

A Brief Chronicle

of the



*Rev. John Baptist Tomasi,
Superior General (1911 – 1922)*



*Rev. John Baptist Zaupa,
Superior General (1922 – 1934)*

Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ

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

Volume II – Second Period

The Approval of the Constitutions [1914–1925]

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THE APPROBATION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS

[1914-1925]

35. We have seen that the XVIII General Chapter had elected a Capitular Commission to review and to draw up the text of the Constitutions, to present to the Holy See for approbation. At the beginning of the year 1914, it had completed its work and Fr. John B. Tomasi, Superior General, in February of that same year, having obtained the authorization, convoked the XIXth General Chapter, the task of which was to examine and establish the text proposed by the Capitular Commission. To facilitate this treatment, the same Commission had printed a kind of guide, or *Schema*, of the Constitutions, keeping in distinct print, with different printing characters, the obligatory articles, in the strength of common law - and then our own regulations, thus distinguishing easily those articles which could be modified or excluded. In another little booklet, also printed up, there were presented those Notes that would explain the reasons behind the single articles of the *Schema*. Two months before the General Chapter assembled, there was given to each Capitular a copy of this printed work. The Commission had also prepared a *Schema* for the Directory, which intended to present to the Chapter for its approval: but, since this was not yet completed, the Chapter voted to put off its discussion for another time.

The Chapter, therefore, assembled on August 224 in Rome: at the last minute, however, due to the death of the Pontiff, Pius X, it was transferred to Verona, where it assembled in the House of the Stimmate on the day established. The Constitutions which were approved by the General Chapter, were reprinted, and in July of 1915, were submitted to the Congregation of Religious, which in its General Assembly, approved them on November 24 1916 for *a seven year period*. The new Holy Father [Pope Benedict XV] approved these on the 26 of the same month, and the Decree of Approbation bears this date.¹

36. On January 26, 1916, there occurred the Silver Jubilee of the priestly ordination of the Very Reverend Superior General, Fr. John B. Tomasi: the occurrence was celebrated in Rome in the Church of St. Nicholas dei Prefetti, and on that occasion there was obtained for the Jubilarian an autographed picture of the Holy Father. This anniversary was also observed in Verona, at the Church of the Stimmate on February 11: the students of the Most Holy Trinity took part in the festivities with an *academia*, manifesting the local musical and literary talent, held on the same day. For this occasion there was published a Special Edition of the **BERTONIANO**.

On February 24 of the same year there was officially inaugurated in Rome Holy Cross Parish, and the first Pastor was installed, Fr. Octavian Piccoli, by His Eminence, the Cardinal Vicar. From March 17 – 28, there was held in the Parish a Sacred

¹ The Constitutions presented in July 1915, were first examined by a Consultor of the Sacred Congregation, who proposed some modifications, which were accepted by the General Council. On November 3, 1916, they were submitted to the examination of a special Commission which approved them: on the 24 of the same month they were approved by the General Congregation, and on the 26, presented for the approbation of the Holy Father.

Mission, to which a great number of the faithful were drawn: this served to provide a kind of thrust to the parish life.

Still in February of that same year, the Superior General transferred his residence to St. Nicholas of the Prefetti, as this locality was more suited, because it was more central: here Fr. Graziani began in this year the decoration of the Church, which was completed in the subsequent years.

37. Meanwhile, in the preceding August, the First World War broke out in Europe, which would call to arms a number of our Confreres. First among these was **Brother Angelo Martinelli**², who departed from Verona on August 3, 1914 and was sent to Galicia, where he took part in the combat, until being captured by the Russians and imprisoned. He was released in 1916. In May of 1915, Italy also entered the war, and other confreres were drafted and called to arms. On May 14, 14 Trentine students presented themselves to the Austrian Consulate of Venice, to regulate their situation: and in conformity with § 29 of the Austrian Military Code, as students for the Priesthood, that were considered exempt from the obligation of presenting themselves to arms.

On March 29, Fr. Tarcisio Martina was called into the service, and sent to Eastern Front, as a first Lieutenant in the First Infantry Regiment. Other confreres were likewise called into service: Fr. Fortunato Mantovani, served as Chaplain in a Field Hospital; Fr. Louis Benedetti, became Chaplain of the Fourth Alpine Regiment, and he offered service first in Cadore, and then in Ala, in the Province of Trent, and finally in 1917, he served at Salonico in Macedonia; Fr. Paride Lucchetti Donazzan was assigned to the Field Hospital in Cadore; **the cleric Dominic Soravito, served in the 54th Infantry regiment in Cadore and was killed by a hostile bullet on July 20 1915 at the feet of the Tofana**; the Cleric Marucci, served in the 8th Bersaglieri regiment and then was transferred to the Air Corps, and did not return to the Congregation.

As a consequence of Italy's entering the war, the armies were massed in the North-eastern Provinces, and also took over the Seminary of Belluno, then occupied by the military. This was the reason why our Fathers, as soon as they had finished the school year, had to leave there. However, even independently of the War, it had been decided to close that House. At the death of the Pontiff, Pius X, the General Council had entrusted the Superior General to initiate the process with the Bishop, for the withdrawal of our Fathers.³ The Superior met with the Bishop first at Feltre in October 1914, and then in Belluno in February 1915: on the one side, there was felt the need that the Congregation had of personnel; and on the part of the Diocesan Authorities, they wanted to entrust the direction of the seminary to local Priests, and there was common accord that our Priests would leave there at the end of the Scholastic year.

However, the Bishop then wrote on March 1, asking if there might be left a few of our Priests both for teaching, and he was disposed to entrust to our Congregation

² **NB: English Translator's Note: *Fra Angelino* would be well known and much loved by the Professed Students of the North American Province, at St. Agatha's in Rome, from 1952-1958.**

³ Bishop Joseph Foschiani died on October 5, 1913, and was succeeded by Bishop Joshua Cantarossi, transferred there from Albenga.

the Parish of Sts. Blaise and Stephen, The Superior General, declined the offer of the Parish, and stated that he was willing to leave a few teachers there: however, the Seminary was shortly occupied by soldiers, and remained so for the duration of the war, and so classes could not re-open.

Fr. Balestrazzi moved to Rome then, and was assigned to Holy Cross Parish. Fr. Fiorio was sent to Verona as Novice Master, Fr. Stofella also went to Verona: Fs. Sella, Zaupa and Fadanelli went to North America.

38. In that region, a new foundation was established in Pittsfield Massachusetts [MA], a city of some 45, 000 inhabitants, of whom 5,000 were Italians, in the Diocese of Springfield MA. Fr. Toniolli was sent there, and from the beginning he had to struggle against a strong current of subversives. However, through his charity and patience in a short time he was able to reconcile the confidence of that colony, and very shortly began the construction of a magnificent Church, the basement of which was inaugurated at Christmas of 1916.

In Springfield, Fr. Zaupa, after having taken up the census of the Parish, began the publication of a Parish Bulletin, which had as its title *The Friend of the Truth*, and in 1918, he established the Italo-American Columbus Organization, divided into three sections: culture, social assistance and sport. Within the first two years, of a very intense life, it served as a great help both from the civil perspective, as well as the religious.

Likewise, in North America Fr. Lucchi, from 1913, he had accepted, without any authorization, a foundation in Milwaukee. The General Council, prior to taking a position on this, asked of the same Confrere, a complete report on his foundation. From this, the Council came to understand that the ownership of that House was the responsibility of the Congregation, and in its name, he had assumed a debt of some \$5,000.00. At one time Fr. Simeoni had been sent there, who, however, left the Congregation, and became incardinated into that Diocese, and Fr. Fadanelli was sent to take his place. The General Council decided to take on the responsibility for that foundation for the time being, and nominated as 'Delegate' for the Houses of North America, Fr. Erminio Lona, with the faculty of making decisions within the limits of the authority that would be communicated to him. He, then, with a view to avoiding scandal to the harm of the Congregation, had to sign a promissory note of \$5,000.00, the indebtedness caused by Fr. Lucchi: and the Council ordered him to place on the property a lien, that would insure our deposit, and would include also another \$1,500.

