vastness. The Australian government's policy was assimilation, and distrust of Italians remained high after World War II.<sup>350</sup> Therefore, there were no Italian national parishes in Australia, and instead parishes with high Italian populations were given to Italian priests to minister. Australian bishops requested priests

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<sup>348</sup> The White Australia policy was gradually dismantled from 1949 to 1972. See Gwenda Tavan, *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2005); James Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera: The Story of Australian Immigration*, 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>349</sup> Desmond Cahill, *Missionaries on the Move: A Pastoral History of the Scalabrinians in Australia and Asia, 1952-2002* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2004); Ilma Martinuzzi O'Brien, "Chapter Two: Italian Australians and the Australian Catholic Church through War, Internment and Mass Migration," in *The Pastoral Care of Italians in Australia: Memory and Prophecy*, Anthony Paganoni, ed. (Ballan, Vic: Connor Court, 2007).

<sup>350</sup> Beginning in the 1960s, both Australia and Canada gradually shifted their policies from assimilation to multiculturalism, though scholars debate and problematize the completeness of the transition. Jatinder Mann, "The Introduction of Multiculturalism in Canada and Australia, 1960s-1970s," *Nations & Nationalism* 18, No. 3 (July 2012): 483-505.

from Italy or of Italian descent for ministries in industrial and urban areas with high Italian populations. The parishes were not, however, exclusively Italian, and as parish priest the missionary often had to juggle a congregation that included Italians, other recent European immigrants, and Australians who had been in the country much longer. The Scalabrinians opened twelve missions in Australia from 1952 to 1963, stretching from Tasmania and Melbourne to Silkwood, a small agricultural town in Far North Queensland. Scalabrinians tried to reach out to Italians beyond their parishes through itinerant religious missions, home and hospital visits, and celebrations of Italian religious feast days. While these were similar to strategies the Scalabrinians had used in the Americas years prior, Scalabrinians in Australia also relied upon lay people to reach out to more Italians. The Scalabrinians started a group called the Italian Catholic Federation as an adaptation of the Italian group Catholic Action and implemented it in Australia. The Italian Catholic Federation encouraged its members to undertake their own home and hospital visits to lighten priests' responsibilities and to help with parish religious and recreational events.<sup>351</sup>

Canada became another important postwar destination for Italians, growing Italian missions and attracting more missionaries. While only 3,898 Italian migrated to Canada during the 1940s due to government restrictions, migration picked up in the late 1940s; 250,812 Italians arrived between 1951 and 1960 and 190,760 Italians followed from 1961

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<sup>351</sup> Giorgio Baggio, "Scopi e organizzazione dell'attività dei missionari scalabriniani in Australia," *L'emigrato italiano* No. 5 (1963): 31-36; Relazione Missioni Scalabriniani in Australia." January 1956, CMS, Collection 078C, Box 149, Folder 1.



to 1970.<sup>352</sup> Like Australia, Canada escaped the devastation of World War II and its labor market boomed for both unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Italians were further aided by a government policy that allowed immigrants to come to Canada provided they were sponsored by relatives. This policy reinvigorated long-standing migration networks until a new immigration policy restricted the sponsorship system in 1967.<sup>353</sup> The Scalabrinians worked with Italians when specifically requested by Canadian bishops both before and after World War II. Corrado Martelozzo, the Superior of the Scalabrinians' Eastern Province, which included eastern Canada, wrote a letter to fifteen Canadian bishops offering Scalabrinian assistance. Scalabrinians started the church of St. Catherine of Siena in Cooksville, Ontario in 1956 after being invited by the Archbishop of Toronto, but soon the Canadian bishops began to approach the Scalabrinians to help other migrants.

### **From Nationally-Specific Catholic Assistance to an International Migrant Ministry**

In the postwar period, the aging of older Italian communities and the needs of Catholic migrants of other nationalities spurred missionaries to reevaluate their work and begin assistance targeted to non-Italian migrants. These changes were most evident in the work of the Scalabrinians, who, by the postwar period, had decades of experience in migrant communities across the globe. The Scalabrinians' existing work changed as their older Italian missions involved fewer migrants and increasing numbers of second- and

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<sup>352</sup> Canada labeled Italians enemy aliens until 1947 and their immigration was limited by government policy favoring British immigrants until 1950. Bruno Ramirez, *The Italians in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1989,) 7.

<sup>353</sup> For an overview of Canadian immigration history see Valerie Knowles, *Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2006*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007); Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

third-generation Italians who were well-integrated into the "receiving" societies in which most of them had been born and raised. At the same time, the Scalabrinians increasingly found themselves working with migrants of other nationalities, either by circumstance or when local bishops requested their help. The Scalabrinians' work with non-Italians was not new.<sup>354</sup> In this period however, the Scalabrinians began sustained engagement with non-Italian migrant communities because, although Italian nation-building had been their means of creating Italian Catholic communities abroad, preserving migrants' Catholicism had always been their objective. Their experiences contributed to a gradual broadening of the Scalabrinians' mission beyond national or ethnic bounds based on their specialized experience with migrant peoples.

After World War II, the changing demographics of Italian-American communities spurred the Scalabrinians to reevaluate the necessity of their work in the United States. The U.S. 1924 National Origins Act blocked most Italian immigration by establishing quotas that severely curtailed immigration from southern and eastern Europe. Only approximately 275,000 Italians migrated to the United States between 1946 and 1961.<sup>355</sup> In 1951, a Scalabrinian in Chicago, Father Italo Scola, noted that, of the millions of Italian-Americans, many were third-generation Italians or more for whom Italy was "their ancestors' country of origin." These Italian-Americans were not bilingual and some had even changed their names "so as to disappear into the mass of Americans and no longer

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<sup>354</sup> While the Scalabrinians sought missions in which they could minister to Italian Catholics, they also ministered to other Catholics who came to their parishes, schools, and charities. Recall Chapter One and Scalabrinian Father Pietro Colbacchini's 1888 description of his ministry in Brazil. Several times a year, Colbacchini traveled to isolated, rural communities to perform sacraments in mixed Italian-Brazilian parishes. See Pietro Colbacchini to G.B. Scalabrini, 20 October 1888, P. Pietro Colbacchini Letters N.1, AGS, Scaffale 2, Palchetto F, Numero 476.

<sup>355</sup> Gianfausto Rosoli, *Un Secolo di emigrazione italiana, 1876-1976* (Roma: Centro studi emigrazione, 1978), 43.

identify their origin.”<sup>356</sup> Scola wrote an article for *L'emigrato italiano* (*The Italian Emigrant*), the Scalabrinians' monthly bulletin, in which he evaluated the Scalabrinians' future in the United States. Despite these difficulties, Scola persisted in the Scalabrinians' long-held belief that Italian migrants shared a common *italianità* rooted in Catholicism. He argued that the Scalabrinians still had an important place in Italian-American communities because Italians in the United States shared a “typically Italian nationalism of blood.” Italians, he wrote, had contributed much to the United States and the Catholic Church there, and therefore “Italian civilization is the essence of the best of American civilization. Who can know, feel, and develop this spirit if not the Italians, the Italian-Americans? And of these, who better than the Church and its priests and, practically speaking, who better than us, missionaries specialized in Italian emigration?”<sup>357</sup>

Scola's optimistic assessment of Italian-Americans' connection to *italianità* and thus to Scalabrinian missions was belied by increasing demographic change. Scola's Chicago parish, Holy Guardian Angel, suffered major population losses as its neighborhood changed. While approximately 5,000 Italian families were part of the parish at the beginning of the twentieth century, only 500 families were members in 1947. Scola tried to revitalize Guardian Angel in the late 1950s by building a new church

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<sup>356</sup> “...tanto da scomparire nella massa dei nativi americani e non potersi più individuare la loro origine,” Italo Scola, “Attualità della Pia Società dei Missioni di S. Carlo negli Stati Uniti,” *L'emigrato italiano* XL, No. 3 (Mar. 1951), 61.

