

A Brief Chronicle

of the



Rev. Pio Gurisatti, the Superior General from 1891 to 1911

Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ

**Rev. Joseph Fiorio – Stigmatine
1876-1958**

Volume II – First Period

**From the Further Development of the Apostolic Mission
to the Establishment of the Provinces [1890-1914]**

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Chapter 1

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE APOSTOLIC MISSION

[1890-1904]

1. The solemn approbation of the Church for the Congregation served as an argument of confidence in its future. The Community with new fervor turned itself to the works of the apostolate which it had been cultivating up to that time: the education and formation of the young through the Schools and the Oratories, the sanctification of souls through preaching, and holy ministries.

In Verona, near the Founder's tomb, the number of young candidates who made up the hope of the Congregation increased: the number of Professed Students, Novices and Aspirants was growing, and they were all lodged in St. Teresa's Convent. The thought circulated to build a special house for them, distinct from the community at the Stimate. Fr. Bartholomew Perazzani was suggested as a possible Superior, while at the Stimate the Very Reverend Superior General also served as Director.

Already in January 1890, Fr. John Baptist Tomasi was ordained, and in November of that same year, Frs. Peter Scotton and Victor Gurisatti were ordained priests. Fr Scotton was sent then to Rome as companion to Fr. Tabarelli, who since the preceding December a House had been opened there. They had rented a dwelling on St. Francis di Sales Street, at the feet of the Gianicolo, near the Villa Lante where the Madames of the Sacred Heart maintained their Novitiate. It was there where Fr. Tabarelli met Fr. Anthony Fossa', the personal Secretary of Cardinal Lucido Maria Parocchi, the Vicar General of His Holiness. It was by means of this priest, that Fr. Tabarelli came to know Cardinal Parocchi, who began to think highly of him and to watch over him.

When Fr. Scotton took up residence in Rome, he enrolled in the University, frequenting the Faculty of Letters, in the hopes of obtaining the Doctorate, and then to commit himself to teaching in our schools in Verona.

In December of this year, 1890, there occurred the second anniversary of Fr. Anthony Conte's death. So that the record of his virtues would not be forgotten, Fr. Paul Gradinati wrote a brief Life of the deceased. And in November, the Constitutions were re-printed, with those modifications introduced by the XII General Chapter, in obedience to the observations pointed out by the Holy See.

In the meantime, on January 1, 1891, Fr. Tabarelli moved from Via St. Francis di Sales, to Via del Bologna, in the Trastevere section of Rome¹, and initiated the practices to obtain a Church to serve, with an adjoining dwelling.

In this same month of January he received from the Cardinal Vicar the charge to teach Philosophy in the Regional seminary of Albano, and he was also named substitute in Philosophy in the Roman Seminary of St. Apollinaris.

Meanwhile, on January 17, Fr. Julius Zambiasi also was transferred to Rome, to take up studies of Mathematics and Physics at the Roman University, and he was also assigned to teach these matters in the Seminary of Albano. In February, Fr. Tabarelli obtained for the Congregation the Church of St. Nicholas dei Prefetti. At one

¹ Our Fathers occupied the second floor of the dwelling, n. 40. The third floor was occupied by the Carmelite Fathers, who took care of the Church S. Maria della Scala.

time, this Church and its adjoining House had been the property of the Dominican Fathers of Santa Sabina. With an official deed, dated March 23, 1848, they granted this Church in perpetuity to the Confraternity of the Most Holy Agonizing Crucified. One part of the house had been made available by a deed dated October 12, 1882, with the signature of a Notary dated February 10, 1883, and was sold to Mr. Cesar Lozza. The remaining part of these Minutes concerning the freeing up of the property, dated May 11, 1878, had become the free property of the Confraternity, in force of the law regarding Pious Works of 1890, it was reduced to a deed of mere use, and not ownership.

Up to this year, the Church had been officiated by the Jesuit Fathers. Our Fathers began their care of the Church on March 19, and on the 23, they transferred their dwelling closer to the Church.

Since, however, all three of the Fathers were occupied with school, and they asked for a Priest who would attend to the ministry of the Church. For the time being, Fr. Pio Gurisatti was sent, and he remained there until about mid-June: and he was then substituted for by Fr. Louis Morando, up until the end of July. At the end of June, Fr. John B. Tomasi arrived, to prepare himself for the doctoral examination in Sacred Theology.

2. Meanwhile in Verona, the teaching of school was zealously continued², even though in this year there was experienced a notable diminution of students in the final classes of the high school, since the government had made obligatory the state examination at the end of the lower grades. This obligated the students of the private schools to undergo the examinations for promotion from the third to the 4th class, also in the government schools. Fr. Tabarelli tried to obtain from the Ministry of Education the faculty of having the examinations in our own school, suffice, but this was not granted.

There, too, Fr. Antoniulli from the previous year had given new life to the Recreation Center for the youth. He restored the old practice for the Christian Season the recitations before the Crib: and in the Carneval season of 1891, there began also plays for theater. For this purpose, the Director of the College of St. Aloysius, Fr. J. B. Carrara, ceded to the Recreation Center of the Stimate the theater props of his College. Then in this same year he made a proposal to our Fathers of ceding to them the Direction of the College itself, whose members attended classes at the Stimate, but this proposal was not accepted.

In the same year, 1891, there occurred the third centenary of the death of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, which was celebrated in all the parishes of the city and the diocese of Verona for the benefit of the youth groups, and our Fathers had many requests to preach.

² After the departure of Fr. Tabarelli Fr. Joseph Zandonai was named Director of the School. How these schools were esteemed in the city, was noted in the autumn of 1890, when following the defections suffered in the Congregation, the decision was made to close the Lyceum level classes. Of the 22 students who presented themselves for the examinations for the licentiate, 20 were promoted – and of the students of the Lyceum classes, the Principal of the school declared that he was most willing to accept all those students who had been regularly promoted at the Stimate.

At the Stimate it had been decided to commemorate it, in addition to the religious services, with a talent-show of literary expositions and musical treats in which there was the intention also to celebrate the 90th birthday of Cardinal Luis di Canossa, Bishop of Verona. This special Academy was put on May 19th, and it proved to be more special than any other before it. However, the Cardinal could not attend because he was ill.³

In June, preceded by a solemn triduum there was celebrated at the Stimate the religious festival for the centenary of St. Aloysius. It was also solemnly celebrated at Pavia, where Fr. Bertapelle had given a great impulse to the city Oratory, frequented by 500 young men⁴.

3. On the 23rd of August, the Congregation suffered a grave loss in the person of the Superior General, Fr. Peter Vignola. He suffered a stroke while ministering to the Institute of St. Sylvester, where he had just finished a Catechism lesson, and he died in a short time. His body was brought back to the Stimate, where a solemn funeral was celebrated. For the ceremony there was a large turn out of the local citizenry, as a manifestation of great esteem and sympathy that he enjoyed throughout the city.

The Vicar General, Fr. Louis Morando, convoked the Fourteenth General Chapter⁵ that gathered at the Stimate on September 24, and in which Fr. Pio Gurisatti was elected to a ten year term. Fr. Tabarelli was elected to the General Council -along with Frs. Morando, Marini and Zandonai – but he was granted permission by the Holy See to remain in Rome. Fr. M. Orando was appointed Director of the House of the Stimate, where on November 7th, a solemn funeral service was celebrated as suffrage for the deceased Fr. Vignola: the eulogy was delivered by Fr. Louis Giacomelli, Pastor of Holy Apostles.

In the meantime, Fr. Anthony OssBlass died on June 9th in Trent. He had acquired the deep love of the people of St. Martin's where he served as Rector, for his zeal in promoting the good of souls and the décor for the House of God. Hew was succeeded by Fr. Peter Beltrami who also died very unexpectedly in December of that same year. He had suffered a slight stroke in August of 1890, but had recovered sufficiently in order to be able to return to his ordinary occupations. On December 16, he had gone to the Seminary in Trent to preach a Retreat to the Seminarians, and while he was making his way to the Church to deliver a Meditation, he suffered some kind of an attack, which in a few hours took his life from him⁶.

³ On the occasion of the centenary of St. Aloysius, there was printed in Verona a popular biography of the Saint, written by Fr. Louis Morando.

⁴ On this occasion, Fr. Bertapelle sent to Rome in the name of the Oratory of Pavia, a devout address which remained exposed for many years in the rooms of St. Aloysius, next to the Church of St. Ignatius there.

⁵ In the month of April, the XIII General Chapter had been celebrated to resolve some questions that had arisen within the General Council itself.

⁶ We think this is the place to recall that in this year 1891, on February 17, there was introduced the practice of reading in public a brief Necrology of the deceased Confreres, on the anniversary of their deaths: this practice eventually was sanctioned in the Constitutions.

As a consequence to these two losses, our Confreres found themselves in the necessity of having to give up their care of St. Martin's, and they withdrew in April of the following year, 1892, gathering all then in the house of St. Bernardine's.

Still another loss was endured by the Congregation early in the year 1892: on February 19, the veteran Fr. Francis Benciolini died in Verona, truly an authentic son of St. Gaspar. After having worked for nearly 50 years in the House of St. Mary of the Lily, within the Parish of St. Stephen's, in 1887, he returned to the Stimate, where he spent the last years of his life, edifying all with his simple piety and with his zeal for the salvation of souls. All in the city were quite moved with his death and attested to the veneration and affection nourished for him on the occasion of his funeral. St. Stephen's Parish also wanted to remember him, with a solemn funeral service celebrated on April 3, in the Church of St. Mary of the Lily.

4. To fill in for these vacancies other young workers entered: on March 12, Fr. Cesar Benaglia was ordained in Verona⁷, and he was assigned to assist Fr. Antonioli in the Work of the Oratory and the Recreation Center: this was an undertaking that prospered greatly, to the point that the Superiors thought of granting for it the use of St. Teresa's choir, which had been used in recent years as a theater.

This had been the scene in July of 1892 of a musical entitled, *Saul*, produced under the direction of our own Fr. Cesar Benaglia. The score had been written by the Maestro Coccon, and this produced a broad effect in the city, and was recalled for many years.

Something of a novelty had been introduced at the Stimate during this year. Fr. Louis Morando, Director of the House, on March 4, the First Friday of Lent, instituted the Pious Association of the Sacred Face, which in a short time showed 2000 registered members. On April 29, in a solemn gathering held in the Church of the Stimate, the banner of the Association was blessed. The thought circulated also of re-naming the small Oratory next to the Church, already bearing the title of the Immaculate Conception, and to dedicate it to the Sacred Face. On this occasion, newly refurbished, over the old altar, the painting of the Immaculate Conception was changed for a portrait of the sacred Face, the work of the artist Joseph Zannoni. The Oratory was inaugurated solemnly on November 11. However, this did not find favor in the local newspapers which censured this devotion, saying that it had been condemned by the Holy See⁸. This had brought about great confusion among the laity, but once the clarification had been obtained, calm returned and the devotion continued to spread.

⁷ In October of this year, in the Church of the Stimate, Fr. Joseph Mattei was ordained by Bishop Francis Sogaro, Vicar Apostolic for Central Africa, who was visiting Verona.

⁸ It would suffice to confer the *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, year 1893, p. 749, for the Decree of the Congregation of the Holy Office, the source of the controversy. Fr. Pizzighella, having succeeded Fr. Morando in the direction of the Association, presented to this same Supreme Congregation a question in which, after having explained the establishment of the Association, and the controversy that the local newspapers had aroused, he asked whether the Association could continue. The response came back, dated March 8, 1893, with the simple answer: *In so far as the matter has been presented, Affirmatively*

In the Church of the Stimate the Stations of the Cross were set up, and there was introduced this devotion, which was then offered every Friday of the year. This substituted for the old devotion for a Good Death which had been prayed there from the time of the venerated Founder.

In Rome, on March 7, Fr. Richard Tabarelli had been named an Urban Associate of the Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, recently instituted by Pope Leo XIII. On April 12, with the communication received from the Secretary of State, he had been named a Consultor of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. In May, he obtained from the Cardinal Vicar, the care of the Church of St. Mary of the Miracles, in the Piazza del Popolo, to which the Superiors sent temporarily Fr. James Marini, substituting him in November by Fr. Morando. Fr. Tabarelli was much esteemed by Cardinal Parocchi, who had through him come to admire and look out for our Congregation: a sign of this was what the Holy Father himself, Leo XIII, said about the Stigmatines: *They are the Priests of Cardinal Parocchi!*

In November Fr. Morando was established definitively in Rome, and with him Fr. Zandonai, who had the assignment of teaching Church History in the Vatican Seminary: there, Fr. Tabarelli was teaching Dogmatic Theology, and Fr. Zambiasi, mathematics. Fr. Morando taught Moral Theology there and gave the Seminarians a spiritual conference each week: these conferences in 1901 were published and received good reviews.

5. In Verona, following the departure of Fr. Zandonai, Fr. Louis Gasperotti was named Director of the School. The situation in the school became increasingly more difficult, because of the battle that had been introduced to draw the students more to the public schools. For the scholastic year 1891-1892, the students from the College of St. Aloysius had been withdrawn because the College had moved to a new location, closer to the Seminary, and its students began to attend classes in the Seminary. Nonetheless, our Fathers continued to be most dedicated to maintaining the school. In December 1892, Frs. Lodovico Lucchi and Nicholas Tomasi with extraordinary examinations at the University of Padua, had obtained the licentiate to teach the lower high school grades, in history and geography, for Fr. Lucchi and in Italian Letters for Fr. Nicholas. Already during the previous year, Fr. Scotton had returned from Rome and he was also inscribed with the student, Edward Castellani, in the University of Padua, while at the same time teaching in Verona the high school classes, and to the Professed Students on the College level. In November 1892, Fr. John B. Tomasi returned from Rome, as in June he had obtained the Doctorate in Sacred Theology, and took up the assignment of teaching Philosophy and Theology to our own Professed Students.