In Brazil, our Fathers found themselves in real difficulties in the house that had been acquired in Limeira, and they asked the Bishop of Campinas if they might open a Parish in that city. He, however, in 1915, offered a foundation in Rio Claro, where he entrusted to our men the care of Holy Cross Church, and provided the use of the adjoining residence, with the promise of granting to them also the property if they performed well in their work among the people: he asked for this foundation three Priests. The offering was accepted and in October, they took over the residence. Frs. Grigolli and Adami with Brother Valzacchi moved there from Limeira. Then on December 31, Fr. Pelanda returned from Italy.

39. All this while the Houses in Northern Italy felt the sad consequences of the War. In Trent, the locale of the Oratory and also part of the House were occupied by

soldiers and the wounded in battle: the Boarding House and the Oratory continued to function, but much hindered.⁴

In Verona, the rooms of the Workers Boarding House were occupied by troops. The Workers Group was able to function, but was continuously disturbed by air raids, one of which in November 1915, damaged the building without causing any victims. To recall this fact, as a sign of gratitude, a commemorative stone was cemented into the wall, under the statue of the Immaculate Mary and a votive lamp was placed before it.

The Workers Group did continue to function, even though in a reduced form. To assure its life in 1913, there was formed an Administrative Commission presided over by Monsignor Joseph Manzini, and Count Ugo Guarienti. In 1914, this Commission presented to the General Council a formula for a contract that was approved and signed: by means of this, the Commission assumed the task of providing the necessary funds for the expenses incurred in this work.

In Verona too, the Aspirants of our Apostolic School in May of 1916 was moved to Sezano to take over that House, that had been requisitioned by the military authority. And for the same reason, in November of that year the Novices and Postulants were transferred to Sezano, and they remained there for the entire scholastic year, 1916-1917.

In Udine, some of the areas in the College had been occupied by the local's schools and others, by the military: nonetheless, the College continued to show life, as did the care of St. Peter's Church continue.⁵ In Milano, the construction of the Basilica was proceeding very well, and in 1916, it was completed. However, the construction company opposed the opening of its opening unless the debt of 250,000 Lira that still weighed upon it was paid. When three members of the Archdiocesan Commission [Monsignor Locatelli, Monsignor Pantalini and Fr. Varisco] renewed its guarantee for the extinction of the debt, on December 24, 1916 permission was granted to open the Church.⁶ There still remained a debt on the House, and the General Council, waiting for better times, sold a part of the land, and in 1918, authorized Fr. Pio Gabos to seek an insured loan of 50,000 Lira at the Credit Bank, and another 25, 000 Lira from another Religious Community.

40. On November 4, 1916, there occurred the First Centenary of the Congregation. However, because of the conditions brought on by the War, no celebrations could be held. The Superior General, putting off for another time all official celebration, did send out a Circular Letter to the entire Congregation, to commemorate this happy occasion

⁴ Before Italy got into the War, Fr. Pivato, Director of the House, was not in good relationship with the civil authorities. He left the city and withdrew to Udine. Frs. Miori and Socrella remained in Trent.

⁵ In 1917, the Military Command had emitted the order of requisition of the Church [October 24], but the order was not carried out because of the retreat of the Italian troops following an enemy invasion.

⁶ In 1918, the Commission still had a debt toward the Ferraresi Gandini Company for 92, 000 Lira. Monsignor Locatelli and Fr. Varisco, with a loan of December 28, obliged themselves to extinguish this in 28 payments of six-month payments of 3,300 Lira, plus the interest of 5 % on the remaining debt. The responsibilities for the years 1919 and 1920 were met by the Commission – but, from 1921 on, they were paid by the Stigmatine Fathers.

and to invite the Confreres to follow the examples of virtue and priestly zeal that our first Confreres left us⁷. A copy of this Circular Letter was also sent to the Bishops of the Dioceses where there were Houses of the Congregation, and other most eminent and benevolent personalities, as to Cardinals Pompili, Casetta and Falconio, to the Secretary of the Congregation of Religious, to the Director of the *Civiltà Cattolica*, Fr. Andreoli, Superior General of the Ministers of the Infirm. From all there were received beautiful responses. For that First Centenary, there was also published a ***Brief Chronicle of the Congregation***, that covered from the beginning to the approbation of the Holy See [1816-1890]⁸. At the beginning of this published book work, there are also included this Circular Letter of the Superior General, and also included some of the letters he received in response⁹.

It was also the plan of the Superiors to gather and publish a second volume of ***The Reminiscences of the Deceased Fathers and Brothers*** who had died after 1886, to continue the edition of a similar book published in 1886, 50 years earlier, for the Golden Jubilee of the priestly ordination of Fr. Peter Vignola: however, the War, as it had counseled against any external manifestation of celebration, likewise impeded several of the compilers of this planned work called to military serviced to present in time their portion of the work entrusted to them. There was published at this time the biographies of the Vignola brothers, Frs. Peter and Vincent, and Joseph Marchesini¹⁰, the work of Fr. Pio Gurisatti.

In the meantime, other confreres had been called to arms: Fr. Gino Gruppo, attached to the Military Hospital of Verona. Fr. Emilio Recchia served as Chaplain of the 247 Infantry regiment, and in 1917 was a Prisoner of War in Friuli, and interned in Germany. Fr. Godfrey Friedmann was assigned to the Military Hospital in Udine, which in 1917, after the enemy invasion, withdrew into our Archepiscopal College of Udine, and during the period of the invasion he served as Curate in Pantianico. Fr. Richard Piccioni, in 1918, was sent to France with the Austrian Troops, dislocated there, where he was able to capture the esteem and the affection of both officers and simple soldiers. The Deacon Angelo Caimi was assigned to a Field Hospital in Albania. Fr. Angelo Pagliarusco and Brother Edward Avesani were attached to the Military Hospital in Verona. Brother Charles Valenti, in 1917, was a Prisoner of War in Friuli. Cleric John Bolzanello and the Novice, Humbert Ghiringhelli, did not return to the Congregation after the War. And in January 1917, Fr. Dominic Rossi was called to arms, and assigned to the Military Hospital of Verona.

⁷ **NB: English Translator's Note:** an English translation of this much cited Circular Letter appears on the web-site www.st-bertoni.com, section History, under A Brief Chronicle, as part of the 'Introduction' of the English translation of *Breve Cronaca I*.

⁸ **NB: English Translator's Note:** an English translation of this appears above in this web-site.

⁹ Also in 1916, there appeared the booklet, *The Spirit of the Venerable Gaspar Bertoni*, printed in Milan by the Eucharistic League press, and a number of Ecclesiastical Reviews commented on this publication.

¹⁰ **NB: English Translator's Note:** An English translation of this appears on the web-site www.st-bertoni.com, section History, under 'Early Biographies'

41. In 1917, inconformity to the Constitutions approved and which became obligatory for the members, Fr. Erminio Lona was named 'Visitor' [regional superior] of North America. Permission was granted to the Coadjutor Brothers, already Professed, who had not yet put on the religious habit, there was given them the freedom to choose to do so, or not. However, the obligation for entering Postulants that they would have to wear it in accord with the Constitutions.

In the same year, there was completed the six year term of the Superior General, and since he could not assemble a General Chapter due to the War, there was requested of the Sacred Congregation to extension of one year, and this was extended still another year. So, the General Chapter finally assembled in 1919.

Still in 1917, another step forward was realized in the Cause of the Venerable Founder's Beatification. At the death of Fr. Pizzighella in 1911, Fr. Graziani was named Postulator, and he mis-placed the documents of the process so far underway, so much so that the Congregation of Rites had the impression that the Cause had been abandoned. In 1916, there was nominated as Postulator, Fr. Balestrazzi who obtained the naming of a new *Ponente* of the cause in the person of Cardinal Philip Giustini, since Cardinal Gotti had died on March 19, 1917. He proposed to the Sacred Congregation the treatment of the Process, *Concerning the non-public worship*, a phase of the Cause for which Fr. Pizzighella, in his time had prepared and had printed the *Positio*. But, since 16 years had passed, the Bishop of Verona himself issued a decree stating that there had been no public worship rendered the Founder. This was based on the phase of the Process that was established in 1901. However, the Sacred Congregation of Rites ordered that a new visitation to the tomb be made and this was supervised by the charge of Cardinal Bacilieri. Fr. Jordan Corsini, Fr. Peter Valbusa of the Most Holy Trinity were appointed, as was Fr. Charles DeFerrari of the house of the Stimmate. Following the report of this visit, Cardinal Bacilieri, on April 27, sent to the Congregation of Rites a new declaration on the absence of public worship. On July 3, in the particular Congregation of Rites, there was confirmed the sentence of the Bishop of Verona under the condition that there be obtained from the Holy Father the dispensation from keeping the body of the Founder, *not under the ground*, but in the wall of the Oratory.¹¹ After this the Postulator petitioned the Remissorial Documents for the Apostolic Process Regarding *his Reputation in General*, and these were promulgated on July 17, and sent to Fr. Marini, Vice-Postulator: the Process opened on July 17, 1918 and closed on January 17, 1919 and a collection of all this was sent to Rome.

