

Fr. Peter Vignola



The Third Superior General

1875 – 1891

[Chapters 7 – 13]



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Schematic Outline of His Life¹



PIETRO VIGNOLA (priest)

BORN: Verona – Jan. 20, 1812

ORDAINED: 1836

ENTERED: Stimate – 1859

DIED: Verona (Stimate) – Aug. 23, 1891

AGE: 79

He worked in the diocesan seminary as a vice-rector for ten years. Then, he was appointed parish priest of San Pietro in Monastero (near the Cathedral of Verona) for another ten years. And, finally, he became the archpriest of San Fermo Maggiore for three years.

He left this position to enter the Stimate in 1859. After his profession, he was very committed in the sacred ministry and taught moral Theology in the Diocesan Seminary. He was also the rector of the Marian Oratory.

He was elected Superior General in 1875, and led the Congregation for 16 years. He founded the communities of Bassano, Pavia and Rome (*Santa Maria dei Miracoli*).

In 1890 he obtained from the Holy See the official approbation of our Congregation. He was struck by paralysis as he was descending the pulpit after a sermon and died soon after.

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¹ Source: Confrades.com – by Fr. Silvano Zanella, CSS.

Short Biography²

- Birth and Early Education:

Fr. Peter Vignola was born in a family that could very well be called a patriarchal family, not only because of the simple, affable and gentle characteristics of all its members, but, above all, because of the spirit of piety and religion in which each one of them was distinguished. The members of this family gave genuine edification to the poor families, a great number of whom lived in the Vignola neighborhood. The old homestead was in St. Stephen's Parish in Verona, on the street that leads to the Church of the *Madonna del Terraglio*.

To be persuaded even further concerning this family, two facts should be recalled here. Three sisters of the head of this family had entered Religion. They were, however, driven from their Convents at the time of the suppression of the Monasteries, carried out by Napoleon I. Another outstanding fact was that of the Vignola sons born to these blessed parents, five of them were ordained Priests. Fr. Vincent, who was the last ordained, recalled on the day he sang his First Mass, that there were all five brothers on the altar. This was indeed an unusual occurrence – in fact, it was more than rare; it was unique.

The oldest of the sons was Fr. Peter. He was born on the first day of the year 1812. His parents were John Baptist Vignola, and Lucia Fiorani. On the day of his birth, he was also baptized. At that time, the family was living in the Cathedral Parish, and then later moved to a house in St. Stephen's Parish. The home in which he was born served as a stepping stone to the Priesthood. In that home a Christian atmosphere pervaded the family life. The young boy's simple soul was permeated with a profusion of graces, and the ineffable delights of the faith. This grace and faith have an effect on a man, even before he is brought forth to the light of day, through the sacred contacts with the soul and heart of his Mother.

As a boy, he set up a little altar in his home, and there, with his brothers, would carry out their own sacred services. This, for them, was a great diversion. The good Mother observed all this, harbored in her heart, as did her husband, the highest hopes for the future of their sons. However, she was taken from them when Peter was 14 years of age. He thus baptized with his tears the dawn of his adolescence. The young boy did not feel that his Mother was gone forever. In his heart, he wept for her death, but at the same time, he believed she was in Paradise – he cried for her absence, but yet felt her presence. He would look toward the heavens, as though to follow her blessed journey. Her voice seemed still be coming to him, and reinforced

² Source: Biographies of the Early Stigmatine Community (cf. Bibliography).

the lessons that she had taught him. She seemed to speak to him from her grave, and from the sky.

- **His Vocation and Ordination to the Priesthood**

He was a boy endowed with an excellent temperament, a firm intelligence, good and sound judgment. What is more, there was a goodness about him, and an evident holiness of life. All those signs that are generally considered as sure indications of a vocation to the Priesthood, appeared in young Vignola so clearly and evidently.

He had just completed, with honor, the four years of High School, and the two years of Rhetoric in the Imperial Royal Lyceum. After spending the summer vacation in the family home in Avesa, he was coming back into the city with his brother, Louis, to begin the study of Philosophy. When they passed through St. George's Gate, they reached the stone bridge. Louis turned to follow the road to the right, leading to the High School, but Peter stopped, and called out to his brother: 'So long - I am going to the Seminary!'

At these words, Louis stopped, and followed his brother with his eyes, and no doubt with his thoughts. Perhaps very soon, Louis would follow in the path his brother was now treading alone. At that moment, he had a strong desire to follow his brother. He would do so in fact one day, and would be the second Vignola son, among the five to become a Priest.

Two years after he had been vested, he was assigned by his Superiors to teach out at St. George's, which at that time was a mission church.