<sup>357</sup> “...la civiltà italiana è la sostanza del meglio che noi abbiamo nella civiltà Americana. Ora chi può conoscere, sentire e sviluppare quest'anima se non gli italiani, gli italo-americani? E tra questi che meglio della Chiesa e dei sacerdoti e praticamente chi meglio di noi, missionari specializzati dell'emgrazione italiana?” Scola, Attualità della Pia Società dei Missioni di S. Carlo negli Stati Uniti,” 62.

and school, but the parish was forced to dissolve in 1960 when the city of Chicago planned an expressway through the neighborhood and marked it for demolition.<sup>358</sup>

Guardian Angel's case was dramatic, but shrinking Italian populations in former Italian communities was not unique. A 1961 article in *L'emigrato italiano* reported that Italians of the second and third generation were "emigrating in mass from the old neighborhoods."<sup>359</sup> Though dozens of Italian-Americans had been ordained as Scalabrinian priests, the percentage of American priests who were Italian-American was much less than the percentage of Catholics who were Italian-American. The Scalabrinians had been successful in their mission, which was the preservation of Italian-Americans' Catholicism, but their means for doing so, ministering to Italian migrants and their descendants on that basis of a shared *italianità*, rapidly receded in importance after World War II.

At the same time, the Scalabrinians' Italian missionary activities outside the United States evolved to embrace non-Italian migrants, initially by necessity rather than design. Korean immigration to Brazil began in 1950s but increased considerably in the 1960s. Most Koreans went to São Paulo, and there a number of Catholic Koreans lived in the parochial territory of Our Lady of Peace, an Italian church staffed by the Scalabrinians. When members of the community approached the church for assistance, the Scalabrinians allowed them to hold weekly meetings in church spaces and added a Sunday Mass for Koreans. Initially, a Korean priest visited the area once a month to say

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<sup>358</sup> Dominic Candeloro, *Chicago's Italians: Immigrants, Ethnics, Americans* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2003), 24.

<sup>359</sup> "...emigrando in massa dai vecchi quartieri," M. Bortolazzo, "Lo Sviluppo delle vocazioni scalabriniane nel Nord-America," *L'emigrato italiano* L, No. 10 (Oct. 1961): 9.

Mass in Korean and visit Korean families. However, once he was recalled to Korea, responsibility for the Korean ministry fell to a Scalabrinian, Giorgio Cunial. Cunial, who did not speak Korean, was forced to improvise in order to minister to the Koreans in his parish. Fortunately for Cunial, two Korean religious sisters helped him. They taught religious education to adults and children and gave what Cunial described as a "little sermon" (*sermoncino*) after Sunday Mass. To actually say Mass, however, Cunial began by saying the first few words in Korean, words that he claimed to have "learned badly with great effort," and saying the rest of the Mass in Portuguese.<sup>360</sup>

The Scalabrinians' mission was based on the belief that missionaries who shared Italian migrants' language and culture were best able to serve them, and Cunial felt he was inadequately prepared to serve the Korean community. He respected the Korean community in his parish, particularly the adults' self-direction in their organizations and the children's religiosity and intelligence. However, he noted that language was crucial to the Koreans' religious, social, and charitable organizations, and he believed the church needed a priest who "understands their language well and knows their mentality and customs."<sup>361</sup> Cunial hoped that the Archbishop of São Paulo, who had recently traveled in East Asia, would fulfill his promise to send the church a Korean priest soon. Nevertheless, Cunial wrote an article called "Korean São Paulo" in *L'emigrato italiano* to explain the situation to his brethren: "With these brief remarks I intended to give a glimpse of this new experience that the Scalabrinian Congregation, in accordance with

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<sup>360</sup> "...che con gran fatica ho malemente imparato," Giorgio Cunial, "San Paolo Coreana," *L'emigrato italiano* LXVI, No. 7-8 (July-August 1970): 27.

<sup>361</sup> "...comprende bene la loro lingua e ne conosca la mentalità e i costumi," Cunial, "San Paolo Coreana," 27.

the internationalization of its purpose, is dealing with in an extremely difficult situation at the Church of Our Lady of Peace in São Paulo."<sup>362</sup>

At the same time, the Scalabrinians' expertise with migrants and international experience led some bishops to seek out the Scalabrinians to meet the needs of non-Italian migrants. Canadian bishops had growing Portuguese communities in their dioceses and wanted the help of the Scalabrinians, who often spoke Portuguese because of their work in Brazil. The auxiliary archbishop of Vancouver visited the Scalabrinian motherhouse in Italy in 1959 and requested priests to minister to Portuguese immigrants in Vancouver who had no one dedicated to their assistance. The Scalabrinian superiors agreed and sent Father Girolamo Angeli, an Italian who had worked in Brazil for twenty-five years, to Vancouver in 1960. His Brazilian parish had included Catholics of fifteen different nationalities, something that was not unusual in Scalabrinian parishes in the Americas. Angeli's work with the Portuguese in Vancouver was similar to the Scalabrinian's program in Italian parishes across the globe. In addition to performing religious services, Angeli visited families, taught religious education, ran marriage preparation, and assisted parishioners in dealings with American and Canadian authorities.

The mixed nature of many Scalabrinian parishes in the Americas gave many Scalabrinians the experience and willingness to officially expand their work beyond Italians and those of Italian descent. In 1961 Angeli wrote an article about his

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<sup>362</sup> “Con questi brevi cenni ho inteso aprire una finestra su questa nuova esperienza che la Congregazione Scalabriniana, in coerenza con l'internazionalizzazione del suo fine, sta affrontando in una situazione estremamente difficile nella Chiesa ‘Madonna della Pace’ a São Paulo,” Cunial, “San Paolo Coreana,” 27.

experiences in *L'Emigrato italiano* called "An International Mission?" He reported that Scalabrinians in Europe worked in Italian communities, but in the Americas and Australia their parishes "were once national but presently local, and thus with a heterogeneous population."<sup>363</sup> He believed the Scalabrinians' mission was assisting Italian emigrants and their descendants, the purpose laid out in the Scalabrinians' Constitution. However, there was room in the mission to help migrants of nationalities provided Italians were properly assisted. Angeli opined that "...if requested by the Sacred Hierarchy, nothing prevents... the religious assistance of other, non-Italian emigrations as a secondary activity and a means of achieving the principle purpose."<sup>364</sup>

From the Scalabrinians' founding in 1887, that principle purpose had been the preservation of Italian migrants' Catholicism abroad. Missionaries' Italian nation-building efforts had been predicated on the fact that Italian migrants were united by a shared *italianità* that was fundamentally Catholic, and so reinforcing migrants' *italianità* reinforced their Catholicism. By the 1960s and 1970s however, the Scalabrinians increasingly expanded their work into non-Italian migrant communities in which their multilingualism and experience running migrant missions, not a shared national origin or identity, prepared them to minister to other Catholics. Such a shift was quickly visible in Canada. In 1971, the Scalabrinians expanded their Portuguese mission to Toronto and trained Portuguese theology students at the Scalabrini House of Studies. The students went on to work with Portuguese communities in Toronto. The community ordained a

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<sup>363</sup> "...parrocchie un tempo nazionale, ma al presente locali e quindi con una popolazione eterogenea," Girolamo Angeli, "Missione Internazionale?" *L'Emigrato italiano* 50, No. 3 (March 1961): 8.