In 1894, Fr. Scotton and the Student, Edward Castellani, obtained the Licentiate Diploma, which authorized them to teach the lower high school classes. In 1893, Fr. Michael Angelo Zanetti and the cleric, Alfred Balestrazzi, were inscribed in the University. Balestrazzi in 1894, following his examinations at the University, obtained the authorization to teach the French language, which was a required two year subject matter for high school students. On September 22 of that same year, he was ordained a Priest, together with Frs. Joseph Chesani and John B. Castellani. Fr. Michaelangelo Zanetti celebrated his First Mass at the Stimate on the Feast of the Assumption.

In February 1893, Fr. Julius Zambiasi received the doctorate in mathematics, but he continued to live in Rome, where he was much consulted and admired. And having received the consent of the ecclesiastical authorities, he accepted the appointment offered to him to be the Guardian of the National Diapason. This provided him with the opportunity of cultivating his own studies on the physics of sound.⁹

We will also mention here some facts of these years of interest to the House in Verona. In January 1893 there was commemorated there with a solemn academy the 50th anniversary of the Work of the Holy Childhood. And on March 7 of that same year, with another Academy and philosophical debate, there was celebrated the Golden Priestly Jubilee of Leo XIII, the restorer of Thomistic Philosophy.¹⁰

On August 13, also in 1893, there occurred the Golden Jubilee of Fr. Cajetan Giacobbe, which was celebrated with great solemnity with the participation of all the pastors of the City. There was a good number of the Stigmatine Fathers, who had always been closed bound to him out of affection and gratitude.

On September 17 of the following year there was inaugurated in the Church of the Stimate the new painting representing the Stigmata of St. Francis, the work by the painter, Joseph Zannoni, which had been commissioned by the local Congregation of the Third Order of St. Francis. For the occasion, there was celebrated with extraordinary solemnity the Feast of the Stigmata, receded by a solemn novena¹¹.

6. In 1895, in March, the Process to introduce the Cause of the Founder's Beatification was begun. Already in February, the Superior General, having gone to Rome, had spoken of this matter with Cardinal Parocchi and with other authoritative personalities and from all of them he received much encouragement. On his return to Verona, he informed all of the houses, asking for prayers for a good result from the Process. He named as the Postulator of the Cause, Fr. Peter Scotton, who at first, did accept the responsibility, but later, he declined. Fr. James Marini was then named, and he accepted the task and put himself to work.

In February also, on the occasion of the Presentation of the Candles to the Holy Father, the Pontiff, Leo XIII, had made to our men the offer to take care of the Church of the Stigmata of St. Francis, and offer that could not be refused because it was the express will of the Pontiff. Frs. Cajetan Pizzighella and Louis Gasperotti were assigned there, and they took possession of the Church on September 5, a few days

⁹ In 1894, Bishop Francis Sogaro sought, and received, hospitality among our men in Rome at the Church of St. Nicholas dei Prefetti. He had resigned as Vicar Apostolic in Central Africa, and wanted to come back and live with our Community, always having considered himself as a Stigmatine. Later, on October 25, 1903 [taking over from the future Cardinal Mery dal Val], he was named the President of the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics [Diplomatic Corps of the Vatican], and in that service he died, on February 5, 1912. cf. *BERTONIANO*, 1912, p. 21.

¹⁰ These Academies were held in St. Teresa's.

¹¹ We will also recall at this time the Fr. Cajetan Pizzighella, Rector of the Church, gathered the Relics of the Saints that had been kept in the House, and organized them, placing them in two frames, prepared for this purpose, and placed in the sanctuary, on the sides of the main altar.

before the Feast of the Stigmata. Fr. Gasperotti accepted also the responsibility of teaching in the high school level of the Vatican Seminary.¹²

There was also accepted at this time a foundation in Civitavecchia. A first request for a foundation had been made by His Excellency, Angelo Rossi, the Bishop of Corneto in Civitavecchia, in August of 1894, repeated then in June 1895. Following a visit made to the spot by Fr. Morando, the foundation was accepted.

Our Confreres assumed the charge to teach in the Seminary, and to cultivate the piety and Christian Doctrine for the youth of the city, especially on Sundays and days of vacation from school. In the first year, two Priests were sent, one of whom had the legal title for teaching. The Bishop gave to our Fathers the use of the house and the Church dedicated to St. Nicholas of Bari, which once belonged to the Religious of Instruction, and which had been suitably restored. Furthermore, the Bishop asked the Canon D'Ardia Caracciolo to commit himself to give to our men some 2000 annually, and another 500 Lira for every other Priest who would be added there in the future. The agreement would be that the sum would reach 4000 annually when the Priests assigned there reach four.

Frs. Octavian Piccoli and Peter Scotton were assigned there in the month of September. Fr. Scotton also had to teach in the Seminary, and Fr. Piccoli was assigned to exercise the sacred ministry in the city and to take care of the Church. As soon as the men arrived there, they noted that the dwelling assigned to them was truly in poor condition, and that the church was too small and insufficient to take care of the youth, which was the principal purpose of the foundation. Our Fathers sought that a more suitable dwelling might be provided for them. Furthermore, in order to insure the stability of the foundation, they asked that there be set up an investment that might render some 3000 Lira annually, an agreement that the Bishop had accepted in general. However, Canon D'Ardia in order to insure this fund asked our Fathers also to open a high school for the youth of the city. Since they could not reach any agreement, the Superior General on April 11, 1896, wrote to the Bishop, asking that there might be provided for our men a most suitable house and Church, and that there be assured the established financial support, by means of a legal document before the end of the scholastic year, going back to the basic conditions on which the contract for this foundation had been based. Since, they couldn't reach any understanding on these points, at the end of that scholastic year, the Fathers were withdrawn.

During this year, Cardinal Joseph Sarto, the Patriarch of Venice, asked also for a foundation in his city.¹³ The idea was to take over the direction of the Oratory dedicated to St. Job, administered at that time by the Sons of Charity, the masculine branch of the foundation of Blessed Madeline di Canossa, the Cardinal was thinking of giving to our Congregation the property and the patrimony of these Sons of Charity [the Canossians], but then he came to understand that this land belonged to the Canossian Sisters, and that they would return there if for any reason the masculine

¹² At the departure of Fr. Gasperotti from Verona, Fr. Paul Gradinati was named Director of the School of the Stimmate.

¹³ For some time, Cardinal Sarto was in communication with the Superiors of the Congregation. In February of 1894, as Bishop of Mantua, he had requested of the Superiors of the House of Verona, a teacher for Greek for the Seminary in that city.

branch could not go on. However, the Patriarch insisted nonetheless that our Superiors might accept the foundation, trusting in Providence. However, with those stipulations, our Community did not think it could accept the offer.¹⁴

7. At Parma, since a house was put up for sale near the Church of St. James, in Via Massimo d'Azeglio, our Fathers thought of buying it, because in that locality they would have enjoyed a greater commodity in expressing their zeal for the good of the youth of the city through the school and the Oratory. They did in fact acquire it, on March 22, 1895, and they transferred there in October of 1897, even while continuing to take care of the Church in the Quarter. On September 17 of this year, they also purchased the Church of St. James, which had been closed to the public, and it adjoining property.

Also in Trent, the need was experienced of having a Church for the exercise of the sacred Ministry, and the proposal was made to build one near the House dedicated to St. Bernardine. This proposal was then approved by the competent authorities. In that locality, the Institute for the Service of the Hearing-Speech Impaired had offered to acquire a tract of land including our House, and their offer was accepted. From the monies received from this purchase¹⁵, land was bought in Lazise, not far from the Lago di Garda. The work for the construction of the church was begun in the spring of 1896, and on June 5th, the corner-stone was blessed. The Church was opened to the public on May 22, 1898, dedicating it to the Holy Spouses.¹⁶

In June of 1896, there was a request for a foundation in Lecco. The request was presented by the Provost of that city, Fr. Peter Galli, and by Cardinal Ferrari, the Arch-Bishop of Milan. The offer included the teaching of the third to the fifth elementary classes, and the direction of an Oratory and Sunday Recreation Center. The Provost would provide a capital of some 40000 Lira, the interest of which, united to the bond of 1000 Lira annually, for a daily Mass, would serve for the maintenance of our Fathers. Two priests of the place, Fr. Angelo and Fr. J. B. Scatti, were to construct at their expense, a suitable dwelling place for our Fathers, the class rooms and the Church for the Oratory. However, they asked for two Priests, retaining a lay teacher for the third elementary class. In the following year, another Priest would be sent, in order to teach that class. The first two classes were taught by the Sisters of Charity. The request was accepted and at the end of October, Frs. Joseph Antonioli and J. B. Castellani were sent for this foundation. However, when they arrived in Lecco, they found that the residence was already occupied by the Sisters who were teaching there. When the matter came up of building a House for our Fathers, the school and the Church, the Provost pretended that the 40000 Lira capital should be used, whereas this had been set aside for their support in the contract of the foundation. In addition, the giving over to the Fathers of the Direction of the Oratory and the school was not granted to them. Contrary to all that had been agreed upon, the tuition

¹⁴ Cf. *BERTONIANO*, 1924, p. 167.

¹⁵ From the sale, 60000 florins were received: 20000 remained as the patrimony of the House, and 40000 were given to the House of the Stimmate as reimbursement for expenses encountered in the foundation of Trent. With this sum, property was purchased in Lazise, called the Donnatella.

¹⁶ cf. *BERTONIANO*, 1927, P. 80.

monies were taken over by Fr. Angelo Scatti, and also in the exercise of the ministry, the Fathers found hostility on the part of the local clergy.

In order to come to a decision, in December the Fathers presented to the Provost a document, in which they requested that there be granted to them the direction of the school and of the oratory, and that the 40000 Lira be set up as a trust fund, signed by the interested parties and by the Cardinal of Milan: that there would be ceded to them the legal ownership of the place, and that whatever would be need for construction, the 40000 lira should remain untouched. This would insure them of the maintenance of the teachers. There should also be ceded to them the administration of the tuition funds, with which they could then provide for the necessary expenses and to pay for a caretaker. And furthermore, there should be given to them a Church with the freedom to celebrate and to administer the sacraments. Since they were unable to obtain any of this, they received the order to depart even before the end of the scholastic year, despite the appeals and recommendations of the Cardinal Arch-Bishop, who counseled them to be patient, and promised that he would intervene in their maintenance.

In 1896, there arrived also a request from Brazil¹⁷. Bishop Gonzales of Porto Alegre, of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, also asked for the opening of a House of ours for the religious assistance for the 200,000 Italians who had migrated here to his city and Diocese. The name of our Congregation had been suggested by Fr. Dominic Vicentini who, when he left our Community in 1890 in order to follow his Missionary vocation, had entered the Pious Society of the Missionaries of St. Charles, founded in Piacenza in 1887, by Bishop J. B. Scalabrini, for the spiritual assistance of Italian emigrants. In departing for South America, Fr. Vicentini had promised to interest himself in obtaining a foundation for us in those regions. The request for a foundation was renewed in July of the following year by the Arch-Bishop in person, on the occasion of his visit to Italy. He went specifically to Verona to meet with the Superior General, and celebrated Mass at the Stimmate: after Mass, he spoke to the Community, inspiring all with the desire for that foundation. Also Fr. Vicentini wrote from Rio Grande, exhorting the Superiors to accept this offer¹⁸: but the personnel of the Congregation was too reduced to extend itself at this moment across the Ocean.

8. In the year 1896 in September, the XVth General Chapter convened in Rome, for the election of the General Councilors, who were elected for five years. And on this occasion, there was introduced an important innovation concerning the manner of electing delegates. Up to this time, the Capitulars would be: in addition to the Superior General, and the General Councilors – the Directors of the formed Houses [all Capitulars by right] – then, one Delegate for each of those elected by the House Chapters, and one delegate from each formed house, chosen in the same manner¹⁹.

¹⁷ Already in 1866, through Cardinal Louis di Canossa, the Inter-Nunzio of Brazil had presented a request for a House of ours in Cuiabá in the State of Mato Grosso, offering the direction and teaching in a Seminary.

¹⁸ Fr. Vicentini wrote again in 1898 proposing a foundation in Caxias.

¹⁹ To enjoy passive voice in these elections, it was necessary to be at least 35 years old. The Directors of the formed Houses who were not yet 35 years of age, would have active voice, but not passive voice.

As a result after the convocation of the General Chapter, the local House Chapters would meet to elect their Delegate and also to formulate their own proposals to be treated in the General Chapter.

During this year, though, the Delegates were elected by voting on a list. There was sent to all the Professed Priests a printed ballot with the names of all the Priests who had completed 35 years of age, and each elector had to underline as many names as there were Capitulars who attended by right of their office. Naturally, with the introduction of the new method, the local House Chapters were by-passed in preparation for the General Chapter, and this gave rise to no little dissatisfaction and disturbance. The General Chapter temporarily approved this method of election for the following General Chapter, which would then approve definitively the method to be used and to be inserted in our Constitutions.

The Chapter decided that one of the General Councilors should have the office of Procurator General, maintaining his residence in Rome: and elected the general Councilors, Frs. Tabarelli [Procurator General]; Morando [Monitor of Religious Discipline]; Marini [Administration] and Rosa. The Chapter took up the question also of the details necessary for the Process of the Founder's Beatification, and expressed the hope that this go forward as expeditiously as possible.

Fr. Tabarelli during this year was nominated an 'Ordinary' in Dogmatic Theology in the Roman Seminary, and Fr. Julius Zambiasi became an Associate in the *Arcadia*, with the responsibility of delivering in that circle scientific conferences.

In this same year, Fr. Tabarelli, on the occasion that the property of St. Nicholas dei Prefetti was inscribed in the name of the Confraternity of the Most Holy Crucified, stipulated with this group an agreement that was signed on June 9th. With this pact, the Confraternity granted to the Stigmatine Fathers the use of the Church and the adjoining residence. They did reserve some space as a garment area for the Members of the Confraternity and also for their Archives, and the right to celebrate in the Church and to pay its taxes and to sustain the expenses of ordinary maintenance. The could be rendered null and void by mutual accord in agreement with one of the parties, with the obligation of giving a six month period of grace.