42. Meanwhile, in October 1917, the events connected to the war heightened: the Austro-Germanic troops opened up a wedge at Caporetto, in the eastern boundary and invaded the Provinces of Udine and Belluno. One part of the Italian army was surrounded and captured¹² – another part put up a resistance, on the right bank of the

¹¹ cf. **BERTONIANO**, 1929, p. 178.

¹² In the days of the hostile invasion, Brother Charles Valenti was captured in defense of Friuli; Fr. Emilio Recchia was interned in Germany [cf. **BERTONIANO**, 1923, P. 29]. Fr. Tarcisio Martina, in the year 1918, carried out a bold mission in territory occupied by the enemy, by gathering important information: for which service he was awarded the Silver Medal for bravery.

Piave River. The terrorized population fled *en masse* before the enemy, and took refuge in Central Italy. The Superiors of the Apostolic School were concerned by the rumors that circulated, which spoke of a possible occupation of Verona, and of the danger deriving from the air raids, and also the threatened mobilization of the city, to which the Trentine students would be subjected, they sent the Aspirants and Novices to Pistoia – the temporarily Professed to Parma, and the perpetually Professed to Pavia. After some days, the Superior General being informed of the matter, called the Professed to Rome, lodging them with the Sons of Holy Immaculate Mary, on Via del Mascherone, enrolling them in the Pontifical Gregorian University. The Aspirants were housed in the Summa Villa of the Seminary of Pistoia, at St. George's in Ombrone. To here was also transferred the teaching personnel of the Student House, and they continued their internal classes for the Aspirants. The Bishop of Pistoia, at that time, was Bishop Gabriel Vettori, who had succeeded Bishop Sarti, in 1915. Even some of the college students of Gemona, who had not been sent home into their families, were brought by Frs. Madussi and Henry Gabos to Pistoia, and lodged in the old 'Temple'¹³, until such time that they could be reunited with the families, who had fled into different regions of Italy.

43. In Gemona, there remained Frs. Edward Castellani, Nicholas Tomasi and J.B. Perenzoni, who continued to busy themselves with the Oratory, which first had met in the House Chapel and then later in St. John's Church: he also taught some school there to the high school students, some of whom had been in the Diocesan Seminary. At the same time, he maintained a small College, and offered his spiritual assistance to some near by villages, as they had done prior to the enemy invasion.

From Udine, at the notice of the enemy invasion, Frs. Scotton and Pivato left right away, and they took refuge in Rome: there remained there Frs. Zambiasi, Zanghellini, Pedrotti, Angeli, to whom was added also Fr. Friedmann, who remained in the city to take care of the wounded and sick soldiers in the Military Hospital, and the Brothers Spagnoli and Guzzola. In the days of the invasion, the city remained practically deserted because of the flight of almost the entire population: the private houses and the stores were all sacked, and even our own men had to gather food stuffs, which in great part they hid for the enemy requisitions, to be assured of some provisions for the entire time of the occupation.

Then, on the evening of December 16, 1917, while they were seated at table for supper, there appeared a military command that placed them under arrest, and immediately, without even allowing them time to take with them objects of clothing necessary for them, they were all led, including the Sisters, to the city prisons.

¹³ In Pistoia, Fr. Bertapelle remained. Already in 1913, while waiting for a field of activity to open up, somewhat restricted now that had been allowed for our Fathers, and the great need for personnel that the Congregation experienced, the General Council had decided to close the House: however, the Bishop, + Andrew Sarti, transferred there from Guastalla, at the death of Bishop Mazzanti, and following an appeal made by the population that were not happy with the proposed departure of our Fathers, turned to the Holy Father, Pius X, to obtain that at least Fr. Bertapelle might be left there. The Council had granted him a year. And in February 1914, they extended this stay there in that place, without limit.

They were confined there for two days, and subjected to interrogations, without receiving hardly any food. In the meanwhile, the College remained at the discretion of the military authorities and of the public who took from there whatever they wanted: the damage done was estimated to be 70,000 Lira. Fortunately, they did not discover what was hidden, as they had supplies, which was thought to be a grace from heaven: and already in the days of their imprisonment, the Fathers bound themselves by vow to make a Pilgrimage to the Madonna of Castelmonte, near Cividale, if they would find that they had hidden¹⁴.

In Capodistria, there remained Frs. John Lona, William Ludescher and Acler, who in 1916 had opened to the public the Church of St. Blaise, next to the Grisoni Institute, after having renovated it anew: it was much frequented by the faithful.

In Trent, Frs. Miori and Socrella were assigned. Brother Quiriono Toller served his military time in the city, and Louis Guardia in Innsbruk. As was the case with the House of Trent, likewise it was the situation at Malosco, they were taken over by the military. This was also the situation with the House of the most Holy Trinity in Verona, which was requisitioned by the military, and they placed there a territorial hospital.

At the Stimate, the Automobile Mechanics School, next to the Workers Boarding House, was much frequented, and it had permission to set aside some good revenue. The Administrative Commission, following the counsel of Cardinal Bacillieri, thought of investing some of these sums realized into the purchase of the Canal Palace, which would have stood for the patrimony of the Workers Organization. This also would have served with its income to cover the expenses of the entire endeavor. The Palace was acquired on August 24, 1918, and inscribed into the name of the 'Anonymous Civil Society of Stable Goods' [S.A.C.I.]¹⁵. It was set up on that occasion for a period of 30 years, with the social capital of 180,000 Lira, divided into 36 stocks and bonds: it had promised to acquire and administer the stable goods, and open and maintain places of moral, professional and civic instruction and education.

44. In October 1918, **hostilities** ceased, and the Provinces of Udine, Belluno, Treviso [as well as those of Trent and Trieste]. Were cleared of enemy troops: the Houses of Trent, Capodistria, Udine and Gemona, took up their relationship with the other Stigmatine House of Italy. In Verona, the House of the most Holy trinity continued to be occupied by a Military Hospital. The Aspirants and the Novices were kept in Pistoia until May of 1919, when they moved to Sezano. Only in October of this same year were they able to re-enter the Most Holy Trinity residence. Likewise, the Professed Students remained in Rome¹⁶. Little by little the Confreres who had been called to arms were discharged from the service, and they returned to our

¹⁴ This vow was fulfilled on March 21, 1921. Frs. Zanghellini, Friedmann, Pedrotti, Angeli, and Brother Spagnoli. Fr. Zambiasi and Brother Guzzola were impeded from participating in it.

¹⁵ In 1917, the Commission for Administration of the Workers Association had presented a request of the General Council, to set up their organization into a moral entity. However, in order to do this it would have to provide its own patrimony, and to cede the ownership of these locales, to those presently occupying them: as a result, the petition was not granted.

¹⁶ During the summer vacations, they were able to spend time in 1918, at Rocca Priora, with the Pallotines. In 1919, they were at Palestrina, with the Franciscans. In 1920, they spent the summer in Malosco.

Communities: in the individual Houses, they took up again their normal and ordinary occupations.

In January 1919, since the state of war had ended, the General Council decided to convoke the General Chapter for the election of the major offices, calling for it to be held in Verona, on August 4. In this same session, of January 28, then was treated another question that was of interest to the Confreres in Verona. The birth-place of the Venerable Founder, situated in Via Nichola Mazza, once known as Cantarane, in St. Paul's Parish, had come into the possession of one Fr. Cajetan Fiorio, a zealous apostle of the youth. Continuing the ancient traditions that had made of that home a place of refuge for the youth of the parish, and there had been constructed there a small theater. Wishing now to retire to a private life, and desiring to sell this property, he offered it to the Stigmatine Fathers, disposed to cede it at a very favorable price. The Council took this offer into consideration, and decided to accept it if it did result that economically it proved to be feasible: the one charged with seeing this through, did nothing about it, and the house passed into other hands.