<sup>364</sup> "...niente impedisce che a margine di tale fine specifica essa attenda, qualora richiesta dalla Sacra Gerarchia, anche alla assistenza religiosa di altre emigrazioni che non siano italiane, come attività secondaria e mezzo per raggiungere il fine principale," Angeli, "Missione Internazionale?" 9.

Portuguese priest in 1975 who worked in a local Portuguese parish. Three Brazilian students also arrived in Toronto to work at the parish.<sup>365</sup>

The Scalabrinians quickly deepened their direct involvement with the Toronto Portuguese community. In 1977, Scalabrinians took over the parish of St. Anthony in Toronto at the request of the Archdiocese of Toronto. While the church's congregation included a large influx of Italians in the 1960s, the archdiocese of Toronto brought in the Scalabrinians for a special ministry to the Portuguese. St. Anthony's was a territorial parish, not a national parish, and its jurisdiction was an area of Toronto known for its immigrants. When the Scalabrinians took over, the parish reported that its territory included 12,000 people, 8,000 of whom were Catholic and 4,500 who attended Sunday Mass at St. Anthony's.<sup>366</sup> The new Scalabrinian pastor was a Brazilian, Father Santo Ciolini, and he was assisted by another Brazilian Scalabrinian and a third priest from the Scalabrini House who came to say Sunday Mass. These priests replaced a series of Portuguese priests who worked in the parish earlier in the decade. The Scalabrinian priests were joined by Scalabrinian sisters who established a house in Toronto in 1977. The parish contracted a Scalabrinian sister to run the parish religious education program for children in the parish who attended public schools. The sister also represented the parish at nearby schools, prepared students to receive sacraments, and held conferences with parents and teachers.<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> "Relatório referente ao apostolado português realizado na paróquia de Santo Antonio, Pelog. Missionários Escalabrinianos," 1 April 1980, CMS, Collection 078C, Box 113, Folder 3.

<sup>366</sup> "Archdiocese of Toronto, Spiritual Statistic: Parish Mission of St. Anthony's Church, Toronto: 1976," 1-2, CMS, Collection 078C, Box 113, Folder 3.

<sup>367</sup> 1979 Agreement between St. Anthony's Parish, Toronto, Canada (Scalabrinian Fathers) and the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo (Scalabrinian Sisters), CMS, Collection 078C, Box 113, Folder 3.



The Scalabrinians' work with the parish's Portuguese members was both similar to the Scalabrinians' historic efforts to provide religious services to Italians and typical of the Scalabrinians' growing work in non-Italian migrant parishes. A 1980 St. Anthony's report stated that the church needed two priests who could speak both English and Portuguese in order to say a daily mass in Portuguese, two Portuguese masses on the weekends, and to supervise a variety of Portuguese organizations at the church, including religious and athletic groups for Portuguese children. The priests also planned to visit children of the parish at their schools. The priests' work with the Portuguese was not confined to the parish. Instead, it involved the priests and parishioners in the wider Toronto Portuguese community. The priests met with nearby priests who served Portuguese communities and with the Archdiocese's Portuguese Pastoral Council. They discussed ministry strategies and collaborated on Toronto-wide projects for the Portuguese, including festivals, preaching missions, and marriage preparation courses. The priests' objective was to implement archdiocesan initiatives for the Portuguese "to avoid a cultural and religious 'ghetto' and so that the new generation feels more active in the Church."<sup>368</sup>

Though Portuguese made up almost half of St. Anthony's congregation, the Scalabrinians conducted their Portuguese ministry alongside their work with Italians and English-speaking parishioners. Italians had their own Italian-language weekly and holiday Masses. Weekly devotions popular with Italians took place each week an hour before or after popular Portuguese devotions. This multifaceted work led a Canadian

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<sup>368</sup> "...para evitarmos o "gheto" cultural e religioso e para que a nova geração se sinta mais ativa na Igreja."  
"Relatório referente ao apostolado português realizado na paróquia de Santo Antonio, Pelog. Missionários Escalabrinianos," 5, April 1980, CMS, Collection 078C, Box 113, Folder 3.

Portuguese newspaper to report on St. Anthony's Parish in 1988 with the headline "St. Anthony's joins Portuguese and Italians."<sup>369</sup> The ministry at St. Anthony's expanded still further in the following decade. Services and administration continued to be in English, Portuguese, and Italian throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Separate Sunday masses were offered in each language and the church bulletin was printed in all three languages.<sup>370</sup> However, these were not the only immigrant groups with their own space at the church. Regular masses were also conducted in Brazilian Portuguese and Tagalog. The Concerned Filipinos of St. Anthony's, founded in 1991, raised funds for both the parish and charitable causes in the Philippines. Many parish groups were organized around particular linguistic communities, such as the English-speaking Catholic's Women's League and the Portuguese-speaking Legion of Mary, but the parish also had parish-wide events such as a 1991 parish parade and pilgrimages to a shrine in Quebec.<sup>371</sup>

By the 1990s, the parish presented a culturally plural image of itself, very much in keeping with Canada's post-1973 public policy of supporting multiculturalism. The parish directory included an article called "The History of St. Anthony's Parish" which chronicled the many immigrant groups that had moved into the church since the 1950s. Recounting the diverse array of people who came to pray at the church on Tuesday, the day devoted to the parish's namesake, St. Anthony, the article said: "Irish kneel side by side with the Portuguese, Italians with Sri Lankans, and Filipinos with Brazilians. Many are of other religions, mainly Hindus and Muslims, but they all have an undeniable faith

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<sup>369</sup> "Santo António une Portugueses e Italianos," *Voz de Portugal*, September 12-13, 1988, 36.

<sup>370</sup> See the collections of 1980s and 1990s weekly parish bulletins in CMS, St. Anthony's Church, Toronto, Ontario, Box 1.