9. In the following year of 1897, Cardinal Marchi offered to our Fathers the care of the Church of St. Jerome of Charity, where there were retained still so many memories of St. Philip Neri, who serve there for many years. But by now the number of the Churches under our care in the city of Rome, became excessive, and there simply was not the available personnel to keep them all going.

In 1896, because of the notable increase in our Studentate in Verona, the need was felt to lengthen the stay at Sezano. And construction go underway to add a new floor level. In this same year, Fr. Louis Fantozzi was accepted into the Novitiate, being a priest already now for two years. He pronounced his First Profession on October 28, of the following year, **1897**.

In this year, there was introduced an important novelty regarding the Novitiate. With the decision of the General Council, having heard the opinion of the Fathers who enjoyed Passive Voice for the General Chapter, and after having obtained the approval of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars], the Novitiate formation was reduced to one year. Following this, the custom would be to pronounce vows for three years, before making perpetual profession. From the obligation of this

triennial profession those Novices who within the year would have completed their second year of Novitiate were exempted. Admission to Perpetual Vows was reserved to the General Council.

Let us recall here furthermore than in October 1898 the Novitiate was transferred from Verona to Trent, and the Novice Master was Fr. Albano Clementi. He took the place of Fr. Paul Gradinati who held this office for many years. In Trent, that January of 1898, Fr. Andrew Sterza died. For some years, he had been retired, first at Verona in the House of St. Mary of the Lily, and more recently, in Trent.²⁰

In the year 1898, the House in Udine was opened. The negotiations for this foundation had begun in the preceding year, and were concluded in May of this year with the signing of an agreement, in which our Congregation committed itself to teach the elementary, high school and junior college grades, for the students of the College there, which was graced with the term, 'Archepiscopal'.²¹ To prepare for this foundation, Archbishop Peter Zamburlini named a Commission presided over by Monsignor Louis Pelizzo, Administrator of the Seminary. He had to provide the funds necessary for the building and the acquisition of the furnishings. A first rather considerable offer of 40000 was made by Sir Anthony Colussi: following the Circular from the Archbishop, there were obtained other offerings, and thus it was possible to purchase the land on which the College would rise.

A bit later, the Cernazai Palace went for sale, and the land with it, for a price of 120000 Lira. This included the Palace, with the building in front [the so-called, 'Stall of the Three Kings'], and the street in between. As the Palace needed much repair and renovation, for the first year the College opened on Via Ronchi, in a rented house. There were assigned there Frs. Angelo Simeone, who had the teaching degree. For the first year, the first high school class was offered, as well as a preparatory class. The internal students numbered 19: later on each year a new class would be added. In the following year, the College moved into the Cenazai Palace and Fr. Zandonai was sent there as Director, following his return from Rome.

At Parma in 1898, the 2nd and 3rd elementary classes were suppressed, and there were instituted the first three high school grades, also for the purpose of preparing vocations for the Episcopal Seminary. In the following year there was also opened a small Boarding House for young Students. The Bishop had made the request that there might be accepted into our House the students of the first three grades of the High School, whom he wanted to take out from the Seminary in the city. And our Fathers, with the consent of the Superiors, were disposed to accept them, but in the final analysis, the Bishop withdrew his proposal.²²

²⁰ In 1896, Frs. Bartholomew Perazzani and Mark Bassi died. In 1900, Fr. John Rigoni died in Verona.

²¹ In these years other Fathers had obtained the legal titles for teaching: in 1896, Fr. Edward Castellani received the doctorate; in 1898, also Frs. Zanetti and Balestrazzi. In the same year, Frs. A. Dalla Porta, Zanotelli and Fiorio obtained the Licentiate with the authorization to the lower high school grades.

²² Later, in 1904, with a view to the difficulties in which the Seminary found itself, in order to maintain the dependency of Berceto, our Fathers offered to accept the Minor seminarians, but the Bishop declined the offer.

At St. James', our Fathers instituted the Sunday Recreation Center for the young boys, and initiated renovations to the court yard and opened up a small theater. With offerings that had been collected, they repaired the Church, dedicating it to the Holy family with the intention of opening it for the public. However, the new Ordinary, His Excellency, Bishop Magagni, for a long time, denied them permission. It seemed when a misunderstanding arose between himself and Monsignor Tonarelli, because of the Ortalli funds²³, the Bishop isolated those Religious Institutes favorable to Monsignor Tonarelli, and among these, were the Stigmatine Fathers.²⁴ Finally, in October 1899, the Bishop granted permission to open to the public the Church which up until then had been officiated solely as a Boarding House chapel. It was blessed, by an Episcopal delegate, the Vicar General of the Diocese, Monsignor Guido Conforti, on October 31. Then, they began to use it for the boys' Oratory, while one for the girls was conducted in the Church of the Quarter.²⁵

10. In 1898, there was initiated in Verona the Ordinary Process for the Cause of Beatification for the Founder. Fr. Marini, named Postulator, after having completed the required steps, obtained the constitution of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, that assembled for the first time on December 30, 1897. The sessions for the discussion of the texts were held from May 29, 1898 through January 26, 1899. In March of that year, there was conducted the recognition of the body. On the 13, the grave was opened and the body exhumed, which had markedly deteriorated due to the humidity of the place that had penetrated the box. It was exposed in a room on the upper floor and then was sealed. It was reexamined on March 22, April 20 and on May 15. And finally, on the 18 of that same month, It was placed in a new box, placed in the Chapel of the Holy Face, sealed in the wall on the Epistle side, on which the following inscription:

The Remains of the Servant of God,
Gaspar Bertoni, Priest,
Founder and Law-giver
of the Sodality of the Priests of the Stigmata.

The process was closed on August 21, and brought to Rome to hand the proceedings over to the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Fr. Tabarelli was named Postulator of the Cause.

The most authoritative witness of the Process, due to the great relationship that he had had with the Servant of God, was Fr. Cajetan Giacobbe, who himself would

²³ Mr. Matthias Ortalli had left in his will a conspicuous estate to Bishop Mitotti, Ordinary of Parma, to be employed in the development of Catholic Works. And Bishop Miotti, feeling poorly in health, left it all to one Monsignore, Canon and Professor, Tonarelli. The new Bishop, Magagni, as soon as he was installed, asked to be put in possession of this inheritance, which he considered to belong to the Diocese, and Monsignor Tonarelli refused: this was the origin of the controversy.

²⁴ In an appointment granted to Fr. Piccoli in September 1899, the Bishop said that he would bend to our Fathers' will, whenever they would make amends by an official act and of adherence to him, leaving Monsignor Tonarelli to his destiny...'

²⁵ The Bishop went for the first time to visit the Church and the House of St. James, on October 29, 1900.

die on New Year's Eve 1898. On this occasion, Cardinal di Canossa offered to the Congregation the Parish of the Most Holy Trinity, which was not accepted, due to the lack of personnel²⁶.

11. In 1899, in Rome the direction of the Portuguese College was accepted. In an initial meeting, held at the Hotel of Rome near the Viscounts of S. Joã de Pasqueira on April 28, 1898, in which Frs. Pio Gurisatti and Richard Tabarelli took part, the basis for an agreement was reached: and in a second meeting, held on May 6, at the home of Sir Anthony Bras, the contract of agreement was drawn up.²⁷ With the economic support for College promised on the part of the Viscounts de Pasqueira, the direction of the College was accepted by Fr. Tabarelli, in February 1899. the College was opened in November of that year in a building on Via Borghese, with 9 students, of whom three were Priests. Frs. Louis Morando and Joseph Chesani were assigned there: however, after three months, they withdrew from the direction of the College, which was assumed then temporarily by Monsignor Jose' de Oliveira Machado, Rector of St. Anthony of the Portuguese, and then later by Dr. Tiago Sinibaldi, of the Seminary of Coimbra²⁸.

In the same year, there was also accepted a foundation in Lisbon. Already on July 17, 1896, Monsignor Giovanini, Secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature of that city, had written to ask for a foundation of ours, that would have the purpose of taking care of the Church of the Italian colony there, and to offer religious assistance to those emigrants. On the occasion, the Monsignor visited Italy and was charged officially to deal with this matter, and he had spoken in Rome with Fr. Tabarelli. For the most part, agreement on this offer had been reached, but the final decision was not made. Having returned to Lisbon, the Monsignor discovered that the Italian colony had already drawn up an agreement with a priest already there. Some members of the Committee opposed the granting of a Church to a Religious Community, in fear that eventually, with the passing of time, it would lose its independence. As a result, the negotiations were suspended.

Later, Count Albert Gervais was succeeded as Minister of Italy by the Marquis Spinola, and Fr. Fantozzi wrote to him on February 17, 1897, notifying him that the Stigmatine Fathers were disposed to accept the offer that had been made. After nearly two years, on January 30 1899, the Minister responded asking whether the Superiors still had their dispositions regarding this matter. And when he received an affirmative response, on Marcy 28 he wrote again, presenting a formal request, and indicating the conditions of the foundation. In addition to taking care of the Church, the Fathers would, as soon as possible have to open an elementary school for Italian children. The Superior General, after having requested and received some clarifications from the Minister [who in one of his visits to Italy met in Rome also with Fr. Tabarelli and with Fr. Vivari], on July 11, 1899, accepted the foundation. Frs.

²⁶ During the vacancy of the Parish, the Cardinal di Canossa, with Decree of November 30, 1899, declared the House of the Stimmate, and he other Houses situated in the Diocese, to be exempt from parochial jurisdiction.

²⁷ *Osservatore Romano*, July 19, 1941.

²⁸ In October 1900, the College was transferred to the Senni Palazzo, given by Leo XIII *Osservatore Romano*, ib.

Melchiade Vivari and Pio Gabos, with Brother Cesare Bonfanti were chosen to go there. They left Rome on November 14, and arrived in Lisbon on the 26, and were welcomed with very festive celebrations, and with a representation of the Italian Government, as also by the Nunzio, the Patriarch and the Salesian Fathers. The Church of the colony was one of the most beautiful and most frequented in the city. Our Confreres made it become one of the better served as well, so much so, that there came to it also numerous of the Portuguese faithful. In brief, they acquired the genuine appreciation of the Italians living there, and the families seemed to be in some competition to present gifts to them, and showed how much they wanted them to be there.

12. In 1899, there was also opened a foundation in Gemona, in the region of Friuli. Mrs. Giacomina Simonetti, nee Guicciardi, with a notary act of intent to sell, on June 13, 1899, ceded her property of the Guicciardi Palace to the Congregation in the person of Fr. James Marini. The Congregation assumed the obligation to conduct the Sunday Oratory for the young men of the area. From the beginning this challenge was assumed by the Community of Udine, which every week on Saturday evening, sent two Priests for this purpose to Gemona, who would then return to Udine on Sunday evening. This went on until October 1903, when the House of Gemona was opened. The Guicciardi Palace in the summer season served also as a vacation house for the College of Udine. Furthermore in Udine at this time there was opened a Sunday Recreation center in St. George's Parish, and its first Director, was Fr. Angelo Simeoni.

In 1900 in Verona, it was necessary to close temporarily the Church of the most Holy Trinity, because of the urgent need of repairs. For a while, therefore, St. Teresa's served as the Parish Church. And in the Church of the Stimate, Fr. Bertapelle established the Pious Union of the Perpetual Way of the Cross, aggregating it to the primary seat, at Ara Coeli in Rome. On this occasion, he sent a Circular Letter to the Bishops, and received approval and encouragement for his initiative, these coming from various Cardinals and many Bishops of Upper Italy.²⁹

In Verona, also in 1900, that part of the Process of the Founder's Beatification was held to establish that there had been *no public worship* rendered to him. On December 26, 1899, Fr. Marini was named Vice Postulator. The Process was begun on May 10, and the examination of the texts was conducted from May 25 until June 25. The Tribunal emitted its decision that in deed there was every evidence that there had been *no public worship* toward the Founder. After this, the Process was forwarded to Rome. The Bishop of Verona by then, was His Excellency, Bartholomew Bacilieri, who had succeeded Cardinal di Canossa, who died that same year, 1900. Meanwhile, in Rome, the *Ponente* of the Cause was Cardinal Louis Tripepi, the Pro-Prefect of the Congregation of Rites, And The Postulator Was Fr. Louis Morando, who had to be occupied with the practices required in order to obtain the Introduction of the Cause.

²⁹ We also record here that in 1902, the Church of the Stimate was endowed with work of the Painter, Charles Donati, a former member of the Oratory at the Stimate.

13. In 1901, the Church in Lisbon was closed. The two Priests who had established it, found it difficult to get along with each other, due to the diversity of their characters. The Superior General, after repeated and useless recommendations, in 1900, came to the determination to recall Fr. Pio Gabos to Italy, and to send in his place, Fr. Nicholas Tomasi. However, the Italian colony there, and especially the Committee, were opposed to the departure of Fr. Gabos. The Minister in one of his visits to Italy, treated of this matter with Fr. Tabarelli and reached an accord that he would intervene. Having returned to Lisbon, the Minister sought to straighten the matter out, and he was able to see the two Fathers agree to settle their differences.³⁰ Meanwhile a Civil revolution broke out there in April 1901, and a Decree was emanated against all Religious Corporations. The Superior General took this opportunity to recall the Fathers from Lisbon, to great regret of all the Italian Colony there, and they understood this decision in connection with the recall the year before of Fr. Pio which was impeded. At the moment of the Fathers' departure, the populace offered a great demonstration of the esteem and sympathy that they nourished for them.

To put it more exactly, there was also a further reason to have difficulties with the representatives of that Colony in Lisbon. In the original agreement they had committed themselves to giving the Stigmatine Fathers 80 units of Portuguese money of that time: then, they found that what the representatives 'really meant' was that this sum was tied in with the Masses the Priests were supposed to offer regularly, or that they were to hand these stipends on to someone else, if they could not satisfy the obligation to offer them. Therefore, the Priests could not use this money until the Masses were offered. The Superiors of the Congregation lamented this misunderstanding with the minister, and he on December 26, 1900, promised he would straighten the matter out: but there is no evidence that full concord was reached on the matter.