45. In August of that year, the XXth General Chapter assembled in Verona, and Fr. John B. Tomasi was re-elected, and the Councilors were Frs. Zanghellini [Vicar], Pio Gabos, DeFerrari [Secretary] and Friedmann who was also named the Procurator General. Fr. Balestrazzi was elected Economus General.

In the Chapter there were also approved further modifications on the Constitutions, now to bring them into conformity with the Code of Canon Law, just recently promulgated. There was also approved the proposal to publish a monthly periodical of a religious and educative nature, to be diffused among Christian families, and to publish a popular biography of the Founder. Furthermore, the Chapter deliberated that our Students ought to study the languages of the regions where our houses have been opened, and ordered that steps be initiated to obtain an Office and Mass of the Sacred Stigmata.

Following the General Chapter, the General Council decided to keep the Professed Students in Rome, housing them at Holy Cross¹⁷ and our Priests would teach them philosophy and theology there. However, the House there was notable to accept them immediately, so there was rented for one year, an apartment from the Sons of Mary Immaculate, that had been left free at that time by the Doctrine Fathers. Our students were then transferred there and attended internal classes, until at Holy Cross there were accomplished the renovations. In the following year, 1920, the students of theology moved into the renovated House at Holy Cross, while the philosophy students were sent to Verona, where they also attended internal classes.

In obedience to a Deliberation of the General Chapter, the Council also have the task to Fr. Pio Gabos, Director of the House of Trent, the task of initiating the publication of a Stigmatine periodical, the title of which would be: *The Missionary in the Family*, but it came out with the title" *For the Good*. The Council further decided that the official image of the Venerable Founder would be the one that Fr. Marani had done. It also reconfirmed in the office of 'Visitor' of the North America region, Fr. Erminio Lona, assigning to him two Councilors.

¹⁷ On 1918, for reasons of health, the Pastor, Fr. Piccoli, was exonerated from his office, and he was substituted for by Fr. Erminio Pivato, who took possession of the Parish on September 8.

In 1920, for the first time, there was conducted the Canonical Visitation to the Houses of Italy, in the form prescribed for the Constitutions, which had entered into force two years earlier: Frs. Friedmann and Gabos were delegated to conduct this. Following this Visitation it was deliberated to close the House of Capodistria. Already for several years, our Fathers there were often at odds with the Council of Administration there, which wanted to overlap its oversight into the disciplinary area. Even in their administrative responsibilities, the care of those who lived there was quite poor. The General Council, in 1913, had decided to withdraw our Priests, but the Bishop of Trieste [Bishop Karlin, who had succeeded Bishop Nagl] intervened, making his influence felt on the Council of Administration.

As long as the War raged, matters went on as best they could. When the war ended, the same difficulties in many instances continued, and even more so now there was felt the lack of personnel. So, it was decided definitively to close that House. The departure of our Fathers occurred on October 11, to the great displeasure of the populace. Following that Canonical Visit, there was also deliberated the close of the House of Pistoia, and Fr. Bertapelle was recalled from there.

46. In 1920, the Superior General made another Canonical Visitation to the Houses of North America, and noted that the work our men were doing there was most promising. There was experienced there, as well, the need for additional personnel, as the work continued to increase.

In Springfield, in the preceding year, there had opened a parochial school for the Italian children. And five Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy of Savona came to care for them. In the beginning, they were housed in a lodging next to the Columbus Hall, but then they moved to Margaret Street, in two houses acquired for them. In 1920, there was purchased a small temporary Church, for the sections of the area known as 'Mittingue' and 'Agawam', which served until 1925, when St. Anthony's Church was built.

In Milford, too, thought was given to open a parochial school, and two homes were purchased that would serve for a Sisters' Convent, and a tract of land next to the old Church, which had been used from 1913. Later, there was given to the Parish a house with some land next to it, situated between the Church and the Sisters' Convent. For Christmas of 1920, there arrived there in Milford, four Sisters of Mercy, who assisted the Fathers in the teaching of Christian Doctrine, and they opened a kind of Maternity School, where they taught sewing and repairing, and a school of Italian for the children of the Parish.

Upon the return of the Superior General from North America, there was appointed as Visitor for that region, Fr. John B. Zaupa, who made a visit to Italy in 1921, seeking new helpers. Fr. Balestrazzi volunteered to return there, and his petition was accepted, and so he resigned as Economist General and from the office of Postulator of the Cause of the Founder.¹⁸

In Springfield in 1920, Bishop Tomas Beaven died. He had shown such good will always toward our Fathers, and especially toward Fr. Dalla Porta, who assisted him in his last illness, and comforted him with the Sacraments of our faith. Bishop

¹⁸ Fr. Rossi took his place as Economist, and Fr. Friedmann as Postulator.

Thomas O'Leary succeeded him, who also manifested sincere affection for our Fathers, appreciating the work they accomplished.

47. From Brazil, Fr. Grigolli had come to Italy to participate in the General Chapter of 1919, and after the Chapter remained in Italy. The Fathers who continued on in that region were not sufficient to sustain the works of the two Houses of Tibagy and Rio Claro. The thought was to give up Rio Claro, and that all should work out of Tibagy. However, the men there, hoping always for better times, retained the House of Rio Claro, where, for the time, they had not been able to do very much: but, the better times did arrive. In 1920, the following were sent to Brazil: Frs. Albino Sella, Joseph Toniolli, Cyril Zadra¹⁹ and Brother Charles Valenti. With the help of these men, they were able to retain Rio Claro, and to accept a new Parish in Paraná, in the city of Castro, 70 kilometers from Tibagi. This new parish had been offered by the Bishop of Curitiba, and Fr. Pelanda took possession of it in 1921.

In the same year 1921, Fr. Albino Sella was named Visitor for Brazil, and he established his residence at Rio Claro and did what he could to consolidate that foundation. On March 13, the Association of Carmel had granted to our Fathers the rights that they had on the Holy Cross Church with its adjoining land. The Bishop, with a deed of May 14, had ceded to the Congregation the property of another piece of land, which in the past he had promised to the Association of Carmel for the establishment of an Institute there in behalf of the youth. On July 18, Frs. John Lona and Fortunato. Mantovani: the first of these two remained at Rio Claro, whereas the other, with Fr. Cyril Zadra, went to assist Fr. Pelanda in the Parish of Castro. On December 13, while celebrating at Rio Claro the Feast of S. Lucy, the corner-stone of the College under construction was blessed. The primary purpose of this building was to serve as an Apostolic School, to accept Aspirants.

48. Still in 1921, as the state of war had ceased, and the communities had returned to their regular life, there was taken up once more the publication of the **BERTONIANO**, which had been suspended in 1915, with the difference that it would not be monthly, but every other month.

In Verona, the Workers' Organization was in full swing once more, and with its professional trade schools, it drew about 500 young men. The Minister of Public Instruction on February 21, 1921, granted to this association the Medal of Gold. The theater of the Association was used as an ordinary hall for cycles of conferences on literary or religious matters. In the same year of 1921, the Diocesan Congress of Catholic Youth met there. Also the Workers Association was flourishing, and there was already felt the need to increase the facilities: the thought dawned of accepting Sisters for the kitchen and laundry, and an apartment was constructed for their Convent. The Sisters of the Holy family of Castelletto on the Garda were contacted, and they entered into service at the end of January of 1922.

In Milan in 1920, the Church of Holy Cross had been established as a Parish, and Fr. Alexander Grigolli was named its Pastor.²⁰ He was installed into his service that year by Monsignor Nasoni, Delegate of the Cardinal Arch Bishop. It was also

¹⁹ In 1919, this last mentioned Father left the Congregation, leaving no trace of himself.

²⁰ In 1923, Fr. Grigolli returned to Brazil, and Fr. Tarcisio Martina was named Pastor.

necessary for the men serving in this Parish to employ the Ambrosian Rite, obligatory then for Milan.²¹ In 1921, the Administration of the House assumed the obligation of liquidating the debt that still remained on the Church, those exonerating the Archdiocesan Commission.²² In May of this same year, Monsignor Locatelli solemnly blessed the new Baptistry, and in June the Bishop of Pavia, + His Excellency Ciceri, consecrated the new main altar.