He had a special inclination to work in the Oratories. The providential institution, precisely at that time, through the efforts of Ven. Gaspar Bertoni, were just beginning in the city. It was in 1836, in fact, that Fr. Gaspar began sending his sons to work in the Oratory of St. Stephen's Parish. Their activity gave birth to what can be called the second Stigmatine House in Verona.

Venerable Madeline di Canossa was caring for the education and instruction of young girls in two of the poorer and more abandoned parishes of the city – San Zeno's and St. Stephen's. Fr. Bertoni did the same for young boys in the two extremities of Verona, on both sides of the Adige. As a Seminarian, Peter Vignola worked with our first Fathers for the good of the youth of his home Parish. He gave the highest hopes of what he would one day do in the Apostolate among the young, when he entered our Congregation.

During the month of September 1836, Bishop Grasser, of sacred memory, conferred the Priesthood on Peter Vignola. The contentment of his pious soul on the day of his First Mass cannot be described.

- **His assignments as a Diocesan Priest**

The Bishop, who knew him very well, chose him right away as his Secretary. Although he was still very young, the Bishop entrusted much to him, in carrying out the most sublime and delicate matters. However, Fr. Peter felt very ill at ease in that office. The many and diverse occupations and difficulties that are so often tedious and material, were a painful restraint on his zeal. He wanted so much to work in a less confining and more extensive field of the apostolate. Hence, it must have been for him a happy day when he was assigned to the Diocesan Seminary. He was named Assistant to the Rector, the austere and pious Fr. Bacilieri. He spent ten years in this assignment.

Then, in 1948 he was chosen by that great light of the Veronese Church, Bishop Aurelius Mutti, as Rector of St. Peter's in Monastero. Shortly thereafter, there came the Imperial royal Decree approving his assignment. He spent four years in this assignment.

In 1952, Fr. Peter was assigned Pastor at St. Firmus Major. The extraordinary and solemn commemorations in honor of the Virgin Mary were a great comfort to him. These were held to celebrate the Solemn Definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, that was promulgated at that time.

- **Fr. Peter, Stigmatine**

In those days, there flourished a religious society, that had the name of the Priests of the Stimate. They were well known for their apostolic holiness of life, and their example of heroicity of austere virtue. Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, one of the most brilliant gems of the Veronese Church, had established it on humility. From this foundation, it was to ascend to the most brilliant heights of Christian love. Between these two extremes of humility and sublimity, he placed abnegation and detachment of all those things that are passing.

On January 20, 1859, Fr. Peter met his brother, Paul, walking along the street. At this time, Monsignor Paul Vignola was the Arch-Deacon and Canon of the Cathedral. Fr. Peter said to him: 'Here, take this as a little remembrance ... I do not need it anymore'. Fr. Peter handed to his brother his Arch-Priest's ring. Fr. Paul was quite astonished, because he did not know of his brother's decision.

That very evening, a humble priest hurried along the street, all wrapped in his cape, toward the house of those holy penitents. He knocked at the door and asked for his brother, Fr. Vincent, who for already some time was a member of the Community there. Fr. Marani, who was the Superior of the Stigmatines, already had

been informed of Fr. Peter's decision, and went to call Fr. Vincent. He told him simply that his brother, the Arch-Priest, Fr. Peter, was waiting at the door and wanted to speak to him. Fr. Vincent went right away, and greeted him, and conversed with him briefly. He then got up to take his leave.

'Wait a minute', Fr. Peter said, 'I am going to stay here in your company – I, too, am going to be a Stigmatine.'

At first, Fr. Vincent thought he was joking, but soon realized that all had been decided. He embraced his brother fraternally, and with great happiness led him into the cloister. He introduced him to Fr. Marani, and the other Fathers who had gathered around. He said: 'Here is my brother – from now on, he is my Brother in a two-fold manner!'

The Pastor of St. Firmus, after four years in the ministry as Pastor, was once again, just 'Fr. Peter.' He was 47 years of age, and it was truly edifying to see him make his two years of Novitiate in the company of young Novices. He manifested humility, dependence and docility, and truly seemed to be one of them.

When these two years had passed, on the Feast of the Purification, Fr. Peter bound himself perpetually to God with the Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.

Fr. Peter was to spend 32 years in the House of the Stimate. Without exaggeration, it can be said that he spent them entirely in the sanctification of himself, and in doing good to souls.

He had a great love for common life, and would not tolerate the least exception, or dispensation in his regard.

In 1960, he was assigned to succeed Fr. Charles Fedelini, who had died, as professor of Moral Theology at the Seminary. He remained at this assignment for a number of years, and was known for his precise order and practical wisdom. He exerted every effort in teaching, because to him, this was a way of doing good to souls.