In September of 1901, there was held the XVIth General Chapter in which Fr. Pio Gurisatti was re-elected, and the Councilors were: Frs. Louis Morando [Monitor], Piccoli [Administration], J. B. Tomasi, and Paul Gradinati. the Procurator would be Fr. Tabarelli. For the election of the Capitulars there was established the method that had been in use for the last two General Chapters: i.e., to elect by a ballot with a list as many Capitulars as would attend by right of office [the Superior General and His Councilors; the Directors of the formed Houses]. The Chapter deliberated furthermore that to meet the general expenses, and especially those of the student house, all the Priests of the Congregation should apply each month 10 Masses for the General Curia. The Superior General with his Council could dispense from this obligation those Houses which could not sustain this burden.

At Udine, the College was prospering and there was felt the need of expanding the building. Already in 1900, the Archbishop's Commission had had put up a construction on the inside of the interior court yard. However, this still was not enough. So, as they did not feel that they could assume further expenses, and be weighed down by other debts. The Congregation in 1902 offered to re-discuss the matter assuming the economic responsibility. The Confreres accepted as their property the building as they found it, and committed themselves to bring it to completion at their

³⁰ In 1900, Fr. Vivari had come to Italy to accompany a Pilgrimage of Italians to Rome for the Holy Year.

own expense, and to continue the work according to the end and spirit of its founders, leaving to the Commission the obligation to take care of the debts already contracted [about 120,000 Liras]. In that same year, there was begun and completed the second part of the interior construction that boarded the court yard³¹.

14. In the same year 1902, we find in Verona a very sad happening: the close of the School of the Stimmate, that occurred at the end of this scholastic year. This came as the result of the refusal on the part of the Ministry of Public Instruction to recognize the titles of teaching for eleven of our men: nine from the high school level, and two from the elementary school. This was simply because they were of Trentine origin, and therefore lacking Italian citizenship. Already in 1897 the Regional Superintendent of Studies in Verona had refused for this reason two of our teachers, and they had recourse to the Ministry, who decided in their favor, declaring that Italian citizenship, in the strength of the Casati law, was required only for the head of the scholastic institution. Now, though, the authorities governing instruction, following the orders they received from the Minister, refused to approve those teachers deprived of this citizenship. For this reason, the General Council found itself in the necessity of closing the schools, giving the families a notification of this through the local newspapers. The disappointment that our Confreres experienced as well as the families of our students was quite deep. The School of the Stimmate enjoyed an excellent reputation for the education imparted to the local youth. On the other hand, it was not possible to continue them because since they were tuition-free, the Congregation did not feel that it was in a position to hire and pay extern teachers.

In giving the notification of this to the populace, the promise was made to do all that was possible to re-open the classes as soon as the conditions would allow: in the meantime, efforts got underway to being the negotiations for these citizens of the Trentine area to obtain Italian citizenship. With the classes discontinued, the rooms available, much thought was given to give new life to the Recreation center, which had been suspended in 1899, for lack of space.

In Parma, too, there were repercussions from this hostile stance on the part of the scholastic authorities: on March 7 of the same year, the Superintendent for Studies in that city also ordered our Fathers to discontinue the school, also because some of those teachers were lacking Italian citizenship. The process to obtain such citizenship were begun, along with the recourse being submitted to the Minister to have the authorization to continue the classes, and this permission was granted.

Meanwhile for two years at Parma there had been accepted boarding students opening up a small locale to house them. In 1902 renovations got underway to make some additions in order to accept a greater number of boarders. At the same time, the Fathers were very engaged in other works of the ministry: in the Church that was put up a new painting, representing the Holy Family, the work of the Painter, Joseph Zannoni. On the first of February, also in Parma, Fr. Fantozzi assumed the office of Chaplain for the Reformatory, or House of Correction at Certosa. However, very soon

³¹ In this year, there was sent to Udine as Vice Rector, Fr. Dominic Pittioni, who had entered the Congregation in 1900, and had completed his Novitiate, and pronounced First Vows in 1901. He had been for many years a teacher, and then Spiritual Director of the Seminary of Udine, and recently had been named a Canon of the College of Cividale.

there was very little he was able to do, due to the limitations imposed by the Director, who would not allow any religious practices. Therefore, after trying for several months, Fr. Fantozzi retired from that endeavor.

Fr. Vivari, meanwhile on the request of Bishop Guido Conforti, accepted the office of Spiritual Director for the Seminary for Foreign Missions that he had founded, thus strengthening the spiritual bonds that have united our Confreres with that religious institute.

15. In November of 1902, a House was opened in Fabriano in Umbria. For some time, Monsignor John Zonghi of the Vatican Secretariat of State, had insisted that we open some foundation there. In this year, following the closure of the school at the Stimmate, there remained some personnel available, and the request was accepted. Frs. Gasperotti, Albino Sella and Erminio Lona were assigned there. They were called upon to assume the direction and the instruction in the Institute named for one 'B. Francis Venimbeni', with elementary classes, and an adjoining residence, as well as the direction of a Sunday recreation center. In recompense, they would receive 1600 Lira each month. The agreement was signed on the 15 and 26 of October. For the financial part, a Commission had been elected by a 'Society for Reciprocal Charity' that was supposed to provide for the necessary conducting of the work. In time, this gave way to giving our Fathers this Administration. The Commission, however, either through neglected, or the impossibility of the situation, was not able to give what it had promised: so, at the end of that scholastic year, our Fathers received the order to withdraw.

In 1902 there was also a request of a foundation in Sacco in the Trentine, for the purpose of assuming the direction of a college of students for the teaching profession that had been established there, but this request was not accepted.

On January 1, a House was opened in Piacenza. The request for this foundation had been advanced by the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who offered the administration of the Church of St. Vincent and the use of the adjoining house. There was included in the agreement the spiritual assistance of their own community as well as that of their students, and with the commitment to open in time, whenever this would be possible a high school with tuition. The pact was signed on November 28, 1902.

To our Confreres was also entrusted the direction of the 'Casella Circle', instituted for young students of the Middle level, who would gather there each evening for purposes of study and recreation: there were more than 80 such young boys who frequented it. For this purpose there was granted to our men a house that had been left by a Monsignor Gerard Casella for the use of the Circle, and another locale under construction and to pay off a debt of 8000 Lira that weighed on the enterprise. Very soon in their direction of the Circle our Fathers found that they were in difficulty with segments of the local Clergy. As a result, in February of the following year, they had to give up the direction of this undertaking. And in exchange, they took on the direction of the St. Tarcisio Recreation Center.

Already in 1890, Monsignor Camillo Mangot, Secretary of Bishop J. B. Scalabrini, had acquired a building called the 'Temple', in order to open there a Recreation Center. But at the very beginning, they did not have sufficient personnel: therefore, the property was given in use, with the consent of our Fathers, to the

'Workers Circle of St. Anthony', which used the place for their meetings, and at the same time, would want to be in use as a Recreation Center. However, in reality, no one was taking care of this aspect of the operation: therefore, due to the regrets expressed by Monsignor Mangot and the Bishop, the direction of the Workers Circle invited the Stigmatine Fathers to take over the responsibility of the Recreation Center. Our men accepted the offer and they drew up with the Circle of St. Anthony' an agreement concerning the use of the building for the two endeavors, Under the direction of our men, the Recreation Center truly began to flourish.³² Fr. Bertapelle obtained for the Center from the Brothers the use of the stage and of a court yard, and initiated improvements in the building and opened a little theater there. Monsignor Mangot, to show his appreciation, and to better insure the stability of the work, in 1906 granted to one of the Fathers the legal ownership of the building. In the same year 1906, Fr. Bertapelle started at Piacenza and Boarding house for students.³³

16. In Udine, on January 6, 1903, Fr. Zandonai, while celebrating Mass for the students, suffered a partial stroke, from which he did recover somewhat, but not in a way that he could take up again his duties as Director of the College. At the end of that scholastic year, he was transferred to Verona and Fr. Gasperotti took his place³⁴. In the same year they began to accept at Udine into the College students who frequented public school. Here, too, were experienced the effects of the struggle with the public schools: the students of the College who presented themselves then to the public schools in order to undergo the examinations for the licentiate, had to undergo certain restrictive measures. For this reason, families were not all that willing to have their children enrolled in private schools. This was the reason why at the end of the scholastic year of 1903-1904, the internal high school was closed, retaining only the elementary grades: and thus will the boarders of the middle school were sent to the public schools.

³² In 1904, a representation of the Oratory took part in a National Congress of the Catholic Youth of in Rome, with a flag donated to the Holy Father. He received them solemnly in the Vatican, and personally decorated the flag with his insignia.

³³ In 1903 there was offered to our Fathers the direction of the Seminary of St. Charles, founded by Bishop J. B. Scalabrini, which was not accepted. And since Bishop Scalabrini died in this time, Fr. Dominic Vicentini became the Superior General of the Missionaries of St. Charles.

³⁴ Fr. Zandonai died in Verona on August 22, 1904, following another stroke. In the course of the year, he had taught Church History to the theology students. On April 14 of that same year, Fr. Joseph Chesani also died in Verona. He had just finished and sent out to be printed his work on the First Canticle of the *Divine Comedy*, by Dante Alighieri.

In the year 1803, school got underway also in Milano ³⁵. In December of the preceding year, Attorney Sampietro, President of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, after having spoken to the Cardinal Archbishop, turned to our Congregation seeking three Priests for the direction of the Workers residence that the Society had begun in Milano, on Via Benvenuto Cellini. There had been begun in that place a Sunday Oratory and the thought was then to open a Rooming House for young workers, and also a Course of evening classes. Our Fathers were to take on the direction of these works. In the first days of March, the Cardinal spoke in Rome with the Superior General and agreement was reached that the House would be opened at the end of that scholastic year. However, during the Easter Season, Fr. Antonioli, Director of the House of Pavia, had begun his Work, and came to Milan for Sunday and Feast Days. In August, there were sent there in a stable manner, Fr. Antonioli and Fr. Albino Sella, and latter, Fr. Emilio Baretella was added.

In October, the House of Gemona opened. The request had come from Fr. Anthony Sbaiz, Vicar Substitute of Monsignor Forgiarini, Arch Priest of Gemona: the scope of the foundation was to assume the direction of the Sunday Oratory, the Youth Group and the eventual undertakings connected with this: to open a little College with internal high school classes and to give whatever assistance in the ministry that might be permitted from the requirements of the Institute there, and from the circumstances of the foundation. The actual seat of the foundation was the Guicciardi Palace of which we have already spoken. Frs. Pio Gabos and Erminio Lona were assigned there; another Priest would come from Udine to help out on Sundays.

Also in Trent there was experienced the need to further the development of youth work. Therefore, in 1904, there was initiated the construction of a theater, which was inaugurated in May of 1905. There, too in 1903, the local Ordinary died, Bishop Eugene Valussi. The Cathedral Chapter, as was the custom, submitted to the Holy See, the names to be ponder in the election of his successor and one of these ³⁶names was our Fr. Richard Tabarelli.

In Rome following the death of Pope Leo XIII [in July of 1903], our men withdrew from the Church of the Stigmata [in Largo Argentina], as they were unable to find agreement with the local Confraternity who wished to impose their will on the

³⁵ These foundations could get underway because in these recent years many of your young candidates were promoted to the Priesthood:

in 1895, Frs. Joseph Nardon, Pio Gabos, Emilio Baretella were ordained;

in 1897, Erminio Pivato, Edward Casettani, Albino Sella;

in 1899, Angelo Simeoni, Anthony Dalla Porta, Joseph Fiorio, John Lona;

in 1900, George Zanghellini, Emanuel Zanotella;

in 1901, Richard Zambiasi;

in 1902, Paul Sozzi, Leo Sella, Erminio Lona;

in 1903, Dominic Rossi, Joserph Tondin, Francis Pedrotti;

in 1904, Alexander Grigolli, Ferruccio Zanetti and Augusto Fieramonte.

In 1901, Julius Zanini had also re-entered the Congregation, and made his novitiate and profession.

³⁶ In the end, Bishop Celestine Endrici was named, who in 1941, was succeeded by another Stigmatine, Archbishop Charles DeFerrari.

actual running of the Church. From the year 1898, there had remained there only Fr. Pizzighella, and Brother Andrew Adami. In Rome also, Fr. Julius Zambiasi began publishing the results of his scientific research on the nature of sound, and his efforts were enthusiastically received in the scientific world. And Fr. Tabarelli in the solemn Assembly of the Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, presented one of his important theological conferences³⁷.

17. In Verona during this same year, Fr. Joseph Marchesini died. With a legal document, dated February 1, 1900, had had disposed of his substantial estate in favor of Fr. Stephen Rosa. With a deed signed February 20, 1902, notarized by the Hon. Burzio, had sold part of this inheritance to Frs. Stephen Rosa and Victor Gurisatti, for 120000 Lira. This will was published by the Notary Burzio on May 20, 1903 and Fr. Rosa became sole heir. However, on May 23, Hon. Louis Marchesini, nephew of the deceased, cited Fr. Rosa before the Pretor of the First Instance of Verona, to make himself the rightful heir of the deceased, Fr. Marchesini, in the strength of a Document he had, dated August 1, 1901, and on the strength of a letter of July 15, 1902, that he wanted to put forward as the real Last Will and testament of Fr. Marchesini. Fr Rosa contested the writing on both documents, and other papers that were found in a sealed box, presented by Sir Marchesini, and opened on May 29, 1903, in the presence of the Notary Ghirardini of Tregnago. The Pretor, with his Decree of the 10, 12 of June 1903, rejected the motion brought forward by Sir Marchesini. He appealed against that sentence before the Civil Tribunal of Verona. This litigation went on for several years, and we will see it ahead.