At Holy Cross in Rome, as was noted earlier, our students of theology still lived there: at the end of the scholastic year, noting the many inconveniences that derived from the frequent contacts of the young students with the parishioners, and of their being involved in parish life in so many needs, distracted them from the necessary commitment they had toward study and regular discipline. As a result, the General Council transferred the entire student body to Trent, with those on the college level attended the internal schools, and the theologians went to the Diocesan Seminary for their classes. The Director of Trent was Fr. Friedmann, and Fr. Fantozzi took his place as Procurator General and Postulator of Fr. Bertoni's Cause.

In Verona, at the Most Holy Trinity, the Apostolic School remained as well as the Novitiate²³: and the Director was Fr. Silvio Segà, who, on December 13, solemnly consecrated the Apostolic School to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

49. In 1922, there was begun in Verona, the Apostolic Process, continuing *On His Virtues and Miracles in Particular*, another phase in the Cause of Beatification of the venerated Founder. Already earlier in 1919, there had been completed the phase entitled; *On His Reputation in General*, and had been forwarded to Rome. Following this, as Cardinal Giustini had died, there was obtained as *Ponente* of the Cause, Cardinal Gennaro Granito Pignatelli di Belmonte, who on June 28, 1921, in the Particular Congregation of Rites, he had proposed the treatment on the validity and the review of the earlier Process *On the Reputation*, and there was recognized the Founder's Reputation for Holiness, and this was declared by the proper Decree.²⁴

Fr. Fantozzi succeeded Fr. Friedmann in the office of Postulator, and Fr. Octavian Piccoli, who had handled the negotiations required for the setting up of this Process²⁵. This began in Verona on June 7, 1922: and already in the first session, there was noted a very serious irregularity that had been incurred in this long Process.

²¹ The Bull establishing the Parish bears the date February 9, 1920. The Decree of carrying this out is May 31 – the taking possession by the Pastor, was July 11.

²² This was an agreement stipulated in May 1923, and approved by the Archdiocesan Commission. The Stigmatine Fathers declared that they would be obliged to extinguish the debt in so far as they held the care of the Parish, and of its contributions.

²³ In April 1920, Monsignor Francis Grillo joined the Community. He was the Arch Priest of St. Daniel in Friuli, and in 1916, he had been named Bishop of Pesaro, and obtained permission not to accept this, from Benedict XV. In March 1921, Fr. Joseph Finetto entered. For many years, he had been Pastor of Spren in the Diocese of Feltre: and in December, Fr. Peter Campi entered, after two years of negotiations to obtain the permission from his Bishop of Vicenza.

²⁴ Cf. **BERTONIANO**, 1929, P. 178.

²⁵ For the taking up of this process anew, there was brought back from Rome to Verona, the copy of the Inchoative Process which in 1923, by mistake had been transmitted to the Congregation of Rites.

When the Original Acts of the Inchoative Process had been taken from the Diocesan Chancery, these were supposed to have been sealed with the Seals of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal. These were found opened, and without a trace of any seals. Fr. Fantozzi, the Postulator was made aware of this. After conferring with the General Promoter of the Faith, he responded that the Process could go on, but that in the Minutes of the meeting this fact should be recorded: in the proper moment, a petition would be made for a canonical '*sanatio.*' The sessions for the examination of the texts began on June 19, and were protracted until May 23, 1923. On June 12, of that same year, there was made the recognition of the body of the Founder by the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, presided over by Bishop Jordan Corsini, Auxiliary of Verona: following this, the Process was closed, and the documentation was brought to the Sacred Congregation.

50. Returning once more to North America in 1921, by disposition of the General Council, there was established in that region an Association recognized by the State of Massachusetts, with the name: *The Trustees of the Stigmatine Fathers.* Their purpose was to cultivate the virtue and the piety of the Roman Catholic Faith through the preaching and teaching, by giving Parish Missions, having in general, the care of the Italian emigrants.; It was authorized to acquire, sell, dispose of in any many whatsoever the stable goods and personal properties, in the necessary and fitting manner to tend toward that above-mentioned purpose. The General Council ordered also that to the name of the Association there be inscribed the names of our Houses, and that there be formed a Central Account in which there should be deposited the movable capital of the individual Houses, which would retain the ownership and the usufruct of these funds, not necessary for the annual running of the local community. Regarding this order, Fr. Victor Gurissati, former Director of the House of Scranton, simply refused to carry this out. In the previous year, he had also refused to be transferred to Springfield.²⁶ Repeatedly he had been invited by the Visitor, and repeatedly warned with the threat of expulsion, but he did not choose to hear any of it. As a result, the Superior General with the consent of his Council, on April 10, decreed his dismissal from the Institute. Following this Decree, Fr. Gurisatti had recourse to the Holy See, to seek secularization: but the Superior General was opposed to his secularization until he would have satisfied his duties toward the Congregation.

Fr. Lucchi, too, opposed a direct order of the Superiors, who asked him to leave Hazleton and to go to some other House in North America. The General Council tried to meet him part way in this difficulty, and allowed him to choose whatever house he would have preferred: he was even informed that he would be left in Hazleton if he would accept another Confre as Director, and some one else as Economus. But he would accept none of this. Being unable to transfer these two Fathers from Hazleton and from Scranton, the General Council decided to give up the two houses in Pennsylvania.

51. In 1922, the Superior General considering that within the year, the seven year experimental period allowed for the Constitutions would be up, in this long process for

²⁶ The Council showed itself disposed also to leave him in Scranton, provided he would have accepted another confrere as Director, and someone else as Economus.

the approbation of these, believed that it would be opportune for this reason to convoke the General Chapter. With the consent of his Council, he petitioned the Holy See for the authorization to convoke an Extraordinary General Chapter, with the faculty also of proceeding also to the election of the major offices if those men who held these positions and the Chapter would agree. The Holy See granted the requested authorization, making the disposition, however, that the Chapter should be presided over by its own Delegate, and this was the Very Reverend Fr. Benedict Lopez, OSB.

The Chapter was convoked for August 8, in the House of Holy Cross in Rome. Coming together on the day and place established, the Superior General in the act of indicating the order of business that had to be treated, declared that he had come to the decision to resign his office, as he no longer had the strength necessary to govern the Congregation: and he invited the Chapter to proceed in the first place to the election of a new Superior and to the Major Offices. The Chapter, after having invited him to withdraw his resignation, and discovering that on this matter, his decision was final, it proceeded to the election of his successor.

On the very first ballot, *by postulation*, it elected as the new Superior General, the Very Reverend Fr. John B. Zaupa, because he was not yet of sufficient canonical age. A dispensation was immediately obtained for this, and the Councilors elected were the following: Frs. Zambiasi [Vicar], Fiorio, DeFerrari [Secretary], and Fantozzi. The Procurator General was elected by acclamation, in the person of the out-going Fr. General, Fr. J. B. Tomasi. The Economus General was Fr. Rossi.

The Chapter then discussed and approved the modifications to the Constitutions which needed the approval of the Holy See, along with including those changes required by the new Code of Canon Law. The modifications were then brought to the Congregation of Religious, with the petition that they receive the definitive approbation.

Following the celebration of this Chapter, the General Council named as Ordinary Visitor of North America Fr. Anthony Dalla Porta, and approved a Statute in which there were indicated the role of the Visitor and of his Council. The Council then assigned to North America Frs. Remigio Zadra, William Ludescher [Ludessi], Charles Zanini, Louis Fontana, Joseph Kuster [Costa] and Fr. Joseph Zuliani. It entrusted Fr. Fr. Balestrazzi with the task of handling the difficulties with Fr. Lucchi and Fr. V. Gurisatti, bestowing on him the authority to do this with opportune instructions. For Fr. Lucchi, he maintained that it was impossible for him to leave Hazleton; he was given the faculty to choose any other Stigmatine House in the North American region. For Fr. V. Gurisatti, who was seeking secularization, there would be required that he first put himself right with our Congregation.

52. The General Council also decided to give up the foundation in Milwaukee, and to transfer Fr. Fadanelli to another House: he refused to obey, and had recourse to the Holy See, seeking secularization. The Council, in order to persuade him not to take that step, showed itself even disposed to hang on to that House and even to leave him there as Pastor, provided he would accept someone else as Director and an Economus. He would not accept these stipulations and preferred to leave the Congregation: we will see later on how this all concluded.