<sup>371</sup> "Parish Sensitive to Multicultural Community," *The Catholic Register*, February 15, 1992, 17.

in the power of Saint Anthony to intercede with God as they present their needs or just come to pray."<sup>372</sup> This vision of universal migrant unity reflected the parish's mission statement, comprised of three goals: to deepen people's understanding of Catholicism, promote charity, and "make the migrants and newcomers welcome by providing the possibilities of expressing the religious, cultural, and social traditions of each ethnic group."<sup>373</sup> The Scalabrinians at St. Anthony did not confine their work to migration issues within their own parish area or even among just Catholics. Through the St. Anthony's Scalabrinian Project, the parish assisted refugees resettling in Canada and sponsored the international migration of individual refugees through an agreement between the Canadian government and the Archdiocese of Toronto. In the 1980s and 1990s, most of these refugees came from Afghanistan and Ethiopia.<sup>374</sup>

Changing demographics decentered Italian nation-building as the basis of the Scalabrinians' approach to migrant assistance. The Scalabrinians remained dedicated to preserving migrants' Catholicism, but experience with migrants and familiarity with their language and customs, not a shared *italianità*, became the reasons that bishops increasingly requested the Scalabrinians to work with migrants in their dioceses. Italian nation-building faded as long-established Italian communities aged and moved. Scalabrinians increasingly worked with non-Italian migrant communities and, as in the St. Anthony's Scalabrinian Project, non-Christian migrants. These examples are typical of the shift in missionaries' work throughout world after World War II, and missionaries' experience in individual communities occurred in tandem with broader changes within

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<sup>372</sup> "Saint Anthony's Parish Directory," 7. CMS, St. Anthony Church, Toronto, Ontario. Box 2.

<sup>373</sup> "Saint Anthony's Parish Directory," 4.

<sup>374</sup> See case files in CMS, St. Anthony's Church, Toronto, Ontario, Box 2.

the Catholic Church. The Church hierarchy began to understand migration as not only a pressing social and religious problem for individual nations but as a universal social justice issue. The Church expanded its migration-related doctrines and work to encompass migrants of all nationalities based on a Catholic understanding of human dignity and on Catholic expertise with migrants already developed by groups like the Scalabrinians.

### **Toward a Catholic Universal Understanding of Migration**

From the end of World War II through the 1970s, migration became embedded in Catholic social justice thought as successive popes made important additions to Church teachings on migration and established new Church structures to assist migrants. The Church hierarchy gradually broadened its assistance to migrants beyond national boundaries in response to new international migrations, specifically the refugee crises created by World War II and the Cold War. These developments provided further impetus for Catholic groups such as the Scalabrinians to expand their migrant ministries and brought migration to the attention of other Catholic groups engaged in social justice issues. The hierarchy applauded the Church's history of migration assistance, including the work of Italian missionaries, and continued to encourage the creation of national parishes and assistance efforts familiar with migrants' language and culture, but now the Church moved beyond nationally-specific assistance and migration became a concern that transcended nationality and eventually Catholicism.

The plight of millions of refugees during and after World War II alarmed Catholics, and the hierarchy created new institutions to assist European refugees. In

1944, Pius XII created the *Pontificia Commissione Assistenza Profughi* (PCAP) to distribute aid to European refugees before and after the war. After World War II, the Church ran two organizations to help refugees and other needy Europeans: the PCAP's successor the *Pontificia Opera Assistenza* (POA), and the *Opera Nazionale Assistenza Religiosa e Morale agli Operai*. The latter organization was supported by the Italian Labor Ministry, which created five emigration centers to provide social assistance for departing and returning migrants. In 1951, the Church formed the Italian Catholic Migration Commission in Geneva to coordinate preexisting national efforts to assist migrants. Among the efforts the Commission oversaw were the German St. Raphael Society and the Italian Catholic Church's *Giunta Cattolica Italiana per l'Emigrazione*. The Pontifical College for Emigration reopened in 1949 under Scalabrinian direction, and the College sent more than 350 priests abroad to work with Italian migrants over the next fifteen years.<sup>375</sup>

A landmark moment in the Church's attention to migration occurred when Pius XII released the Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia* on August 1, 1952, the first papal document that addressed migration globally rather than the conditions of a specific community. Popularly known as the "Magna Carta" of Church teaching on migration,<sup>376</sup> *Exsul Familia* reaffirmed the Church's position that people had a right to migrate, chronicled the Church's long history of working with migrants, and established norms

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<sup>375</sup> Antonio Perotti, *Il Pontificio collegio per l'emigrazione italiana, 1920-1970* (Roma: P. collegio per l'emigrazione, Ufficio centrale emigrazione italiana, 1972), 27-28; Gianfausto Rosoli, *Insieme oltre le frontiere: momenti e figure dell'azione della Chiesa tra gli emigrati italiani nei secoli XIX e XX* (Caltanissetta: S. Sciascia, 1996), 77-83.

<sup>376</sup> For example, the Scalabrinians published an English translation with this title. Pius XII, *Exsul Familia: The Church's Magna Charta for Migrants*, Giulivo Tassarolo, ed. (Staten Island, N.Y.: St. Charles Seminary, 1962).

and Church bodies for the spiritual care of Catholic migrants of all languages and nationalities. The document, whose full title was *Exsul Familia Nazarethana*, literally *The Exiled Family from Nazareth*, equated migrants' sufferings with those of Jesus Christ and his family. His parents, Mary and Joseph, took the infant Jesus to Egypt because the King of Judea had ordered the death of all male infants in his kingdom.<sup>377</sup> *Exsul Familia's* opening line made the explicit comparison: "The émigré Holy Family of Nazareth, fleeing into Egypt, is the archetype of every refugee family."<sup>378</sup> Their example was important for the Church not only because it involved Jesus but because the Holy Family migrated together, and the Church considered the family the basic unit of society. The Church feared migration's physical and emotional hardships as well as the threats to Catholicism caused by separated families. The Holy Family was the Church's ideal migrant family because Joseph's strong faith caused him to take his family to Egypt, and they remained together during and after their ordeal.<sup>379</sup> *Exsul Familia* therefore focused on the Church's spiritual work with Catholic migrants.

Though Pius intended *Exsul Familia* for all Catholics, Italian missionaries featured prominently in the document, and their work was clearly important to how Pius thought about migrant assistance. Papal documents typically emphasized continuity in Catholic thought and action, and *Exsul Familia's* introduction was a lengthy history, comprising more than half of the entire document, in which Pius recounted the Church's

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<sup>377</sup> Matthew 2:13-23

<sup>378</sup> Pius XII, *Exsul Familia*.

<sup>379</sup> According to the account in the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, an angel appeared to Joseph warning him of the threat and encouraging him to take his family to Egypt for safety. The family remained there until the king had died and another angel appeared to Joseph and instructed him to take his family back to the city of Nazareth.

work with a variety of migrants, including emigrants, slaves, refugees, pilgrims, and travelers from antiquity through World War II. Pius praised nineteenth- and twentieth-century Italian-serving migrant organizations, including the Pallotines, Scalabrinians, *Opera Bonomelli*, Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, St. Raphael Society, and Missionary Society of St. Anthony of Padua.

The last two sections of *Exsul Familia* addressed the pastoral care of Italian migrants but also called for their practices to be a model of assistance to all Catholic migrants. In “Chapter V: The Spiritual Care to be Provided to Migrants by Italian Bishops,” the pope requested that the annual Day for Italian Migrants be celebrated “in parishes where all or most of the members are of Italian descent.” Other nationalities should imitate this day of prayer and fundraising for migrant missionary work. “Similarly, this should also be done with necessary modifications, for migrants of other nationalities and languages, so that a Day for Migrants may be celebrated throughout the whole Catholic world at one and for the same time, on the first Sunday of Advent.”<sup>380</sup>

Through *Exsul Familia*, Pius used his papal authority to make existing Catholic assistance to Italian migrants both the model and the means of assistance to all Catholic migrants. *Exsul Familia*’s final section placed the Pontifical College for Italian Emigration under Scalabrinian control. The College’s priests remained secular, recruited from Italian dioceses rather than from the Scalabrinians, but these priests shared the Scalabrinians’ dedication to Italian emigrants, so the pope believed the Scalabrinians were appropriate teachers for these aspiring missionaries. The pope had confidence in the Scalabrinians and the Holy See’s problems with the Scalabrinians were over. The

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<sup>380</sup> Pius XII, *Exsul Familia*, par. 49.