In 1904, there was begun in Verona the Workers Boarding House, with which the Congregation sought to meet the needs of these young men, by opening for them a trade school. Renovations got underway to prepare the place for this undertaking, the theater was enlarged and embellished, and on December 18, there was a solemn inauguration of the work by Cardinal Bacilieri, with the City Prefect in attendance, the Mayor and other civil and military authorities. After Fr. Gurisatti's discourse as Superior General, Monsignor Joseph Manzini spoke, and in the end, so did Cardinal Bacilieri, emphasizing the foresight in this work, and the great good that he hoped would accrue from it.³⁸

From that first year, there were also opened night classes on design, with more than 100 students, elementary culture and the French language. There were also instituted weekly religious conferences, which would draw between 200 and 250 young men. In this manner, our Confreres continued the work of education which had been such an important part of the Congregation's program. Here it took another form and that great good that had been achieved through high school teaching.

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³⁷ Cf. *BERTONIANO*, 1927, pp. 25, 85, 176; 1928, p.237.

³⁸ The text of the Superior General's talk on this occasion might be found in the *BERTONIANO*, 1923, p. 114.

Chapter 2

ACROSS THE SEAS

[1905-1914]

18. Already for some time, there had been felt throughout the ranks the desire to establish some foundation outside of Italy, and in particular, in South and North America. To keep this dream alive, the hope to open a House in South America had been fanned into flame by an invitation extended by the Bishop of Rio Grande do Sul, earlier by means of a letter in 1896. Then, he came in person the following year, as we have already seen. To attempt a foundation in North America, Fr. Lodovico Lucchi insisted greatly, as he had been in communication by letter with a colony of Trentine residents living in the State of Pennsylvania [PA]. In 1904, he presented his request to the General Council, to have permission to go with a companion to North America, to attempt a foundation in Scranton PA, but his request was turned down. He did not lose courage at this, but continued his epistolary contacts with that colony: he even wrote to the Bishop of that city, with the intention of provoking an invitation from his part.

In the following year, he renewed his request and the General Council in its meeting of August 17, granted him the permission, to depart with Fr. Anthony Dalla Porta, in order to undertaking an exploratory visit in that region. The Fathers left Trent on September 26, through Basel, Switzerland, Paris and embarked at the Port of LeHavre, on October 2. On October 8, they arrived in Hazleton PA, and were joyfully and enthusiastically welcomed by the Trentine colony. On October 13, they went to Scranton, and presented themselves to the Bishop, who received them with great cordiality. He gave them all the necessary faculties to exercise the priestly ministry for the good of the Italian emigrants, and to acquire a piece of property and to construct a church.

At the beginning, they started to use for the Italians the Lithuanian Church, who were also disposed to sell it, and to build a new one for themselves. The initial idea of our Fathers was to purchase that Church for the Trentine colony, and they addressed an appeal to all the Trentines spread throughout the United States, to gathering funds. But then, following the suggestion of the Bishop, they came to the decision to buy a piece of property with a house and a bit of land, and on this they would build the Church.

In 1906, Fr. Lucchi began the construction, and in the summer months, the basement was inaugurated.

Fr. Dalla Porta, however, acting on Fr. Tabarelli's suggestion, who had already spoken in Rome to the Bishop of Springfield, Massachusetts [MA], and who knew a number of priests in that city as they had been his students in the Roman Seminary³⁹, in May, made his way to Springfield. He reached an agreement to open a House there and to dedicate himself to the spiritual assistance of the Italians. He established

³⁹ Among these, was a Fr. Kelley, who was taking care of the Italian emigrants in the basement of the Springfield Cathedral. cf. The Parish Commemorative Edition of Springfield, 1932.

himself thereon July 26, taking a room with the priests of the Cathedral, and taking care of the Italian faithful in the Cathedral basement itself.⁴⁰

19. In August of 1905, in Rome there was received from the Sacred Congregation of Rites, the Decree of Approbation of the Founder's writings.⁴¹ The next step was to prepare the *Positio* for the Introduction of the Cause, and to request Letters of Postulation from the Cardinals, Bishops, Superiors General of Religious Orders, and other personalities to present these to the Holy See⁴². The Postulator of the Cause was Fr. Louis Morando, who in December of that same year was named to be the Arch-Bishop of Brindisi, and on January 7, 1906, he was consecrated in Rome by Cardinal Peter Respighi, the Vicar General of His Holiness. Following this, he went to Verona where on January 23, he pontificated in the Church of the Stimate. On March 25, he made his solemn entrance into Brindisi, and on April 1, to Ostuni as well, where he had been appointed Apostolic Administrator.

In Rome Fr. Cajetan Pizzighella succeeded him as Rector of the Church of the Miracles, and he was also named Postulator of the Cause of Beatification, and Fr. Richard Tabarelli succeeded him as a General Councilor. Already in the Ordinary Congregation of the Sacred Rites, on February 26, with Cardinal Louis Tripepi, Pro-Prefect of the same Congregation, as *Ponente* of the Cause, there had been proposed and favorably resolved this doubt: whether there should be sign off on the Commission for the Introduction of the Cause, and on March 2, the Holy Father, Pius X, ratified and confirmed the vote of the Sacred Congregation. As a consequence of this step, according to the norms that in vogue, Fr. Bertoni could be considered under the title of 'Venerable'.⁴³

In May of the same year 1906, the Superior General, Fr. Pio Gurisatti, in his Circular Letter addressed to the entire Congregation, resigned his office, and convoked the XVII General Chapter for the election of his successor. The Chapter gathered in the House of the Stimate on September 18, and during it, Fr. Gurisatti withdrew his resignation. The following were elected General Councilors: Frs. Tabarelli [Vicar and Procurator]; J. B. Tomasi, Julius Zambiasi [for the Economy], Balestrazzi. The Chapter approved some modifications to be brought into the Constitutions: the reduction of the Superior General's term and that of the General Councilors, to six years; there was confirmed definitively for the election of Capitulars, the method employed in the last General Chapters; there were modified also some points of the Constitutions, to bring them into conformity with the *Norms* of the Sacred

⁴⁰ cf. *BERTONIANO*, Special Edition, 1924, p. 50.

⁴¹ Cf. *ib.*, 1927, p. 176.

⁴² Letters were received from Cardinals Bacilieri, Cassetta, Ferrari, from the Patriarch of Venice – and from the Bishops of Parma, Bergamo, Ceneda, Lyons, from the Vicar General of Rome. Letters also came from the Dominican, Capuchin, Conventual Generals. From the Mothers Superior of the Canossians, the Pastors of the Cathedral, of Sts. Firmus in Verona, from the Superiors of the Episcopal Seminary, and from Counts Cartolari, Ravignani and Guarenti.

⁴³ On this occasion, the inscription on the tomb of the Founder was modified in this manner: The remains – of the Venerable Servant of God – Gaspar Bertoni, Priest
...

Congregation of Bishops and Regulars had published in 1901, as it was the thought of the Superiors to present as soon as possible these Constitutions to the Holy See for their formal approbation. For this purpose, a Commission was formed that had the responsibility of drawing up the text.⁴⁴ Furthermore, in the Chapter it was also decided to transfer the Residence of the Superior General to Rome⁴⁵, and in November, he did transfer to Rome, taking over a room in the Church of St. Mary of the Miracles, together with Frs. Pizzighella and Balestrazzi⁴⁶.

20. In Milan, Fr. Antonioli, in March of 1905, had purchased a good sized tract of land, that could sustain a building, in the 'Acquabella' section of the city, outside of the Porta Montforte. He had begun to build there a dwelling with the thought of opening there a Rooming House for Students and workers: for this purpose, he sent out a Circular Letter to advertise the endeavor. The General Council, which at first showed little interest, as it did not want to assume the responsibility for it, later on, after speaking with Fr. Antonioli and hearing his own account of the work and his plans to open in that area a popular Institute, authorized him to go ahead with the construction. He was authorized to proceed with the building, but within the limits which were judged by the Superior General to be necessary. He was authorized also to receive loans, promising to be of financial help to him. Fr. Antonioli however, dedicated himself to liquidating the debts contracted with the sale of a part of the land, just as soon the price of it would consent to receive a good return on his investments⁴⁷.

Having terminated the construction, at the beginning of 1907, our Fathers moved to Via Benvenuto Cellini, in the Acquabella section: and they acquired a large pavilion, which had served for the International Exposition of the year before, and they made this over to serve as a Church, which was then blessed by Cardinal Andrew Ferrari on February 2, dedicating it to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. In this time the

⁴⁴ Since there had been re-ordered the Roman Congregations in accord with the Apostolic Constitution, *Consilio Sapienti*, dated June 29, 1908, the General Council decided to put off the work of revision, in the expectancy that the Sacred Congregation of Religious would establish the Norms according to which this work could be completed.

⁴⁵ Fr. Gurisatti had written to the Holy Father, Pope Pius X, asking him if he would allow this moving of the General Curia. The Holy Father responded through his own Chaplain, Monsignor Francis Gasoni, on November 16, that he not only permitted this, but that he was quite happy that the General Curia would be established in Rome.

⁴⁶ In this year, Fr. Balestrazzi received the invitation to assume teaching Church History in the Roman Seminary, but he did not choose to accept.

⁴⁷ The contract of purchase was stipulate on March 17, 1905: the expense was 140,050 Lira – plus another nearly 9,000 for the contract. The construction got underway on August 18, and the expense was 150,000 Lira. There was also need of a loan for the furnishings, of another 75,000 lira: there was in full, a loan for 137,000 lira. All the rest was given by the Congregation, which for some years also paid the interests on these debts.

Rooming House was also opened, and 16 men were boarded there, almost all students⁴⁸.

In 1905, also in Udine a bit of land was purchased near the College, part of which was used as a garden for the College, and a part was made into a court yard for the Sunday Recreation Center, directed by our Fathers. In 1900, they had taken over the direction of the Parish Recreation Center of St. George's. That Oratory later on had shown enormous development, and to obtain even greater results our men opened it up to the entire city, re-naming it the Sunday Recreation Center of Udine. In order to be better able to direct and cultivate this, they transferred it then to a locality closer to the College, making use of the Parish Church of the most Holy redeemer for religious services. There, in these years,, they constructed the theater, and acquired for it a passage way which from Via Tiberio Deciani gave access to the Recreation Center- and another passage way that placed the College in connection with the Recreation Center.

In 1906, still in Udine, Fr. Pittioni was named Director of the College, while the Director of the House was Fr. Piccoli. He was able to procure the services of the Handmaids of Charity to take care of the kitchen and laundry. In this same year, he obtained from the Archbishop the care of the Church of St. Peter the Martyr, which up until them had been cared for by Monsignor Valentine Liva, who that year was transferred to a place in Cividale.⁴⁹

21. In Verona, Fr. Louis Fantozzi greatly developed the enterprise of the Workers Boarding House, and continued the adaptation of the buildings: he re-organized the interior court yard and decorated it with a statue of the Immaculate Mother, the work of the sculptor, Ugo Zannoni, placed in an appropriate niche in the wall of the House of the Stimmate. This was inaugurated on the Feast of St. Aloysius in 1905.

To further the development this Workers Rooming House, without in any way invading the space of the Student House, in 1906, he thought of acquiring the Menegazzoli Palace, looking out on Piazza Cittadella, with the intention of placing there the Professed Students and the Aspirants, thus leaving St. Teresa's free for his Workers Boarding House. In fact, he did buy it, at a price of 117000 Lira, but then the General Council decided to transfer the Professed Students to the House of St. Mary of the Lily.⁵⁰ The theology students were sent for class to the Diocesan Seminary. Those in Philosophy for still another year were taught by our men, but for the

⁴⁸ On January 20, 1908, later in that foggy night, there was a terrible train accident at the Acquabella junction, near our House. The Fathers of Acquabella was the first to arrive on the scene, to impart absolution to the dying and assistance to the injured, some of whom were carried to a room in our House.

⁴⁹ Already for some years, our Fathers had given Monsignor Liva a hand in the care of St. Peter's Church.

⁵⁰ There remained at the Stimmate the aspirants of the upper high school level. In the following year, the Superior General forbade for three years the acceptance of any new Aspirants, but authorized Fr. Pio Gabos to accept them in Gemona, where he had functioning the entire high school curriculum. There was also being conducted there a little College of boys who frequented our internal high school classes and the Commune elementary classes. In 1908, Fr. Pio Gabos built at Gemona the theater for the Oratory, which cost 7000 Lira.

following school year 1907-1908, they, too, began to frequent classes at the Seminary. So, the Menegazzoli Palace remained empty, and in 1907, it was re-sold to the Serghetti Institute, who wanted to join with the Daughters of the Sacred Heart, and they sought a building where they could open a Religious House.

In 1907, the General Council authorized the Workers Boarding House to build a gymnasium⁵¹ and a school of music along the Vicolo Teresa, on the condition that there would be avoided any interference or block the passage way through St. Teresa's garden.⁵² Furthermore renovations and the embellishment of the St. Teresa's Church were permitted, which was then set aside for the use of the workers of the Boarding House.

At Parma, too, a real development was given to the youth work: in 1906, the theater of the Oratory was increased, and there were organized in the 'D. M. Villa Group' religious conferences to prepare the young men for the life of the apostolate. On December 12, 1907, in that city, Bishop Francis Magani died and he was succeeded by Bishop Guido Conforti, who had such benevolence toward our men. He recommended to them above all, the work of the Oratory for the youth, both boys and girls, and promised to help out in the necessary expenses with an annual offering. At the same time, our Fathers, while continuing to teach the internal classes of the lower high school level, began to accept into the boarding house also students from the Technical School who were sent to the public schools: until 1908, when they closed the internal school, keeping only the Boarding House for the students who were then all sent to the public schools.