Also Fr. Lino Cembran, in 1921, obtained an Indult of exlaustration for one year, on condition that there be carefully observed the Vatican Decree, *Magni semper*, of the Consistorial Congregation, dated December 30, 1918.²⁷ In 1922, that same Congregation forbade under pain of suspension *a divinis* [forbidding a priest the exercise of his priesthood] to remain in the United States of America, and following the favorable view of the Superior General, he was given permission to go to Central America: under these conditions, he obtained the indult of secularization.

In 1922, also Fr. Lawrence Donazzan abandoned the Congregation, without benefit of any dispensation. He incurred canonical censures, which were imposed on him by the Apostolic Delegate, His Excellency, + John Bonzano. When he returned to Italy in January of 1923, he obtained from the Holy See the absolution from the censures, after having left in writing that he had deplored his own conduct, and asked pardon for the scandal he had given. In May of 1923, there was granted to him the Indult of exlaustration for one year, which then was prolonged. In 1923, he did receive the Indult of Secularization, with the prohibition of returning to the United States.

To make up for these sorrowful losses suffered by the Congregation in North America, the Superiors sought to look for other foundations. Already in 1921, Fr. Zaupa, the Ordinary Visitator, following the giving up of the Houses in Pennsylvania, addressed himself to some Bishops in the United States, in order to obtain in their Dioceses an Italian Parish and the permission to open there a House of Formation. The Cardinal Arch Bishop of Boston responded to him, offering him a parish in Lynn, about 12 miles from Boston, and the permission to open a Student House, in a locality yet to be agreed upon. Frs. Balestrazzi and Sozzi were sent to this new foundation, and they took possession of the Parish on April 20, 1922, taking care of the little Church which was inaugurated on August 13. The Cardinal of Boston was quite satisfied with the work of our Fathers, and in November he offered to the Congregation also a Parish in Waltham, which was inaugurated on the 26 of that same month.

In the same year 1922, the Arch Bishop of New York, following a recommendation from the Apostolic Delegate, offered to the Congregation a Parish in White Plains New York, in the periphery of New York. The parish had been established a few years earlier and was conducted by a secular priest who lived in a small house, and officiated on the ground floor in another small place in Brooklyn. The foundation was accepted in June, and Frs. Leo Sella and Joseph Rosa took possession of it.

53. In the meantime in Verona, in Verona, from June 12, 1921, commemorating the Founder's death. there arose the idea of celebrating in 1924, the centenary of the Oratory of the Stimate, From this first idea, it grew to the idea of celebrating in the same year, the Centenary of the Stigmatine Works, since because of the War in 1916, it was not possible to celebrate the centenary of the foundation of the Congregation.

The idea was approved by the Major Superiors and in December 1922, to prepare for these celebrations, a Committee of Honor was established, as well as an Executive Committee divided into five sections: one for the presidency; a second

²⁷ This concerned the moving of secular Priests from Europe to the Americas. – cf. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, Year 11, p. 39.

made up of ex-students; a third for the Oratories; a fourth for the festivities; and a fifth group, artistic in nature, that was to concern itself with preparing a monument for the Venerated Founder, to be set up as a memorial of the 100 years. A Circular Letter was sent out to the ex-students and to friends of the Community in order to collect commitments and offerings. And there was organized a contest for ideas on the monument that was to be set up in the little square on Via Carlo Montanari, in front of the House of the Stimmate. Among the many proposals for these festivities, was the publication of a Biography of the venerated Founder. This came out in 1922, written by Fr. Joseph Fiorio²⁸, and printed in Verona by the Bettinelli Press.

Another fact to recall here, which might have some tie with the centenary celebration, was the consecration of the Church of the Stimmate. In this year 1922, there occurred the first centenary of the reopening of the Church of the Stimmate for public worship. The Church had been closed for a while in 1919, and was used exclusively as the domestic chapel of those who lived there. In November of 1921, it was re-opened for the public, and in it the Pious Union of Franciscan Tertiaries had solemnly celebrated the recurrence of the 7th Centenary of the Franciscan Order. The consecration of the Church was celebrated on September 29, 1922, by Bishop Jordan Corsini, Auxiliary of Cardinal Bacilieri²⁹.

54. At the beginning of the year 1923, we find another new fact in the story of our Congregation: the naming of the first Cardinal Protector. Many times previously the General Chapters had presented the proposal to petition the Holy See for a Cardinal Protector. The Very Reverend Fr. Zaupa, after his election, with the consent of his General Council, sought as our Cardinal Protector, Cardinal John Bonzano. He had been Apostolic Delegate in North America, and was created a Cardinal on December 11, 1922. The Brief naming him was dated February 22, 1923, and he took possession in the Church of the Holy Cross, on April 22.

In Verona, on March 29 of this year, there was celebrated the Golden priestly Jubilee of Fr. James Marini. He was surrounded by the Confreres of the two Houses and a choice band of friends, especially among the clergy.

In Verona also the undertaking of the Workers Association was well set up, and the General Council in July of the same year 1923, decided to exonerate the Commission for Administration and these responsibilities were taken over by the Institute. They did ask the group that the might remain in the role of 'Patrons' of their organization. This deliberation had been preceded by opportune negotiations with the Commission itself. From 1922 on, the former Fr. General, Very Reverend Fr. John Tomasi, had denounced the Agreement of 1914, and Fr. Zaupa, after his election, was in agreement with the Commission concerning the manner of taking part, without obligations, in giving a written guarantee.

In that same session of July 1923, the General Council, following the proposal of the Superior General, in order to provide for the needs of the Mother House and the

²⁸ **NB: English Translator's Note: Fr. Fiorio was the author of these two volumes of the *Breve Cronaca* - as he was of the still very valuable *Spirit of the Founder*.**

²⁹ On November 22 of that same year, Cardinal Bacilieri died, and in June of 1923, there was called to succeed him, the Most Reverend Jerome Cardinale, Canon and Theologian of the Cathedral of Genoa.

Student House, both from the disciplinary perspective, and also to obtain a better distribution of personnel also in the other Houses, decided to transfer it to Verona. At the same time, the Council decided for the next scholastic year, to open private schools at the Stimate beginning with the first high school class, and named Fr. Peter Scotton as the Director.

Fr. Fantozzi, in returning to Verona, took up again the direction of the Workers Association. On November 5, on the occasion of the awards ceremony and the inauguration of the new year, in the presence of the local authorities, the Superior General made public the decision regarding the re-opening of the high school class. He also gave a brief resume' of the history of the Workers Organization, and of its development over the years. He thanked those in attendance, especially the Administrative Commission for the assistance that it had given to this Work in its most difficult moments: and in the name of the Congregation, he assumed the solemn responsibility to sustain the Institution for the good of the working class.

Meanwhile, the Student House was slowly building up again. At the beginning of that scholastic year, the students of Theology came down from Trent.³⁰ They returned to their old 'stamping grounds', which they had left six years earlier. A good number of new aspirants came increase the ranks of the Apostolic School. For this, important renovations and additions were made, constructing an entire new floor on the eastern side of the building. On the first floor of the building, in that space leading toward the interior court yard, there was set up a new Chapel, capable of holding 200 persons.³¹ The aspirants of the first three classes frequented school at the Stimate – all the other students attended internal classes.

55. In 1923, there was a request for a foundation in Ortonovo, in Lunnigianna, on the part of His Excellency, + Bernard Pizzorno, Bishop of Luni e Sarzana. The request included the care of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Mirteto, built by the piety of the people to remember a prodigious event on July 24, 1537. The local belief was that a statute of the Sorrowful Mother had shed tears of blood. This Sanctuary had been taken care of by the Dominicans and most recently by the Passionists. However, the latter wished to withdraw, and the Bishop appealed to Pius XI who intervened with his authoritative voice, to invite our Congregation to accept the care of the Sanctuary. On that occasion, the Bishop thought of giving to the Congregation also the Parish, in order to obtain some unity in the care of souls, and to avoid possible contrasts between the clergy of the parish and those assigned to the sanctuary.

The foundation was accepted, even in consideration of the recommendation of the last General Chapter that directed the Superiors to look for a place of repose for

³⁰ The high school students had come down from Verona from Trent for the previous scholastic year.