Scalabrinians became independent of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation's direct control in 1951, and *Exsul Familia* glossed over the Scalabrinians' difficulties in the 1920s. Now, the Scalabrinians and other Italian missionaries became the model for Catholic migrant assistance. *Exsul Familia* permitted priests to assist Catholic migrants in countries outside Italy "...if they follow carefully the methods used for Italian migrants... as fully publicized in the Acts of the Roman Pontiffs, and hereby approved by us, with necessary modifications for the place and circumstances."<sup>381</sup>

In the 1960s, the Church hierarchy expanded its attention beyond Catholic migrants to advocate for migration as a universal social justice and human rights issue. Pius XII's successor, John XXIII (reigned 1958-1963), and the Second Vatican Council he convened (1962-1965) made significant additions to the corpus of Catholic social justice teaching, part of their larger efforts to create a Catholic renewal to update the Church's structures and clarify its position on modern issues. The most famous document was John's 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris (On Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty)*, which he addressed to the clergy, Catholics, and, significantly, "all Men of Good Will," making it the first encyclical addressed to non-Catholics. The document laid out Catholic ideals for proper relations between people and states to provide a path to world peace. John adopted the language of human rights, a decisive shift that resulted in successive popes becoming vocal advocates for human rights, conceived of as such, around the world.<sup>382</sup> The document approved of the United

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<sup>381</sup> Pius XII, *Exsul Familia*, par. 58.

<sup>382</sup> Drew Christiansen, "Pacem in Terris," in Kenneth R. Hines and Lisa Sowle Cahill, eds., *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 226.



Nations and its support for human rights, even while noting that the U.N. and Catholic Church did not have identical list of what constituted rights.<sup>383</sup> John included "the right to emigrate and immigrate" among the religious, cultural, moral, economic, political and social rights he discussed in *Pacem in Terris*.<sup>384</sup>

*Pacem in Terris* articulated universal migrant rights and did not limit its discussion to Catholic migrants or their spiritual care. John wrote that "every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence" within one's own state and could emigrate "[w]hen there are just reasons in favor of it." Migrants had rights because they were human beings, not because of their nationality. "The fact that he is a citizen of a particular State does not deprive him of membership in the human family, nor of citizenship in that universal society, the common, world-wide fellowship of men."<sup>385</sup> Migrants' rights did not come from the state, and John paid particular attention to refugees, saying "...refugees are persons and all their rights as persons must be recognized. Refugees cannot lose these rights simply because they are deprived of citizenship of their own States."<sup>386</sup> Like Pius XII, John wrote that receiving states should allow migrants as long as they were able. International migration was not, therefore, an absolute right. Receiving states were under a moral obligation accept migrants unless the

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<sup>383</sup> It is important to clarify that the Church's work for human rights was not based on liberal democratic ideas of rights and governance. The Church's understanding of human rights was based on Catholic natural law. According to natural law, God created each human being in his own likeness, therefore each human possesses an inviolable dignity. Human laws and authorities must therefore work for the common good of all. In Catholic thought, the rights and duties of both individuals and states do not derive from a social contract but are features of the universe God created. *Pacem in Terris* was John XXIII's attempt to bring Catholic understandings of rights, duties, and individual dignities into the modern world, particularly in light of the carnage of World War II and the Cold War.

<sup>384</sup> John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, April 11, 1963, par. 25. Accessed April 5, 2013.

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_11041963\\_pacem\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem_en.html)

<sup>385</sup> John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, par. 25.

<sup>386</sup> John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, par. 105.

arrival threatened the good of their own people, an ambiguity would be hotly debated in future migrant crises.

John's successor, Paul VI, expanded the Holy See's institutions to centralize Catholic work among a variety of people whom the Church considered migrants. Paul's March 19, 1970 *motu proprio*, *Apostolicae Caritatis*, established the Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Emigrants and Tourists.<sup>387</sup> The Commission reorganized Catholic ministry to those whom the Church classified as "people on the move" under the Commission's umbrella. "People on the move" included not only labor migrants but refugees, internally displaced people, students, tourists, pilgrims, people working in transportation industries, circus performers, and nomads. These people could not obtain regular religious assistance from a local parish because of their mobility and thus needed ministries tailored to the realities of their lives. While many of these groups previously had special ministries dedicated to them, there was a renewed push to find ways to assist them.<sup>388</sup>

The Church hierarchy's attention to migration issues beyond national boundaries not only reorganized bodies in the Roman Curia and expanded the Church's doctrine, but this new focus had immediate consequences for Catholic groups already working with migrants. For the Scalabrinians, who were already growing their work beyond Italian migrants because of changing demographics and new opportunities, these Church-wide changes further encouraged them to reexamine their work. The Second Vatican Council

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<sup>387</sup> Paul VI, *Apostolicae Caritatis*, March 19, 1970. Accessed April 6, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/motu\\_proprio/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_motu-proprio\\_19700319\\_apostolicae-caritatis\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19700319_apostolicae-caritatis_it.html)

<sup>388</sup> In 1988 Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* changed the Commission's name to the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. It still operates today.

spurred the Scalabrinians to reevaluate their mission in light of Bishop Scalabrini's original vision for the order. *Perfectae Caritatis* (The Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life), promulgated in 1965, directed religious orders to examine their life, discipline, and mission in order to renew their ministry and adapt it to the modern world. After following the example of Christ in the Gospels, the most important criteria in evaluating the mission was to be the group's founder. "It redounds to the good of the Church that institutes have their own particular characteristics and work. Therefore let their founders' spirit and special aims they set before them as well as their sound traditions- all of which make up the patrimony of each institute- be faithfully held in honor."<sup>389</sup>

The Scalabrinians' reexamination of Bishop Scalabrini's vision for the order supported broadening the Scalabrinians' mission from Italian migrants to all migrants. Some in the Scalabrinian hierarchy had considered such an expansion since the 1950s. They emphasized how Bishop Scalabrini began to contemplate a pan-Catholic migrant ministry at the end of his life. Scalabrini allowed a Pole, Jan Chmielinski, to train in the Scalabrinians' seminary in Piacenza for three years. Chmielinski was ordained with the permission of his Polish bishop and then went to the United States in 1893 where he established the parish of Our Lady of Czestochowa for Poles in Boston. Chmielinski said Mass for Poles around Boston and eventually founded several other Polish parishes in the city. When Bishop Scalabrini toured Italian communities and Scalabrinian missions in

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<sup>389</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Perfectae Caritatis: The Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life, Promulgated by Pope Paul VI, October 28, 1965*, par. 2b. Accessed April 5, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19651028\\_perfectae-caritatis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_perfectae-caritatis_en.html)

the United States in 1901, he visited Chmielinski and the Polish community of Boston twice, performing a communion and confirmation on his second visit. Later, on his visit in New York in November 3, 1901, Scalabrini ordained another Pole, Father Duda, who was working with Chmielinski by 1903.<sup>390</sup>

At the end of his life, Scalabrini believed that the Church needed structures to help all Catholic migrants. In 1904, while touring the Scalabrinians' missions in Brazil, Scalabrini wrote to Pope Pius X with his first proposal for a Catholic congregation to preserve the faith of emigrants of all nationalities. He expounded on this theme in his memorandum *Pro emigratis catholicis*, issued in May 1905, less than one month before his death. Scalabrini wrote "All the emigrations of various nationalities need, concerning religious perils, the wise and vigilant care of the Church."<sup>391</sup> He recommended the same pastoral strategy the Scalabrinians already employed in their work with Italians: migrants of each nationality would have their own parish institutions, their own parishes when possible, their own schools, and priests and sisters of their own nationality or who, at the very least, spoke their language.