22. In Piacenza in these years our Fathers had to sustain a series of litigations for the localities where the Oratory was conducted, that eventually led them to give up the work. When, in 1906, Monsignor Mangot granted to them the property called the 'temple', the Associates of the St. Antoninus Group', who had obtained permission to use the areas for their meetings, they loudly protested, pretending to have on their own the right to change the rooms around, and they committed other actions of aggression. They even came to the extreme of changing the locks on the doors, and to expel the Stigmatines, who were the legitimate owners. Our Fathers, already well experienced how empty was the hope of arriving at a compromise, without much fruit they appealed to the Diocesan Authorities, and from there receiving the authorization to appeal to the legal authorities, they appealed to the urban Pretor in order to obtain the right to be readmitted into the possession of the locale. In the meantime, the new Bishop, J. B. Pellizzari [who had succeeded Bishop Scalabrini] claimed that it was all diocesan property, had recourse to Rome and this brought the civil suit to an end. The Stigmatines had recourse to the Congregation of the Council, which on April 13, 1908, decided in favor of their view.

However, in the meantime, Fr. Bertapelle had left Piacenza, and in the meantime the Recreation Center had been temporarily closed by our decision. Fr. Scotton substituted for Fr. Bertapelle, and he gave up the care of the Recreation

⁵¹ In 1908, on the occasion of the Congress of the Athletic Federation, Fr. Fantozzi accompanied to Rome the gymnastic team called the *Scaligera*, which performed its routine in the Vatican, in the presence of the Holy Father and received an award.

⁵² In 1908, the garden became an athletic field, for the use of the young workers.

Center to dedicate himself exclusively to the care of the Boarding House of the Students, which was assuming greater development.

On January 1, 1907, as House opened also in Pistoia. The foundation had been requested by Monsignor Marcello Mazzanti, the Ordinary of that city: its scope was to assume the direction of the Boarding House for the sons of the poor people. It had been founded by the Bishop in 1904, thanks to a generous donation of Canon Monsignor Cecconi. He had given for this scope, a large building, known as the '*Temple*'. The goal of the Boarding House was to gather the young men in their free hours from school or work, in order to keep them from dangers, instruct them and form them in a Christian way. To this Boarding House, there was joined the 'Congregation of St. Aloysius', and the 'Nicholas Forteguerra Group': there was also a theater company. This was all maintained financially and morally, by an association of ladies and gentlemen called 'Patrons', who contributed to this work an annual donation. The locale was furnished with a gymnasium and in 1908, it was also provided with a covering, so that it would serve as a closed in hall, and also one for meetings. Up to that year, the Boarding House had been conducted by the Salesians. The Bishop gave over to our Fathers the Church and the House of the Temple, with its court yard and garden, and the benefice connected to the Church.

The foundation was accepted in the meeting of the General Council of December 16, 1906, and Frs. Albino Sella and Henry Gabos were assigned there.

In the following year, February 1908, there was accepted also the foundation in Capodistria. The request for this was presented in 1904, by the Bishop of Trieste, Bishop Francis Nagl. Further, he requested two priests and two Brothers for the 'Grisoni Institute', founded about 50 years earlier, by Count Grisoni of Capodistria. It was an orphanage for poor boys and girls, with internal elementary schools. One of the Fathers served as Director of the Institute, and assumed the spiritual direction of the girls department, entrusted to the Sisters of Providence. The other had the office of Master for the masculine branch. The Administration was held by an Economist with dependence on a Council of Administration, according to the dispositions left by the founder of the work. Frs. Erminio Lona and Fortunato Pedot were assigned here, and they moved in during the month of October.

In 1906 there had been requested also a foundation in Constantinople with the scope of opening there a high school for the Italian population there, under the care of the National Association for Italians away from home, founded by Senator Schiapparelli. Fr. Scotton was sent there to look over the situation and the condition of the foundation. On his return, on the basis of his negative report, the General Council declined the offer, because it would have been too demanding on our Institute, both because of the considerable sums of money that it needed, and also because of the number of personnel that would have been necessary. Furthermore, the independence of our working there was not sufficiently guaranteed.

23. Additional requests also came in around this time for foundations in Brazil. In 1905, the Bishop of S. Paolo, Dom Jose' Barros, on the suggestion of the Missionaries of St. Charles, asked for three Priests for a foundation in his diocese and offered a

fitting residence. It seemed at first that they Community would accept this invitation, but then gave up the idea, much to the disappointment of that Bishop.⁵³

In 1906, this same Bishop came to Italy and had a private conversation with the Superior General in Milan, in which he expressed his regrets that the promise made to him earlier had not been kept, so he renewed his request. Some agreement was reached that within that same year the foundation would have been established: but then, on his return trip to Brazil, the Bishop died in a ship-wreck of the steamer 'Sirio', and thus once again, the Superiors did not think they were abolished to carry out the agreement reached.

Meanwhile, the deceased Bishop was succeeded by his Secretary who had accompanied him on that voyage to Italy, Dom Leopoldo Duarte e Silva. Therefore, in 1907, he wrote to the Superior General to obtain the foundation that had been promised, and he offered us an enchanting locality, one of the better places in his entire Diocese.⁵⁴ This time, too, it seemed as though all was agreed upon – but, then, in the meeting of February 1908, the General Council decided to decline the offer. In that same year, 1908, the new Bishop came to Italy, and meet with the Superior General, insisting on taking the foundation that was so much desired, and offered a place in Amparo. The General Council, with a view to the scarcity of our personnel, declared that it was impossible for the moment to accept a stable foundation: and only granted the Superior, if he should think it opportune, to send on the site someone of our Priests, in an extraordinary mission and without any obligations. In the end, nothing was done.

The difficulty in accepting foundations in Brazil was due also to the necessity of increasing the commitment in North America. In 1907, the Superior General went to make a Visitation of our houses there, taking with him, Fr. Joseph Nardon and Brother Camillo Ramus. And having seen the enormous need that our Fathers had there of additional help, on his return, he proposed to Fr. Balestrazzi that he should leave for North America, and he willingly accepted the proposal. He resigned his office as General Councilor, in which he was substituted for by Fr. Graziani, and left that same year and joined Fr. Anthony Dalla Porta in Springfield. In the meantime, Fr. Dalla Porta had purchased two houses on Wilcox Street, near Union Street, and had moved in to one of them. Later he made the other one into an oratory, and began to take care of it, helped now by Fr. Balestrazzi. Fr. Dalla Porta then accepted the care of another Church not very far away from Springfield, to which Fr. Nardon was assigned. Also Fr. Lucchi in Pennsylvania accepted a new foundation in Scranton, the Episcopal See, where there were 35,000 Italians. Therefore, in 1908, two others Fathers left for North America: Victor Gurisatti who went to open the House in Scranton, and Lino Cembran, who stayed in Hazleton with Fr. Lucchi.

⁵³ From a letter from Fr. Louis Capra of the Missionaries of St. Charles, it came to be known that our Fathers were anxiously awaited from day to day. Fr. Ferruccio Zanetti some years later [March 16, 19124], wrote from Brazil that the locality offered by the Bishop on that occasion, was the City of Campinas, which at that time, pertained to the Diocese of S. Paolo. The clergy of Campinas in 1914 declared: Campinas would have belonged entirely to the Stigmatines!

⁵⁴ Fr. Capra, who came to Italy in this time, stated that the place that had been offered, was the best in the entire Diocese of S. Paolo, a real little paradise: the task would be to work among a population that was almost entirely Italian, almost all from the Veneto, and very religious.

24. In Italy in these years, there circulated rather ugly political rumors: more and more talk centered on state laws that would be opposed to Religious Corporations, and of the confiscation of the goods they possessed. Religious Institutes became more disturbed by all this, and with the approval of the ecclesiastical authorities, they sought to place in security, by alienating those goods necessary for the exercise of their activities. Also the Superiors of our own Congregation thought in these terms, and they thought of protecting in some way, the funds supporting our Institute.

In 1907, there were sold the property in Calderara near the Montorio Veronese, and also the estate of Stallavena in Valpantena. In 1908, the land on Lazise near the Lake of Garda was sold and all the funds that remained in Valpantena were invested, with the exception of the vacation house and that land surrounding it and the Maroni property. And then the height of misadventures occurred, following the suggestions of the ecclesiastical authorities, all the monies were invested in stocks and bonds of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. Following World War I, all of these investments were de-evaluated.

In these years, too, there came to some resolution the civil case that had arisen for the inheritance of Fr. Marchesini. We have already seen that in 1903, Sir Louis Marchesini had appealed against the Pretor's decision, before the Civil Tribunal of Verona. This, after a long and laborious trial, following the testimony of various hand-writing experts, confirmed the falsity of the documents presented by him, and having heard the testimonial proofs on the articles presented by the two sides, with its decision of August 3, 1906, confirmed the earlier decision of the Pretor, and condemned the plaintiff to pay the expenses of the case.

Meanwhile, from July 7, 1903, Sir L. Marchesini had cited before the Tribunal of Verona, Frs. Rosa and Victor Gurisatti, to have declared null and void the sale of February 17, 1902: having obtained from the President of the Tribunal the judiciary sequester of the funds, sought the confirmation of this from the court itself. Finally, with the citation of March 21, 1906, there was proposed also to the court the petition to adjudicate on the inheritance. These three cases were decided with a single sentence on May 5, 1906, in this manner:

- (1) there is no case of the plaintiff in the litigation seeking the inheritance;
- (2) there is no case in seeking to nullify the purchase-sale contract of February 27, 1902;
- (3) the sequester agreed upon with the presidential decree is revoked;
- (4) Sir Louis Marchesini must pay the court costs.

Sir Louis also appealed against this sentence, and appealed to the Court of Appeals in Venice: with its decree of June 8, 1907, his appeal was rejected, and he was ordered to pay these court costs.

Following this, others among the legitimate heirs of Fr. Marchesini, who joined in with Sir Louis, after his death, with a document of November 20, 1907, cited Frs. Stephen Rosa and Victor Gurisatti, citing them before the Tribunal of Verona. Their position was that the court should declare that Fr. Marchesini's will of September 1, 1900, should be considered null and void. Furthermore, the contract of purchase and sale, of February 27, 1902, Fr. Rosa should hand over to the appealing heirs the substance left by Fr. Marchesini, and give a full accounting of his Administration from May 19, 1903. These plaintiffs, resolutely rejected as deprived of foundation the

hypotheses brought forward to impugn the legitimate right of Fr. Rosa for the inheritance and the validity of the appeal of February 27, 1902. They wanted to leave on his shoulders a certain moral responsibility in behalf of the plaintiffs, with a view to the rather unfortunate economic conditions in which some of these legitimate heirs of Fr. Marchesini were living, they thus came to an agreement⁵⁵: there would be returned to these heirs the immovable aspects of the estate valued at 120,000 Lira; and Fr. Rosa ceded to these same heirs, all the goods that came to him through the inheritance. Those benefiting thereby would be bound to pay the hypothecary debt of 40,000 Lira weighing on the funds, from November 6, 1897, in favor of Fr. J. B. Tomasi, and to pay Fr. Rosa some 32,000 lira in two six month installments. Fr. Rosa then deposited 12,000 lira in the Chancery Office to satisfy the obligation imposed by the last will and testament to celebrate a Mass on all festive days, in the Private Chapel of the Pozza Estate In suffrage for the testator.⁵⁶

25. Meanwhile in Verona there proceeded with some speed the renovations and decoration of St. Teresa's Church. As this work went on, there developed the idea of establishing a Sanctuary in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes. Having had the permission of the Superiors, Fr. Fantozzi, in a pilgrimage he made to Lourdes in 1908, reached an agreement with the Bishop of Tarbes, that he would come to Verona for the inauguration of the Sanctuary. And at Lourdes, together with Brother Sante Albertini, he took the exact measurements of the grotto, in the hopes of reproducing it in Verona, according to its natural size. There was then demolished a part of St. Teresa's Church, that wall separating the presbyterate and the old choir of the nuns. And on this foundation there was constructed the rocky grotto, and a double stair way of access. When these works were terminated, on March 12, 1909, the Church was consecrated by Bishop Schaeffer, of Tarbes and dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes. On the occasion, there was celebrated a solemn triduum of festivities, in which the Bishop; of Tarbes, our Archbishop Morando and Cardinal Bacilieri, Bishop of Verona, all celebrated Pontifical Masses.

At the same time with the Church, the main altar was consecrated: the first two side altars, dedicated to St. Joseph and to St. Aloysius, were blessed by the Bishop of Tarbes in 1910: the other two dedicated to the Good Shepherd and to St. Teresa were blessed in 1911 by Cardinal Bacilieri, when there was also placed in the Church a marble bust of Fr. Gaspar. The statues of the altars and the bust were the work of the sculptor, Ugo Zannoni, who executed these works of art gratuitously, as also the statue of the virgin placed in the niche in the rock. On the occasion of the consecration, there was also published a special edition remembering the event.

In the year 1909, we must also recall a proposal made by the Holy See which was of interest to the entire life of our Institute. The Sacred Congregation of Religious

⁵⁵ There was behind this agreement the well-founded fear that the Tribunal might declare null and void all the preceding court decisions, since they were made by an advocate in behalf of the Institute at the Stimate, legally incapable of possessing – this is what happened a few years earlier in the Tribunal of Udine, for the deed on the purchase-sale of the house of Gemona.