³¹ In 1914, important work had been done in Sezano in order to furnish the villa with its own freshwater. During this undertaking, a controversy with the Commune of Stella broke out, which accused our community of having tapped into the public water supply. In time, this accusation was shown to lack any basis in fact, as the Commune sent in their own people to investigate. However, *for the good of peace*, an agreement was reached, by offering to the Commune a certain percentage of the water thus obtained. The expense for this work was 60,000.

our sick Confreres, and for this purpose it seemed that the Sanctuary might be utilized. Our Confreres took over the Sanctuary, on July 12, with the intervention of the Bishop, who introduced the Fathers to those attending the ceremony. Also, having obtained the authorization for the parish, the Superior General presented as the first Pastor and 'abbot', Fr. Erminio Pivato: the Bishop, with his Decree of December 6, declared this religious parish to be entrusted to our Congregation, *at the will of the Holy See*³². The solemn entrance of the Pastor took place on September 8, 1924.

As a consequence to this, Fr. Bruno Chiesa was named Pastor of Holy Cross parish in Rome, and he made his entrance on April 15, 1923. A new pastor was also named for Milan at this time – as Fr. Grigolli was returning to Brazil – in the person of Fr. Tarcisio Martina, who took possession of the Parish on October 25.

In Parma during this year the Church was renovated under the supervision of the Architect Camillo Uccelli.³³ Two years earlier, there had been completed an enlargement of the Boarding House, and several small houses were purchased at the far end of the court-yard. These were demolished to extend the courtyard.

In Udine, there was celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the foundation of the College. On that occasion, the renovations and decoration of the Atrio got underway, and the monument to ex-members of the Student Association, who had died in battle in the War, was set up, and the College flag was blessed. At this celebration, there were present the civic authorities as well as a large representation of the local organizations. There, too, during this year, a technical School began operation, with the four lower grades offered, making use also of extern teachers. In the available space of the Recreation Center, there was opened a military organization, the first of its kind in Udine.

In December, the Superior General left for North America, accompanied by two students, Joachim Bortignon and Louis Zuliani³⁴. They were being sent also to help; out in the Apostolic School there, and they were at the same time to continue their studies in the Diocesan Seminary, in Brighton. It was the intention of the Superiors to open the Apostolic School in Lynn. But it soon became apparent that that would not be the best place. The city of Waltham offered a much better locality, as near by was an elementary school conducted by Sisters, and a near by high school, conducted by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. A few miles distant there was also Boston College, conducted by the Jesuits and the near by Diocesan Seminary. Therefore, after our fathers had been invited to care for the Italian Parish in that locality a piece of property on Lexington Street, with a beautiful main residence and a rather large piece of land. It was here in 1924, that Fr. Erminio Lona initiated the Apostolic School.³⁵

The clerics Bortignon and Zuliani first attended a special class in English at Boston College and in the following year they enrolled in the course of First Philosophy.

³² This is a technical canonical phrase.

³³ The Lourdes Grotto, in the side chapel, was constructed in the year 1936.

³⁴ From 1923-1926, Fr. J.B. Castellani also stayed in North America, being assigned to Preaching and giving Parish Missions to the Italians, especially in those parishes entrusted to our care.

³⁵ In those early years, the aspirants attended the Christian Brothers' High School there [St. Mary's].

56. In 1924, in Holy Cross parish in Rome, there was opened an elementary school for the youth of the parish. The theater was also enlarged, in order to render it more suited for the development of parish activities.

In Verona, there was celebrated with much the Golden Jubilee of St. Stephen's Oratory. Also in Gemona, the Oratory there observed its Silver Jubilee. On the contrary, the *Oratory of the Stimate*, which precisely in this very year should have been celebrating its centenary, because of long and difficult discussions with the Pastor of the Most Holy Trinity, and the Bishop of Verona, it had to be shut down³⁶.

In November 1924, there were celebrated in Verona the 100th anniversary of the Stigmatine Apostolates. It was established in the Festival Program³⁷ in which there were announced the Congress for the Marian Oratories and one for its ex-members. However, since the Oratory at the Stimate had to be discontinued, the thought was abandoned of the Congress, as was also the one for the former students. The end result, there was only the religious ceremony. On November 13-15, there was celebrated a solemn triduum in St. Anastasia's Church, and a large number of the faithful were in attendance: Fr. Julius Bevilacqua of the Oratory presented, and he spoke of Fr. Bertoni as a priest, a religious and a saint.

On the 16th, Archbishop Cherubini came from Rome, and celebrated the Mass in the Stimate and he distributed Holy Communion to the large number of faithful who attended. At 10:00 a.m., in St. Anastasia's, the Bishop of Verona celebrated the Pontifical Mass, in the presence of representatives of the Religious Orders and Congregations who were involved in instruction were in attendance. At the Gospel, Monsignor Joseph Manzini, the Vicar General of the Diocese, delivered the sermon, on the text: *The Just Man shall flourish, and like the cedar of Lebanon he will be multiplied*. He treated of the virtues and work of Fr. Bertoni in magisterial style. The celebrating Bishop, by a special concession of the Holy Father, imparted the Papal Blessing on all.

In the afternoon in the theater there was held a solemn Academy, in which the official discourse was delivered by Count Ugo Guarienti: in all these celebrations the music was offered by the students of the 'Bertoni Apostolic School'.

For the occasion, the Holy Father had sent a precious autographed document. Several Cardinals and Bishops throughout Italy and beyond also sent their best wishes for the occasion. As a remembrance of these celebrations there was printed and distributed a Commemorative Edition, richly illustrated, placing in evidence the works of the Congregation. There was also a brief biography of Fr. Bertoni distributed, the

³⁶ The Oratory, considered now as an Institution of Catholic Action was declared as under the competence of the local Pastor, and he wanted to conduct it in his own parish. In 1925, for the same reason, the Oratory of St. Mary of the Lily was ceded to St. Stephen's Parish.

³⁷ The General Council in July 1923, had approved the program of festivities: a religious feast in St. Anastasia's, the publication of a simple booklet, a Congress of former Marian Oratory members of both the city and the Diocese; the setting up of a commemorative stone at the birth-place of the venerated Founder; the transportation of the remains of those buried in the Church of the Stimate a raffle in support of the tuition free schools; the refurbishing of the Chapel of the Transfiguration and of the Founder's room, and a commemorative stone for the benefactors.

work of Fr. Joseph Mattei. On this occasion, there was redone the entrance way of the House with multi-colored marble of St. Ambrose. This was mounted on a rich setting of oak leaves and laurel, surrounding the bust of the Founder placed above the seal of the Congregation. The former Via Trettone was re-named 'Via Bertoni', and there was placed an inscription of the Founder's bust on the commemorative stone, with the words " *You benefited your home-land.* And finally, on this occasion, there was obtained the transfer into the confines of the Church of the Stimate the remains of 43 confreres who were rest ion the Cemetery. These remains were placed in the Church, where, for 45 years, those of the Founder had rested.

The 100th anniversary was celebrated also in other Stigmatine Houses of Italy. In Parma on October 26. It was celebrated with a Solemn Pontifical Mass, and discourse, offered by the Arch-bishop, Guido Conforti. Bishop Corsini, the Ordinary of Guastalla also participated as did representatives of Religious Orders and Congregations and Catholic Associations. In the evening, there was offered a kind of 'talent show', in the Academy conducted in the local theater.

On January 25, 1925, in Milan, the Cardinal Archbishop was in attendance at the morning celebration. In the evening the usual Academy was held, including the discourse of Sir Panighi, Secretary of the University of the Sacred Heart. In Udine, with the House of Parma joining in, on February 15, 1925, the celebrations were held in the Church of St. Peter, Martyr. The Pontifical Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Anthony Rossi, in the presence of the authorities and representatives of the very institutions of the city. There was also put out a commemorative edition, and the unveiling of the Bust of the venerated Fr. Bertoni, a gift of the former members of the Oratory.

In Trent, on June 21, 1925, the Vicar General offered a more solemn celebration of the Eucharist and then Bishop Marconi, OFM celebrated the Pontifical, substituting for the Prince Arch-bishop of Trent, with a great participation of the faithful.