The Scalabrinians chose to expand their work to all Catholic migrants. The transition was not always easy or harmonious, but over the next several decades the Scalabrinians steadily grew their mission. The 1987 General Plan for Scalabrinian

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<sup>390</sup> Scalabrini to Cardinal Mieczyslaw Ledóchowski, Piacenza, 12 Mar. 1900, AGS, BA 03 03 f.3. See also Silvano M. Tomasi, *A Scalabrinian Mission among Polish Immigrants in Boston: 1893-1909* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1986).

<sup>391</sup> "Le emigrazioni delle varie nazionalità hanno tutte bisogno, dal lato dei pericoli religiosi, della cura vigile e matura della Chiesa," Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, "Memoriale per la costituzione di una commissione pontificia *Pro emigratis catholicis*," reprinted in Silvano Tomasi and Gianfausto Rosoli, eds., *Scalabrini e le migrazioni moderne: Scritti e carteggi* (Torino: Società editrice internazionale, 1997), 229. See also Scalabrini to Pius IX, São Paulo, 22 July 1904, reprinted in *Scalabrini e le migrazioni moderne*, 215-217.

Formation explained the transition as an “evolution”: "Within the Congregation there began an evolution- slow, painful, and not always accepted by its members- an evolution that brought the Congregation to a concrete opening to non-Italians." The Plan attributed the evolution to three factors: missionaries from Italian-descended communities in the Americas often did not want to limit their work to Italians after ordination, non-Italians joined the Scalabrinians, and missionaries came into contact with non-Italian migrants "to whom, little by little, they extended their pastoral care, thus giving rise, within the Congregation, to new attitudes and an explicit commitment on their behalf."<sup>392</sup>

The Scalabrinians began a concerted effort to recruit aspiring priests not of Italian descent into the Congregation to work in migrant communities under Scalabrinian jurisdiction. By the 1980s, the Scalabrinians recruited Filipino priests to serve Filipino communities in the United States and Canada, and the first three Filipinos novices professed religious vows in 1989.<sup>393</sup> The Scalabrinians' 1989-1990 novitiate class in Mexico included 2 Mexicans, an American, and 5 Columbians. The class ahead of them, consisting of 2 Mexicans and a Columbian, was sent to Toronto for English and pastoral experience.<sup>394</sup> While the Scalabrinians still maintained that migrants were best served by missionaries of their own language and community, the Scalabrinians increasingly trained their missionaries in other languages and cultures so that individuals could serve outside their own communities.

Not every Scalabrinian expansion was successful, however. In the 1970s, the Scalabrinians established an apostolate of the sea in Puerto Rico. They sought to provide

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<sup>392</sup> “The General Plan for Scalabrinian Formation,” 10, CMS, Collection 078C, Box 70, Folder 4.

<sup>393</sup> See the documents in CMS, Collection 078C, Box 149, Folder 2.

<sup>394</sup> Silvano M. Tomasi to Anthony Paganoni, 17 Aug. 1989, CMS, Collection 078C, Box 149, Folder 2.

spiritual services and welcome to the crews of the many cargo and cruise ships that docked in San Juan. In 1975, at the invitation of the Archbishop of San Juan, the Scalabrinians came to Puerto Rico under a five-year contract, primarily to conduct a ministry at the International Seaman's Center. Workers on the ships spent most of the year away from friends, family, and community life. The Center's director, Scalabrinian brother Luciano Sasso, said the International Seaman's Center (*Casa Mar*) provided a "home away from home where they can find a warm welcome, friendship, relaxation, and assistance." The Center provided spiritual services and, according to Sasso "our spiritual presence here keeps him [the seaman] mindful of his own religious identity for which he is very grateful."<sup>395</sup> In 1975, Sasso estimated that 20% of the 2000 seamen who docked at the port each week came to the Center while additional sailors received assistance when the priests went onboard the ships to administer sacraments.<sup>396</sup>

The Scalabrinians also took over a San Juan territorial parish, Our Lady of Charity (*Nuestra Señora de la Caridad del Cobre*), as part of their Puerto Rican mission, a difficult experience that demonstrated the challenges of moving from Italian nation-building to a universal migrant assistance in which missionaries had to learn the local language and culture. The provincial superiors who organized the mission believed work in this parish fell within the Scalabrinians' migrant mission because Our Lady of Charity included migrants from the Puerto Rican interior as well as migrants, both documented and undocumented, from the Dominican Republic and Central America. The superiors thought pastoral experience in Puerto Rico would help train individual Scalabrinians for

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<sup>395</sup> Luciano Sasso, "Annual Report," 1, CMS, Collection 078C, Box 119, Folder 1.

<sup>396</sup> The Scalabrinians' ministry also included assistance work at the San Juan airport, but the Scalabrinians did not ultimately find this work effective.

work with Puerto Rican migrants in the United States. One of the priests, Isaias Birollo explained "A parish such as this, made up mostly of poor people who are more acutely affected by migration, offers an opportunity to any member of the province who may want to prepare himself one day to work among the puertoricans [sic] in the United States."<sup>397</sup>

However, doubt quickly emerged within the Congregation over whether their work in Puerto Rico was truly in line with the Congregation's mission and a good use of the Scalabrinians' limited personnel. Internal discussion finally led the provincial superior to take an unusual step: he sent a survey to the province's Scalabrinians. The survey explained the pros and cons of keeping the mission and asked whether recipients thought the missions should be closed and whether they would be willing to serve there. Response was mixed. Some Scalabrinians enthusiastically said they would go while others said they would go if directed, an expression of their obedience to their superiors, but they were concerned that they did not have the proper cultural knowledge and that the Province did not have enough personnel. However, another priest objected, saying "I have never understood why, with such a need for Scalabrinians to assist Italian emigrants, we're going to take a parish among the native Puerto Ricans."<sup>398</sup> More Scalabrinians supported the work at the Seaman's Center because they felt it was in line with the Scalabrinians' Constitution, but they doubted the appropriateness of the Scalabrinians'

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<sup>397</sup> Isaias Birollo, "Why our presence in this parish?" CMS, Collection 078C, Box 119, Folder 1. He goes on to say that Puerto Ricans "are not to be confused with other Latin Americans" and that just knowing Spanish is not sufficient to aid them. "A knowledge of the history and culture of the puertoricans [sic] is indispensable" because Puerto Ricans' political situation and relationship to the United States are contested and sensitive.