⁵⁶ Fr. Eugene Salvi, of the Foreign Missionary Society of Milan, renounced his share in the will in behalf of Fr. Rosa, about 10,000 Lira.

presented the question to the Superiors of our Institute whether they wanted to unite with the Theatine Clerics Regular, in order to assure the continuation of this Order which was in danger of being extinguished. The General Council held a kind of 'referendum' among all the Professed Priests of the Congregation, and entrusted the General Councilors, Fr. J. B. Tomasi, and Ml. Zanetti to gather the views of the houses in Italy. The question was:

... 'whether to be substituted for a dying Order, assuming the simple title of Clerics Regular, and the canonical position of the Theatines in the Church; and gradually, and in accord with the possibilities, the property and the care of the Churches that still remain the responsibility of this Order, in the city of Rome, Frascati, Naples, Sorrento, Lecce, Palermo, Messina, Piazza Armerina. These Churches, by order of the Holy See to the respective Bishops would then be held always under the care of the Religious Institute, for the entire time reputed necessary to occupy them, even if there should come to be lacking even the few Theatine Priests who now take care of these. This agreement will not impose any modification on our Institute, nor on its particular physiognomy. No modification will be inserted into the Constitutions, except that some in our Institute would have to make solemn profession...⁵⁷

In 1909, the foundation of the House of Belluno occurred. The Bishop of that city as His Excellency, + Francis Cherubin, seriously ill at the time. There had already been given to him a Coadjutor, in the person of Bishop Joseph Foschiani, who appealed to His Holiness, Pius X, to obtain through his mediation, a foundation of ours there. He wanted to entrust to us the direction and the teaching in the Major Seminary of the two reunited Dioceses, of Belluno and Feltre. Despite the difficulties made known to the Holy Father by the Superiors of the Congregation, and among these, the real lack of personnel for such an undertaking, the Pope insisted on the proposal and the Community had to accept. Fr. J. B. Tomasi was sent there as Director and teacher of Dogmatic Theology, to whom were added Frs. Balestrazzi, recalled from North America; Fiorio, Leo Sella, Friedmann, and the Deacon, Henry Fadanelli, who was ordained a Priest at Belluno, at Christmas of the same year. There remained one extern teacher who lived in the Seminary, as did also the Coadjutor Bishop.

In 1910, Bishop Cherubin died, and Bishop Foschiani succeeded him. The one extern teacher, Fr. Emilio Palatini, was set free, and to substitute for him for the teaching of Canon Law, the Community sent Fr. Fortunato Pedot. In 1910, there were also sent to Belluno Fr. Joseph Stofella, as Latin teacher, and Fr. Rossi as Administrator. In the preceding year, the administration had been conducted by a local priest. In recompense for the labors offered to this enterprise, to each Confrere was give a n annual salary of 200 Lira.

26. The Congregation suffered three grave losses in the one year, 1909. On March 19, Fr. Julius Zambiasi died in Rome. He had acquired the esteem of scientists for his publications, and was also much appreciated by the Ecclesiastical Superiors due to his scientific competence. The Roman Congregations many times entrusted to him most important and delicate studies. A terrible illness, the consequence of his

⁵⁷ The Circular Letter of the Superior General, dated May 21, 1909.

assiduous labor, threatened his existence, and he would not admit to it, until he had become incurable.

On August 20, in Brindisi, ArchBishop Louis Morando died. He had ardently dedicated himself to the spiritual welfare of the faithful, by neglecting himself, and he fell victim to his zeal, mourned and missed by all his children, of whom he had acquired the esteem and affection.

However, the most grave loss was that of Fr. Richard Tabarelli. In 1908, he had published his tract *On Grace*, which had won a magnificent encomium from the Holy Father, Pius X. He had no hesitation in referring to Fr. Tabarelli as 'the glory of the Congregation and the Church'. In the same year, he had been named a member of the Commission of Vigilance in Rome, instituted as a result of the Encyclical, *Pascendi*, against Modernism. He suffered a stroke on October 11, while he was hearing the Confessions of the Madams of Sion, and in a few hours, he died. He left a broad sense of loss especially in Rome. And still today, more than 40 years since his death, he is still remembered with esteem and affection by those who were his disciples, not only in Rome but in every part of the world. It seems that the Holy Father had told him that he was to be created a Cardinal within the year.

27. In 1910, we find at long last the first Stigmatine foundation in Brazil, which came about through strange and unimaginable circumstances. A certain priest arrived in Trent, by the name of Fr. Sanson, who said he had been delegated by the Bishop of Marianna in Minas Gerais, to lead a colony of Italians to the village of Sete Lagos, and he assured all that he was acting in full accord with the Brazilian government. He asked for a few Stigmatine Priests who would then have the spiritual care of the colony, and the direction of a little seminary which many desired to open there. For this purpose, he had sent out through the Trentine region, a Circular Letter with the approval of the Bishop. In all truth, not everything about that priest inspired much confidence, and his truthfulness gave rise to much perplexity.

Fr. Balestrazzi, entrusted to do so by the Superior General, addressed himself to the Foreign Minister to obtain information, eventually to be of some help for the journey: and the Commissariat for Emigration responded to him that from 1902, there was forbidden gratuitous emigration into Brazil, because of the wretched conditions in which many of the Italian colonies were living in that Country: and this same Commissariat found itself in the necessity to refer to the Justice Department those who would favor gratuitous emigration toward that country.

With all this, the General Council still believed it a good idea to accept the invitation, and assigned for that foundation Frs. Alexander Grigolli and Henry Adami, with Brother Dominic Valzacchi: as these were not able to leave from an Italian port, left from Trieste, at that time under Austria, on November 10.⁵⁸

They arrived in Rio de Janeiro on December 5, and went by train to Sete Lagoas, where they found out that all the declarations of that priest was phony, and they found themselves abandoned to their own resources. They took refuge then in Sao Paulo with the Missionaries of St. Charles: in the meantime, Fr. Vicentini had arrived in Brazil, and he withdrew his own Missionaries from a Parish in Tibagy, in the

⁵⁸ In those days, to leave the country there was not required any passport, or other document of that nature.

State of Paraná. Fr. Grigolli presented himself to the Bishop of Curitiba⁵⁹, Dom José Braga, to ask him for the care of a Parish. The Bishop had received high recommendations about the Stigmatines from their old Confrere, Fr. Vicentini, and he entrusted to them a Parish, where the Stigmatines entered on March 29, 1911.

In 1910, the Superior General conducted a second Canonical Visitation to the Houses of North America, where the foundations had consolidated, and he brought with him Fr. Peter Piemonte, who shortly before had made his First Profession.

28. In 1911, the term of the Superior General and that of his Councilors term had ended, and in September, there gathered in Verona the XVIII General Chapter. In this **Fr. John B. Tomasi** was elected Superior General, and his Councilors were: Frs. Balestrazzi [Vicar General]; Albino Sella [Monitor], Piccoli [Revisor]; and Baretella. Fr. Graziani was named Procurator General, and the Economist was Fr. Pio Gabos.

There were approved some further modifications to be introduced into the Constitutions, and a Commission was elected to review and draw up the Constitutions, in order to present them to Holy See, and to obtain their approbation. This Capitular Commission was made up of: Frs. Piccoli, President; Zaupa [Secretary; Fiorio, Sozzi and J. B. Castellani.

At Belluno, Fr. J. B. Tomasi was substituted for by Fr. Balestrazzi, and Fr. Tarcisio Martina was added as dogma teacher.

In Verona, the Sisters of the Visitation were thinking of selling the Convent at the Trinity, and to move on to Vicenza. The Superior General, when he came to know of this, asked the Sisters to exercise our Community's right of precedence in the right of re-purchasing it, in the strength of a clause inserted into the old contract of purchase-sale of 1877. With this end in view, he searched high and low, but could find nothing in writing. Cardinal Bacilieri also took an interest in these proceedings, and he had a study made of the Chancery Archives, but found nothing that substantiated this claimed right on the part of the Stigmatines, but the price being asked of them seemed equal and just. The Convent was re-sold to them at a cost of 138,000 Lira, and there should be kept in mind, that these Sisters had built a new Convent on the property The Students entered there on October 20, after having completed the necessary renovations, and these works continued throughout that year. On this occasion, there was also re-activated the entrance off Via Tetone [later called Via Bertoni], and the stair case of granite was re-built, as this had been partially removed. There was also recalled from Trent to Verona the House of Novitiate and it was established in the House of the Trinity, naming Fr.. Michaelangelo Zanetti as Novice Master.

In this year, during the vacation time, there were issued the first numbers of the **BERTONIANO**, the periodical reserved for the Stigmatines, under the care of Fr. Zaupa. The first issues were mimeographed, but these were later reproduced on a printing press, including these issues beginning in 1911. In Trent, once the Novitiate Community had been shifted to Verona, the house was available for a Boarding House for Students, which had already begun. Fr. Erminio Pivato, in 1910, had added

⁵⁹ **NB: English Translator's Note: early in the new millennium, 2000, a Stigmatine was named Archbishop of Curitiba: Dom Moacyr Vitti, CSS.**

new rooms to the building, Adding on an entire new floor, and as a result, a discreet number of boarders could be accepted⁶⁰.

Still, in 1911 a tract of land was purchased in forest region of the Commune of Malosco, in the Upper Anaunia, with the idea of building there a Vacation House for the students. This was constructed in the years 1911-1912, with money given by Bishop Sogaro, and other benefactors.⁶¹ The students were able to go there on vacation for the first time during the summer of 1912.

29. In 1912, there closed the opening Apostolic Process of the Founder's Cause of Beatification. This phase bears the title: *Ne Pereant Probationes* ['So that these Testimonies might not be lost'].

Already in 1907, Cardinal Tripepi had died, and Cardinal Jerome Gotti, was named *Ponente* of the Cause. Fr. Pizzighella was appointed the Postulator of the Cause, and on October 23, he obtained the *Remissorial Documents* of the Sacred Congregation of Rites for the Inchoative Process. This was opened on June 5, 1908, and sessions for the examination of 15 documents under question began on the 16 of the same month, and were terminated on January 24, 1912.

This process formed the first part of the Apostolic Process, and bore the title: *Super Virtutibus et Miraculis in Specie* ['Concerning his Virtues and Miracles in Particular']. This phase would be complemented in the Continuing Process. Therefore, the original Acts had to be sealed and kept in the Chancery Archives until they would be considered anew in the Continuing Process: however, through some unexplainable negligence, the Process was printed, and a summary of it was brought to Rome. Here, the Sacred Congregation took note of the error in procedure that had been committed, and kept sealed the copy received in Rome, and this would eventually be brought back to Verona when the Process was taken up again.

Meanwhile in Verona, devotion to the Servant of God was promoted: on June 30 there was organized a pilgrimage to his tomb of all the young boys enrolled in the Oratories of the city who in the course of that year had received First Communion. On this occasion, there was distributed a memorial printed for the occasion.⁶²

There was also felt in Verona the need of having a Biography of the Founder, in order to spread knowledge of him and devotion to him among the faithful. The proposal was made to Professor Joseph Ellero of Udine, who out of regard for our Fathers, at first accept this charge, but then found himself in the impossible situation of finding the time to dedicate himself to this challenge. This was then offered to Professor Joseph Trecco of Verona, who accepted it.

⁶⁰ In 1908, there had been offered to our Fathers in Trent the care of the Church dedicated to St. Francis Xavier, but this was not accepted.

⁶¹ From a Document located in the Archives in Verona, it appears that the construction cost 60,000 Lira., of which 18,000 had been donated by Bishop Sogaro.

⁶² Also, Fr. Michaelangelo Zanetti in 1907 had had printed in Pavia, a little leaflet with an image of the Venerable Founder, with a brief presentation of his life, and prayers to the Most Holy Trinity to seek his glorification.

30. In Verona in 1912, the College at the Stimate was opened⁶³. This had been an idea that had been bandied about for some time. Already in 1907, Fr. J. B. Tomasi, then Director of the House, after the students had been transferred to St. Mary of the Lily, thought of utilizing the rooms for a College of Students. The thought was taken up again by Fr. Michaelangelo Zanetti in 1910, and he had already decided to go ahead with the re-opening for the next year. However, during that August, in a trip he made to Parma, he became quite ill with an attack of appendicitis that had burst, with the danger of peritonitis. Being brought to the hospital in that city, he was operated on for a burst appendix, and a severe internal abscess, and he remained in bed for five months. He returned to Verona in April 1911, with his surgery still open and draining, due to another abscess in the intestine, which could not be reached. Following an additional operation, it came out well, and he was finally freed from any further setbacks. In 1912, he had been re-appointed Director of the House of the Stimate, and was able to bring into life his old idea, opening the College in October, at the beginning of the scholastic year.

All this while there continued at the Stimate the Boarding House for workers, and in 1911 further professional classes were offered, as there was established a School for Automobile Mechanics, authorized by the Government. However, since this whole endeavor of ours was quite weighed down with debts as a result of the renovations brought to the building, and the income was not able to balance with the necessary expenses in its operations. As a result, the Superiors decided to reduce its activity in accessibility and in 1912, the musical band was discontinued. Thus, those rooms could be rented, and this brought in new financial revenue to support the trade schools.

In 1912, the Aspirants were recalled to Verona from Gemona, and they were lodged in the House of the Most Holy Trinity: here, Fr. Louis Benedetti had been appointed Novice Master. In the same year, the House of St. Mary of the Lily was closed, and the building was rented to the Morando Institute. There was serious thought given to the sale of that property, but Cardinal Bacillieri wanted our men to continue the Sunday Oratory in the parish of St. Stephen's, which was held in the Church of St. Mary of the Lily. The Oratory was entrusted to Fr. Benedetti and he had his Novices help out in the apostolate.

In Piacenza, in order to insure the flourishing life of the Workers Boarding House for the future, Fr. Scotton sought to acquire a locality suited for sale, at the price of 120,000. However, the Superiors did not feel that we could assume even additional expenses, and then in 1912, withdrew Fr. Scotton from Piacenza, transfer him as Director of Udine. Fr. Charles DeFerrari who up to that point had been Director of the Oratory of Capodistria.

This Oratory was entrusted to our men in 1910, and Fr. Edwin Job was appointed as Director. He was, however, dependent upon a Commission of Administration which was supposed to provide for the necessary financial means for the endeavor to function. In 1911, Fr. Job was succeeded by Fr. Charles DeFerrari. Already from the beginning, these Fathers found themselves often in conflict with the

⁶³ It had long been the desire of many to re-open the schools of the Stimate. In 1910, a request was made of the Superiors to open two elementary grades, with the intention of have them followed by the high school classes: but the times were not yet mature.

Commission, and after two years, they realized that it was not possible to collaborate with it. In place of busying itself with the finances of the oratory, they were trying to control the internal direction of the apostolate, often being an obstacle to the Director's efforts. Therefore, they gave up the direction of the Oratory, and this was assumed by a local Priest.