57. IN 1924, in Springfield of North America, Fr. Anthony Dalla Porta became gravely ill, and for two months the parish was in great trepidation: public prayer was offered for his cure, and the joy of the population was unbounded when he could return to them. A further manifestation of affection occurred in October of that same year, when he celebrated his 25th year as a priest: at the solemn reception in his honor that was offered on that occasion, the Mayor of Springfield also participated in the name of the entire city, and the Vice-Consul of Italy was presented to honor the jubilarian.

In West Springfield on October 9, the new church of St. Ann's was inaugurated with the visit of the Bishop. After the blessing of the Church he celebrated a Pontifical Mass and administered Confirmation. In Pittsfield, also on April 20, the new Church was opened to the public. This proved to be an event which interested the whole city. The inauguration was celebrated by the Superior General, and on October 26, the Bishop of Springfield celebrated the solemn blessing with a Pontifical Mass and the conferral of Confirmation.

The basement of the Church was used as a reception hall, and the local populace offered a theatrical performance, with a concert in the evening³⁸.

In Waltham on January 28, the old Church burned down and on February 10 the work of reconstruction got underway: in the meantime, services were held in the basement. On February 20, the 10th anniversary of the parish was celebrated, and on March 12, the services in the Church were re-established. On September 24, construction began of the new Church on River Street, which was inaugurated that Christmas Eve.

In White Plains from their arrival there, Frs. Leo Sella and Joseph Rosa found that the Chapel and the dwelling next to it, were really indecent and in very poor condition. So, they set about looking for another central location where they might meet the needs and the aspirations of the Italian colony there. They found a most opportune locality, near the electric station on South Lexington Avenue. However, they did encounter a very strong opposition on the part of the Diocesan Council. They took their case to Archbishop Hayes, explaining to him the needs and the desires of the Italians there, and they were authorized by him to acquire that property: it was a rather large house with three floors, with ample and comfortable surroundings, with much fresh air. Behind this, and connected to it, there were two large halls one next to the other. The entire area was also a vast, shady area. With a down-payment in September 1923, they were assured of the property, and with another payment of \$45,000.00 on March 1, 1924, they obtained that passing of this to the Italian Parish. In the meantime, they sold the property of Brookfield, and on July 1, they began to conduct services on the upper floor of South Lexington Avenue. This was blessed by the Pastor, Fr. Leo Sella on July 3, to the great joy of all.

Likewise in White Plains, in the Silver Lake section where there were 600 Italians in 1923, a large hall was purchased which was reduced to the Chapel dedicated to St. Anthony, and was served by our Fathers, and very soon the Italians of the area flocked there in large numbers, and with them, also the faithful of other nationalities, which cost our men a tremendous effort. In 1925, in the northern section on Ferris Avenue, where there were more than a thousand Italians, a tract of land was acquired with the intention of building a house there.

58. Fr. Fadanelli remained in Milwaukee, and in 1922 he obtained the indult of secularization. However, the Consistorial Congregation informed the Archbishop there that for special reason, it was not permitted for Fr. Fadenelli to remain there, under suspension of the faculty to celebrate the Mass. There followed then negotiations between the Superior General and the Archbishop of Milwaukee in the hopes of reaching some accord regarding that foundation. Finally after a written declaration from the Archbishop according to which he declared that the Stigmatine Fathers had acted correctly in all these discussions regarding their withdrawal from Milwaukee, with the assurance from him that Fr. Fadanelli had left the Archdiocese, nor was he able to return there in the future. The Superior General, then in the name of his Council, declared that the community abandoned its every right in this controversy regarding the Italian Parish. Also, Fr. Lucchi, in 1924, submitted a declaration in which he

³⁸ In June of this year at Pittsfield, a piece of property was acquired with two houses near the Church. Eventually these were used as a Sisters' Convent.

recognized and regretted his own failings, and asked pardon for the scandal associated with his conduct, recognizing that the manner of our Superiors' acting in his regard had been fair and, unfortunately, necessary. Following all this, the Superior General that it well not to oppose his secularization and insertion into the Diocese of Scranton.³⁹

In Fr. Victor Gurisatti's situation, the Holy See committed the case to the Apostolic Delegate, His Excellency Fumasoni Biondi. He ordered Fr. Fadanelli to submit all of his financial records to two representatives, one from the Diocese, and one from the Congregation, so that they might verify which of the goods presently possessed by him, pertained to the Diocese, and which to the Congregation. He refused to hand these over, and therefore, in September 1924, he was suspended from serving any further as a priest.

In 1925, the Superior General, in order to facilitate the entire matter and to put an end to the scandal, declared that as soon as Fr. V. Gurisatti would submit to the order of the Apostolic Delegate, and would have obtained the indult of secularization, the Congregation would charitably hand over to him, whatever the two representatives had seen justly belonged to the Congregation. He still refused to obey: and the Superior General, in 1927, with the consent of his Council, presented to the sacred Congregation of Religious the Decree of Dismissal, already emitted in his regard, on April 10, 1921, and by this decision was confirmed.⁴⁰

59. In Brazil, following the Superior General's Visitation, there was nominated a Council with the same faculties⁴¹ as those established for North America: there was also established in that region a kind of Legal Corporation [known as the *Associação dos Estigmatinos para a Educação e Instrução Popular*]. Its competence was to incorporate all the financial goods of the Community there. There was set up a Central Account in which there was to be deposited all the monies not necessary for current expenses.

At Rio Claro, in 1923, construction got underway for the future College for which a Count Materasso offered a considerable donation. In 1924, the Apostolic School was opened with ten young men, of whom 6 were sons of Italian emigrants.⁴²

³⁹ Fr. Lucchi died in Hazleton in 1944.

⁴⁰ Following all this, Fr. V. Gurisatti suffered a mental breakdown and later was a patient in a Baltimore Hospital. There he regained some mental balance and recognized and regretted in writing the wrongs he had committed against the Community, and vigorously asked to be readmitted into the Congregation. The Superiors assured him of this, as he continued the care being given to him. However, he died suddenly on May 26, 1931: from September 12, 1938, he had been incardinated into the Diocese of Scranton.

⁴¹ He had departed for Brazil in October 1922, and returned that December. In 1922, Fr. Ferruccio Zanetti returned to Italy to participate in the General Chapter: in May of that same year, Fr. Fortunato Morelli also departed for Brazil

⁴² Fr. John Lona, assigned there in Rio Claro, for some time had the responsibility of a parish in Cadeiras, a few kilometers distant from Rio Claro. In 1924, he began publishing in Portuguese a little work for the spiritual assistance of the sick, which proved to be of real value for those vast regions where priests were so few in number.

In Paraná, the Bishop of Curitiba made a Pastoral Visitation of Castro and Tibagy: accompanied by the Fathers from September until December 1923, he crossed the entire region and all the localities dependent on those two parishes. He was most pleased at the level of the practice of the faith in the area among the inhabitants, and he offered an enthusiastic comment on the zeal of the Fathers committed there. At Tibagy, Fr. Zanetti had returned from Italy in March 1923, arriving with Fr. Julius Sieff.⁴³

In 1923, the Arch-bishop of São Paulo offered to our Congregation St. Cajetan's Parish, which up until then had been administered by the Scalabrini Father, of the nearby parish of St Bernard's, where they went to teach Sunday. The parish was accepted on September 18 and Fr. Pelanda took possession of it on December 13. In February 1924, was assigned there also to assist. Fr. Pelanda committed himself right away to restoring the Church which was in much disorder, and to invigorate the Parish Associations: the Parish was officially inaugurated on April 13, 1924.

60. Before closing this chapter of the Chronicle, we will add that on June 12, 1925, the Sacred Congregation of Religious, in its Plenary Session, gave a favorable vote to the definitive approbation of our Constitutions: on the 23 of the same month, the Pontiff, His Holiness Pius XI, approved in a definitive manner the Constitutions of the Congregation. The Sacred Congregation emitted its Decree with the date, July 28.

The Superior General, in communicating this happy news to the entire Congregation, appealed to the Confreres in his Circular Letter that all understand the great importance that the Constitutions have for the life of the Institute and the need of observing them, by all the members of the Congregation.

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⁴³ In the Parish of Castro, in this year, there were constructed four new Chapels for the religious services: and in the center, there was opened a parochial school in order to combat the advertising campaign conducted by the Protestant school in the area. At this time the men began publishing a Provincial Bulletin with the title, *O Amigo da Verdade*.