<sup>398</sup> "Non ho mai capito perchè, con tanta bisogna di scalabriniani per l'assistenza agli emigrati italiani, si andare a prendere una parrocchia tra gli indigeni portoricani." All responses collected in CMS, Collection 078C, Box 119, Folder 1.

work at the San Juan airport chapel and Our Lady of Charity. "Where are the needier migrants? S. Juan?" asked one. "For the preparation of personnel for work with spanish [sic] it is not necessary to keep such a property."

The Puerto Rican mission revealed the growing pains in the Scalabrinians' transition from a group dedicated to assisting Italian emigrants to one assisting all migrants. When the first two Scalabrinians arrived at Our Lady of Charity in 1974, they took a five-week Spanish course to help their ministry. Individual Scalabrinians, however, remained concerned about being prepared to serve in Puerto Rico. One Scalabrinian wrote in his survey response "As of today we have no religious prepared to assume this task- to be sent is one thing, to volunteer is too risky (spiritually, culturally, etc. etc.)"<sup>399</sup> One Scalabrinian suggested that the Puerto Rican missions be kept open but the Province should create separate committees to coordinate the work of the Scalabrinians' Spanish, Haitian, Portuguese, and Italian Apostolates. The idea that Scalabrinian trainees needed pastoral experience in different migrant cultures was a new one. Bishop Scalabrini founded the Scalabrinians because he believed that Italian missionaries already had the cultural and linguistic knowledge to help Italians, even though in practice, Italian linguistic and regional fragmentation was always an obstacle for Scalabrinian missionaries. Several weeks after the surveys were due, the province decided to close the Puerto Rican missions. But the Scalabrinians learned from the experience, and over the ensuing decades, the Scalabrinians improved missionaries' preparation through the study of international migration issues, sending Scalabrinians in

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<sup>399</sup> Response collected in CMS, Collection 078C, Box 119, Folder 1.



formation to gain experience in migrant communities of cultures not their own, and by recruiting Scalabrinians who were not Italian or of Italian descent.

An important new element of the Scalabrinians' work with migrants was undertaking research as a migrant ministry, and the Scalabrinians' interest and advocacy reached beyond Catholics in both their study and collaboration. Beginning in 1963, the Scalabrinians established Migration Centers around the world to facilitate research on migration issues that could be used to improve education, policy, and migrant pastoral care. Initially, the Scalabrinians debated what the Centers should look like. The priests of one Center wrote that they experimented in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council: "We are urged to try even if possible errors can be made. Ours is one of these attempts and the results that we have obtained so far point out that we are not in the wrong track."<sup>400</sup> The Centers soon adopted a range of activities and a mission for the "internal and external service of the Congregation." Internal service meant research that aided the Congregation's mission, including information about the migrant communities in which Scalabrinians worked, training materials for new Scalabrinians, and preserving the Scalabrinians' history. External service meant informing public opinion and policy makers, a work that the Scalabrinians traced to Bishop Scalabrini's original advocacy for migrants to the Church, Italian government, and Italian public.<sup>401</sup>

The Scalabrinians' migration centers quickly spread around the world and reflected local needs and audiences. The first was the Centro Studi Emigrazione (CSER,

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<sup>400</sup> "Fathers of the Center for Migration Studies of New York to Delegates for the General Special Chapter from the North American Provinces, 4-5," New York, Easter 1969, CMS, Collection 084, Box 1.

<sup>401</sup> "Internal Statute of the Centers for Migration Studies," CMS, Collection 085A, Box 49. The folder contains an Italian copy of the Statute as well.

established in Rome in 1963), followed by the Center for Migration Studies (CMS, New York, 1964), Centro Scalabriniano de Estudos Migratórios (CSEM, Brazil, 1988, though there had been an earlier incarnation of this institution), Centro de Estudios Migratorios Latino-Americanos (CEMLA, Argentina, 1985), Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC, Phillipines in 1987), Centro Studi e Ricerche per l'Emigrazione (CSERPE, founded in Basel, Switzerland in 1968), and Centre d'Information et d'Etudes sur les Migrations Internationales (CIEMI, France, founded 1971-73).

The Centers quickly began establishing intellectual communities and partnerships within and beyond the Catholic Church. The CSER sent reports on migration issues to the Italian Bishop's Conference (UCEI), published reports on Italian emigration, and housed a library and archives accessible to scholars.<sup>402</sup> In 1966 Father Silvano Tomasi, director of the CMS, served as the first executive secretary of the American Italian Historical Association and moderated a session on "Italian Immigration in North and South America" in which the speakers were scholars from Fordham, Rutgers, Indiana, and Columbia Universities.<sup>403</sup> The Centers also held public talks and conferences and published books. They created and continue to run several migration-related scholarly journals. In the 1950s, Scalabrinian seminarians in New York created a bulletin about migration issues that the CMS took over in the 1960s, creating the *International Migration Review* in 1966. The CSER established *Studi Emigrazione* in 1966, and the SMC has published the *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* since 1992.

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<sup>402</sup> "Alcuni cenni sull'attività del C.S.E.R. durante lo scorso sessennio (1963-1969)," CMS, Collection 084, Box 1.

<sup>403</sup> Silvano Tomasi, "Opening Statement: American Historical Association Joint Session with the Immigration History Group," New York, 29 Dec. 1966; Robert D. Cross to Members of the Immigration History Group New York. Sept. 1966. Both in CMS, Collection 084, Box 3.

## **Conclusion**

In the decades after World War II, Italian missionaries transformed their spiritual and charitable work with migrants from Italian nation-building to a universal migrant ministry. Three factors encouraged this transformation. First, Italian missionaries increasingly encountered migrants of other nationalities while they worked in their Italian missions around the world, and missionaries aided these other migrants alongside Italians when others priest were unavailable. Second, local churches requested Italian missionaries' assistance in non-Italian communities because they recognized missionaries' experience with migrants. Canadian bishops wanted Scalabrinian missionaries to work with Portuguese migrants in Canada because the Scalabrinians had operated successful migrant ministries for decades and many Scalabrinians spoke Portuguese because of their work in Brazil. Third, the Church hierarchy became increasingly concerned with global migrations during World War II and Cold War refugee crises, and it encouraged Catholics to think about migration as a universal issue, not a concern limited to particular national or religious communities. In the 1950s and 1960s, migration became a component of Catholic social justice teaching. The Church hierarchy recognized Italian missionaries' expertise and held them up as a model for migrant assistance. The Church's broader ways of thinking about migration further inspired missionaries such as the Scalabrinians to expand their work and membership beyond Italians. By the late twentieth century, these Italian missionary groups had become multiethnic organizations that engaged in spiritual and charitable assistance, as well as research and advocacy, for all migrants, not just Italians.

The transition to a universal migrant ministry expanded the scope of Italian missionaries' work and their membership, but this expansion did not change how missionaries understood the Italian national community or *italianità*. The Scalabrinians continued their Italian ministry alongside their work with other migrant communities, creating Italian spaces abroad in which migrants could receive culturally-specific religious and charitable assistance. This work reflected the original beliefs of missionary organizations' founders, including Bishops Scalabrini and Bonomelli: migrants from Italy shared a common Italian language and a culture rooted in Catholicism. They had believed that Italian missions provided spaces in which Italian migrants could best practice their Catholicism because migrants were welcomed, their culture celebrated, and their material and religious needs met. Missionaries had never abandoned this core belief, but missionaries' postwar *italianità* lacked imperialistic and nationalistic elements that some missionaries and lay collaborators had adopted earlier in the twentieth century. Similarly, any sympathy for Fascism disappeared when Italy's Fascist government ended in 1943. The postwar period demonstrated the strength of missionaries' understanding of the Italian national community and *italianità*, not only because this understanding had remained central to missionaries' work since the nineteenth century, but also because it became the model for how missionaries approached other Catholic migrant communities when the missionaries expanded their work.