Fr. DeFerrari arrived in Piacenza, and had to experience a certain sense of hostility directed by the Brothers of the Christian Schools against the work of our Fathers. This might have been because of the development that our Workers Movement was taking. This had already been noticed by Fr. Scotton from 1911. When the Students' Boarding House was begun, our men were in agreement with the Brothers in this sense, that they would have accepted as internal students only those enrolled in the elementary schools, and in ours, would be those enrolled in the trade school and high school level. Following this, the Brothers accepted also the students from the trade schools and did not appreciate the fact that our Boarding School was more flourishing than theirs.

These contrasts got worse with the passing of time, and so, two years later in 1914, it was decided to give up the work and to close that House. Fr. DeFerrari then was assigned Director of the College of Verona.

In Pavia, our Fathers already in 1909 had given up the direction of the Sunday Oratory, and now thought of opening in their dwelling, a Dormitory for young students⁶⁴.

In Udine, given the good results from the studies there, the College and the internal schools flourished all the more, so that by 1914, there had to be put up a new wing in the building for the elementary classes. The Oratory prospered as well, frequented by more than 300 young men. In it, Fr. Pelanda had instituted a gymnastic team, and he also supervised some important works of enlargement and decoration of the theater. At the same time, in order to improve the environment of the College, the building on the Cossetti property in front of the College was purchased, and there were projected renovations of the old 'Stall of the Three Kings', in order to make it a dwelling: these works were completed in 1915.

31. In Gemona in 1912, there was finally concluded a misunderstanding that had dragged on for some years, and that would decide for us the outcome of that house. It has already been recorded that in 1899, Mrs. Giacomina Simonetti, with a notarized deed, had sold her Palace to Fr. James Marini, with the obligation on the part of the Stigmatine Fathers, to institute there an Oratory for the young men of Gemona. Later, the Arch-Priest James Scisizzo, who had succeeded Bishop Fogiarini, in order to assure the purpose of the beneficence in favor of the parish, wanted that to the notarized document there be added a private memorandum, what had been signed in three copies, on August 21, 1901. In this document the woman stated that she had *ceded* to the Superior of the Stigmatines, on June 13, 1899, her Palace for the purpose of a benifice: giving permission to the same Superior of the Stigmatine Fathers, for the time being, to develop it for that work of local beneficence, which he

⁶⁴ In 1905, there had been offered the direction of St. Augustine's College, which was not accepted.

might feel to be the most opportune, in accord with the Arch Bishop of Udine⁶⁵, with the Arch -Priest, pro tempore, of Udine.

At Mrs. Simoentti's death [May 1902], her heirs found among her papers a copy of that later document, and they wanted to make use of it to lessen the value of the purchase-sale contract, of June 13, 1899. So, on April 2, 1908, they cited before the Civil Tribunal of Udine, Fr. Marini – and then, on January 20, 1910, also Fr. Henry Gabos, to whom, Fr. Marini with a deed authenticated by the Notary Bertoldi of Verona, on May 16, 1907, had sold the property of the Palace.

The two cases were combined, and in the hearing of March 29, 1912, the conclusions of the two parties were presented. On the part of those summoned, it was observed that for the Tribunal of Udine, whether it had jurisdiction for Fr. Gurisatti and Fr. Marini, it was not for Fr. Henry Gabos, in the strength of the 98 Article of the Code of Procedure. On the part of the plaintiffs, it was asked whether there could be a declaration of nullity of the contract of sale of June 13, 1899. As for the '*Promemoria*', it was noted that the property had not been sold, but *ceded* to the Congregation, as this was not legally capable of owning, and furthermore, there is lacking the deed of its acceptance. There was further petitioned whether the testimonial proofs could be admitted to prove the existence of the movable materials for the value of 8,000 Lira.

The Tribunal with its decision of July 2, 1912, declared: the contracts of June 13, 1899 and that of May 14, 1907, were declared null and void: as a result, all the goods about which the plaintiffs make a claim need to be returned as property of the estate of the late Giacomina Simonetti. As for the movable values, the testimonial proofs were admitted.

The Arch Priest insisted that they make an appeal, but the Stigmatines, after hearing the opinion of Attorney Cernelutti, renounced it. The Arch Priest then, got into the case, on the strength of what had been written in the memorandum: that should the Stigmatines ever withdraw, the estate should then serve for a work of beneficence to be designated by the Pastor.

Contemporaneously, there were initiated negotiations to reach some kind of a compromise, and a Commission was set up that was meant to act in the name of the Parish. At Mestre, a sister of the deceased Mrs. Simonetti lived: and one half of the estate was meant to go to her. The part that belonged to her was ceded by her, and it was acquired by Attorney Fantoni. Following this, the Arch Priest insisted with the Superiors of the Congregation that they might leave some Priests in Gemona, who would be able to use one half of the House already purchased, to attend to the Oratory and to the Recreation Center, committing themselves at the same time to providing lessons for the private students, and offering their ministry in the Parish. The General Council withdrew the Aspirants to Verona⁶⁶, and transferred Fr. Pio Gabos to Milan, leaving the House still opened until the litigation might reach some conclusion.

In 1914, the Parish acquired from the Simoneitti heirs also the other half of the estate, that was inscribed with the name of the Rural House of St. Joseph, substituted later for the more anonymous sounding '*Juventus*'. And so, that House was able to pick up again its normal activity, committing itself to the men's Oratory, frequented

⁶⁵ In Udine, in 1909, Arch Bishop Peter Zamburlini died, and he was succeeded by Arch Bishop Anastasio Rossi.

⁶⁶ However, for one more year the Aspirants of the lower high school level.

by about 400 of them, and also maintaining the trade schools with a little Rooming House.

32. In Rome, the Superior General, desiring that some of our students would study there and frequent the Ecclesiastical Universities and obtain the academic degrees, in 1912, rented a few rooms next to the House of St. Mary of the Miracles on Via Ripeta, where were placed in connection with the rest of our house there.

In this time the General Council attended also to bettering the internal organization of the Congregation, by approving some disciplinary regulations for the various classes of membership [aspirants, novices, temporary and perpetually professed, preparing also forms for the disciplinary reports for the individual houses. The Superior General, with his Circular Letter of October 13, 1912, made it obligatory for each house to send each month the financial reports to the General Curia⁶⁷.

It was also established that for admission to perpetual profession there would be required the vote of the local Chapter and a written report of the Director and the Prefect. And then, in the light of a reform instituted by Pius X, in the praying of the Breviary it was deliberated to seek from the Holy See the faculty of using the Universal Calendar, with the addition of our own feast of the Espousals and the Virgin Mary, whereas up to that point in time, in the individual Houses the local Diocesan Calendar was followed.⁶⁸ There were also obtained from the Holy See special faculties for blessings and applications of indulgences, for the Directors of the Houses, and the rectors of Churches.

33. Before closing this Chapter, we have to recall two consoling facts: i.e., the offering made to our Congregation of the two Churches of the Holy Cross, one in Milan and one in Rome, which were meant to commemorate the 16th Centenary of Constantine. In Milan, Cardinal Arch-Bishop Andrew Ferrari, who was also well disposed toward us, from March 27, 1912, in a Pastoral Letter, referred to the Church that was to be constructed as a memorial of that Centenary. He expressed the wish that it should be constructed in the 'Acquabella' section of Milan, 'where our beloved Stigmatine Fathers of Verona accomplish such wonders of priestly seal.' Returning to this same matter on May 30 of the same year, while he was addressing a fervent appeal to the Milanese Catholics to invite them to assist in the cost of construction, he named a Commission presided over by Monsignor Locatelli, who were to concern themselves with the matter. As a consequence to this, there were initiated negotiations between the Chancery Office and the Superiors of the Congregation.

The General Council decided to grant gratuitously the land for the construction of the Church, on the condition that this remain the property of the

⁶⁷ Already in 1890, a form had been introduced for the economic account, the same for all the house, which at the end of the year, had to be sent to the Superior General. And in 1907, with the Circular Letter of November 15, the same Superior General had imposed on all the Directors the sending in twice a year to the General Council a report on the disciplinary state of each house: a report which in 1915 was made obligatory three times a year.

⁶⁸ On this occasion, it was decided to celebrate the feast of the Espousals as a Double of the 2nd Class, without Octave, while previously it had been observed as a Double of the 1st Class with an Octave.

Institute, when it became a Parish: and that if one day, the Stigmatine Fathers had to abandon that locality, the Diocese would pay them the value of the land. Meanwhile the construction got underway and at first, the desire was to name the Church in honor of St. Helena, and there was set up a local Commission which together with the Archdiocesan Commission they would set about collecting funds from the faithful.⁶⁹ On September 28, the corner-stone was blessed.

In 1914, with the work progressing well, thought was given to establishing an Agreement to be stipulated between the Diocese of Milan and our Congregation, in order to regulate the property and the service of the Church. The General Council had presented to the Archdiocesan Commission a series of proposals in this regard: reserving the right of executing in the Church those works that it thought opportune, and to receive reimbursement, in the case that the Community ever had to abandon that locality for the work done and for the price of the land. On the basis of these proposals the Commission prepared a plan of an agreement which, if accepted by the General Council, would be presented to the Cardinal Arch Bishop, for approbation. However, he did not think any formal agreement was necessary, and tore the papers up which had presented them in the presence of the members of the Commission. He declared that he had intended to build this Church for the Stigmatine Fathers, and this should remain their property, nor could any of his successors ever think of depriving them of it.

In Rome, the construction of the Church of the Holy Cross had begun in 1912, and on October 17 of that year the corner-stone was blessed by Cardinal Frances Cassetta, Bishop of Frascati, and the Protector of the General Council for the Constantinian celebrations.. The work continued for the entire year 1913, and on December 29, the Church was inaugurated with a sacred rite, celebrated by Cardinal Cassetta. The first offering of the Church was made to the Superior General towards the middle of the same month of December by Cardinal Basil Pompili, Vicar of His Holiness: but the official handing over was made by the Holy Father to the Superior General, on July 7, 1914, with the order of beginning to care for the Church by the following Sunday, July 12: already on March 19th, it had been canonically established as a Parish.

The Cardinal Vicar in communicating to the Superior General the will of the Holy Father to entrust to our Congregation this new Parish, declared to him that our Fathers would have to give up the other two Churches of St. Nicholas of the Prefetti and of St. Mary of the Miracles. The Superior General, in accord with his Council, had recourse to the Cardinal Vicar himself, in order to see if at least the Church of the Miracles might be left under our care. Just a short time before this some renovations were made here at considerable expense for our students. The appeal, however, was to no avail because the cardinal had already promised this Church to other religious. However, during another Audience the Superior General obtained from the Holy Father the permission to acquire, at the expense of the Holy See, another bit of land of some 2000 square meters, near the Holy Cross Church, and also to retain the Church and house next to the Prefetti Church. With the abandonment of the House of the Miracles, the General Curia was transferred to Holy Cross parish in the Flaminia

⁶⁹ On this occasion there was also organized a musical concert, offered *for a church to be raised*, directed by the well-known Maestro Lawrence Perosi, for the scope of raising funds.

section, and there our first students came to live and were inscribed at the Gregorian University: Virgilio Job, Joseph Lona, and Remigio Zadra.

34. In 1913, Fr. Tomasi the Superior General, accompanied by Fr. Balestrazzi, made his first Canonical Visitation to the Houses of North America. He noted that there was dire need for additional personnel, so he sent Fr. Erminio Lona, Joseph Rosa, and Anthony Toniolli. Thus a new house could be opened in Milford Massachusetts [at that time, in the Diocese of Springfield]. To this were destined Frs. Lona and Toniolli, who from the outset had great struggles with a rather numerous colony of socialists and anarchists.⁷⁰

In Springfield, Fr. Dalla Porta from 1911 had purchased a house with some land connected to it, on William Street. In April construction began on the Church. The Bishop on July 16, blessed the corner-stone, and on December 24 the Church opened to the public. On May 12, 1912, the Bishop imparted his solemn blessing. In 1913, on Wilcox Street, Fr. Dalla Porta constructed a large hall, called 'Columbus Hall', that was to serve for meetings of the parish associations, and as a place where the youth could gather. At Scranton, too, in 1913 a tract of land was purchased on which a Church was built for the Italians, and it was inaugurated on December 28, of the same year.

In Brazil, too, the foundation was assuming greater solidity. In 1912, Fr. Ferruccio Zanetti was also sent there, and he would serve for many years as the Missionary for Tibagy. With his help, our Fathers were able to accept temporarily also the care of St. Jerome's, in the territory of Tibagy, for provide some schooling for the youth in that area. And Frs. Adami and Zanetti were assigned there. In 1914, taking the occasion of an illness that struck Fr. Grigolli, for whom it was suggested that there be sought a place near the sea, Fr. Adami had sought another foundation in Sao Palo, but to no avail. There were still there some hard feelings toward our Congregation for the many refusals it had rendered to the requests there for a house of our Congregation. As a result, Fr. Adami had recourse to the Bishop of Campinas⁷¹, who offered a foundation in Limeira. The foundation was accepted and opened in the first days of July. Fr. Adami went there with Fr. J. B. Pelanda, who for this purpose had been sent to Brazil.⁷² As a result, the foundation in Brazil was becoming better established: at long last, the heart-felt desires to have Houses in Brazil, nourished all this time, had become a reality.

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⁷⁰ In the summer of 1911, returning from a visit he had made to Italy, Fr. Dalla Porta brought with him back to America Fr. Nicholas Tomasi, who remained there only one year. In 1909, Fr. Angelo Simeoni was also sent

⁷¹ The Diocese of Campinas had been established on June 7, 1908, taking it from the Archdiocese of Sao Paolo.

⁷² In June 1915, Fr. Pelanda left for Italy, in order to regulate his military situation [Italy had entered World War I on May 24 of that year. He was substituted for by Fr. Zanetti who in September returned to Tibagy, and Fr. Grigoli took his place in Limeira.