## Conclusion

The Scalabrinians' bulletin *L'Emigrato Italiano* made a dramatic choice for its September 1991 cover. Set off against a dark green background, the cover juxtaposed two photos of docked ships. A crowd, more than a dozen people deep, filled all the dock space visible in both pictures. The photograph on the left was a color photograph in which many people could also be seen on the ship's deck. It was labeled "Albanesi, 1991" ("Albanians, 1991"). The photograph on the right was an old black and white photograph, and many of the women standing on the dock wore scarves wrapped around their heads. This photograph was labeled "Italiani, 1906" ("Italians, 1906"). To cement the comparison, the cover was replicated in miniature on the bulletin's inside cover with the caption "Italians like the Albanians."<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> "Italiani come gli Albanesi," *L'Emigrato Italiano* LXXXVIII, No. 7 (Sept. 1991).

The cover made a clear commentary on the Albanian refugee crisis currently engulfing Italy. Albania's closed communist regime, in power since 1944, began to crack in 1991. Tens of thousands of Albanians fled the country on packed boats and traveled to Italy's eastern coast. Italians welcomed the approximately 25,700 Albanians who arrived in March as refugees from communism, but their attitude darkened that August when more than 10,000 Albanians arrived aboard another ship that landed in the southeastern city of Bari. Many Italians began to view the Albanians as part of an "invasion," and this provoked a heavy-handed response from the Italian government that caused a humanitarian crisis. The state considered the Albanians undocumented migrants, not refugees, denied them basic rights, and forcibly detained them inside Bari's soccer stadium for a week. The Italian state eventually repatriated the migrants back to Albania.<sup>405</sup> Many people within the Catholic Church, including the Scalabrinians and the Holy See, condemned the state's response, and Catholic organizations assisted many Albanians while they were held in Bari. The Scalabrinians' response to the Albanian crisis reflected not only their concern for the poor, but also their interest and advocacy for migrants beyond national boundaries and the Scalabrinians' nineteenth-century origins in the Italian diaspora.

In this dissertation, I have shown how Italian missionaries, including the Scalabrinians, Salesians, Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and the missionaries of the *Opera* Bonomelli, used Italian nation-building as a key component of their work with migrants from Italy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though they

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<sup>405</sup>Luca Einaudi, *Le politiche dell'immigrazione in Italia dall'unità a oggi* (Roma: Laterza, 2007).

differed in their attitudes toward the new Italian state, these groups all shared a primordial understanding of the Italian nation. They believed that an Italian nation and an Italian people existed before and independently of the Italian nation-state unified in 1861. This Italian nation was separate from the new state that the Holy See opposed until 1929, so missionaries could insist that migrants were members of an Italian nation and shared an Italian character, *italianità*. Missionaries understood *italianità* as fundamentally Catholic and thought that reinforcing migrants' *italianità* would reinforce their Catholicism. Therefore, they ran missions around the world that provided welfare, religious, and cultural assistance to Italian migrants who often faced hostility in receiving societies, even within the local Catholic Church.

Missionaries always insisted that Catholic *italianità* was separate from the Italian state. Yet, from their founding, all missionary organizations collaborated with the Italian state in one way or another, such as accepting state funds for their schools or working with local consuls to help migrants with legal problems. Italian missionaries and migrants first expressed support for the Italian state during the Liberal governments imperial expansion attempts, particularly its invasion of Libya in 1911 and its entrance into World War I in 1915. This interest predated the Fascist era and the 1929 Lateran Accords. The Accords finally reconciled the Catholic Church and the Italian state, but the Fascist period was a time of continued struggle over the meaning of *italianità* and influence over Italian migrant communities. Missionaries rejected the Fascist government's attempt to equate *italianità* with Fascism, while some antifascists were violently hostile to the Church. World War II challenged missionaries' work because many migrants and

missionaries resided in nations such as France, the United States, and Canada that were at war with Italy. However, Italian missionaries' decades-long insistence that *italianità* was fundamentally Catholic and apolitical enabled missionaries to survive the war and resume their work in the postwar period without abandoning *italianità*.

After the war, a number of factors finally ended missionaries' emphasis on *italianità* and Italian nation-building in their work with migrants. By the mid-twentieth century, many Italian communities, particularly in the Americas, no longer required Italian specific-assistance because their communities included many people three or more generations removed from Italy. At the same time, missionaries began working in other, non-Italian migrant communities when the composition of formerly Italian communities changed and when bishops requested missionaries to assist other migrant groups, as happened in Canada when several bishops asked the Scalabrinians to work among Portuguese migrant communities.

The final change that expanded Italian missionaries' work with migrants was the Catholic Church's growing treatment of migration as a universal social justice issue. Several landmark documents from the Holy See in the mid-twentieth century, including the papal encyclicals *Exsul Familia* and *Pacem in Terris*, presented migration as an issue of concern and solidarity for all Catholics, and later, for all people, regardless of their national origins or religion. In addition to expanding missionaries' work, the Church's growing interest in migration also encouraged Catholic migrant advocacy and the study of migration issues. New Church bodies accompanied this expansion in doctrine and focus. Though earlier in the century the Holy See had created offices within itself that



addressed migration, including the Pontifical College of Italian Emigration and the Prelate for Italian Emigration, both were devised to train and supervise missionaries who obeyed the Church hierarchy. The new offices created in mid-century, however, gathered the Church's migrant-serving organizations together, recognizing the fact that migrants had specialized needs. While nationally-specific assistance still remains an important part of Catholic work with migrants today, it is only one of several approaches within the larger Catholic migrant ministry.

Finally, new demographic, political, and economic developments also brought these expanded Catholic ideas of migration to public attention in Italy when it abruptly became a country of immigration. An international array of migrants began arriving in Italy during the second half of the twentieth century, raising new questions about who should be considered an Italian or a member of the national community. By the late 1970s, Catholic groups such as the Scalabrinians already worked with these migrants, who faced poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and sometimes violence. The Scalabrinians' concern for Albanian refugees was representative of their larger commitment to migration issues. The poignant cover of their September 1991 bulletin reflected the ways in which the Scalabrinians now connected Italians' migrant experiences to a larger, global migration history. By the late twentieth century, this understanding drove the Scalabrinians and other Catholic priests and religious to abandon their previous, primordial conceptions of *italianità* and the Italian nation and call for migrants' social and political inclusion into Italian society.

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ASMAE: Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (Historic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs): Rome  
ASV: Archivio Secreto Vaticano (Vatican Secret Archives): Vatican City  
BNCR: Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma (Central National Library, Rome): Rome  
CMS: Center for Migration Studies: New York City  
CSER: Centro Studi Emigrazione-Roma (Center for Emigration Studies-Rome): Rome  
IHRC: Immigration History Research Center: Minneapolis

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