- **Superior General**

In September of 1875, Fr. John Baptist Lenotti, of holy memory, breathed his last. The few priests that comprised the General Chapter elected Fr. Peter to succeed him. During Fr. Lenotti's administration as Superior General, Fr. Peter had held the post of General Councilor, and that of the Director of the House of the Stimate. For the next 16 years, that is, for one half of his life spent at the Stimate, he was to govern our Congregation. He ruled it with an inspired, meek and patient zeal.

Certainly, his most outstanding accomplishment, for which we owe him eternal gratitude, was the Approbation of our Congregation by the Holy See. Sixty years had passed since its foundation, at the time of his Election. Because of the

small number of the members of the Congregation, all that had been obtained in that time was a Decree of Praise from the Supreme Pontiff, Pius IX. The Pope himself expressed the wish that the 'Little Flock would grow!' This had to be a reality before the definitive approbation could be granted to it.

Another accomplishment of his, which was also significant, was to re-open the Schools of the Stimate, that had been originally established by the Venerable Founder long before. They were closed in 1844, because the Jesuit Fathers in that year opened a High School at St. Sebastian's. Because of the evils of those times, this Jesuit School alter was also closed. For a long time thereafter, Verona lacked any Parochial School that for so many years had done so much good for the poor children.

From the opening day, the school flourished. It was frequented by other Religious Congregations in the city, especially by the new College of St. Aloysius, the Camillians, Fr. Provolo's students as well as those of Monsignor Comboni. Illustrious families sent their sons there, as did those of the nobility and aristocracy. They all stated that they were happy to send their sons to school at the Stimate. The results were most heart-warming, because when the boys graduated, and then went on to the Seminary, or to the state Universities, the mere fact that in their applications, they stated that they had attended the Stimate, was of itself a sufficient recommendation. Fr. Vignola himself took over the directorship of the school.

As the End of the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Stigmata is not only the instruction and education of youth, but also preaching, especially missions, the Spiritual Exercises, and the explanation of Christian Doctrine. During the Administration of Fr. Vignola, this phase of the 'End' was fulfilled in a manner never before equaled. A great many Missions and courses of the Spiritual Exercises were preached, and so many parishes benefited by the schools of Christian Doctrine.

In addition to being the Superior of the Congregation, he was assigned by the Chancery Office as the Director of a number of Institutes, of all the Sister Penitents of St. Sylvester, and of the Sisters of the Holy family. He was named examiner of Vocations of the Seminarians, as well as Pro-Synodal Examiner.

To this should be added the great number of persons from all walks of life, especially Priests, who flocked to his Confessional, or who sought him out for counsel in their difficulties. He was esteemed by all of them as a man of counsel. His advice would always be brief, frank and precise, and everyone left him contented. He would give this advice at the proper time, sometimes in the form of a story, or as a prayer, and would only give it after having reflected on the matter for some time.

This man of God, from his first years as Superior, opened the House of Parma, for which his predecessor, Fr. Lenotti, had only begun the negotiations. In accord with the wishes of that Bishop of holy memory, Bishop Villa, the elementary school was

opened at *Borgo Bertano*. This was the most miserable and abandoned section of the city. Then an Oratory and a recreation center were opened for the youth.

Bishop Riboldi, who was later a Cardinal, wanted the Congregation to come to Pavia. An Oratory, a recreation Center and a Night School were opened, and Missions were preached in a great number of the villages of the Diocese. Through the influence of Bishop Villa, who was from Bassano, the Congregation also established a High School, an Oratory and a Recreation Center there. Finally, in the last year of his life, Fr. Vignola sent his sons to Rome.

- **His Death**

He was in his 80th year, on Sunday, August 23, 1891. That morning, as was his custom, he had heard the Confessions of his penitents, and said a late Mass for the convenience of the people. After dinner, he went to the Sisters at St. Sylvester's. With that great heart of his, that paid no heed to the weight of his heavy schedule, nor his many years, for one hour he instructed those Daughters of misfortune and tears.

When he came down from the pulpit, he gave Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. He then stopped to talk for a few moments with the Mother Superior concerning some matters of the Institute. He took his cape and hat, and started out the door. He suddenly felt ill, and complained of a severe headache. He was ushered into the Chapter Room, where he sat down. Shortly afterwards, he slumped backward, unconscious. A priest and the doctor were summoned. Immediately the Last Sacraments were administered to him. After three hours of agony, he was dead. The call to eternity came to him in the field of his labors, and he answered the summons to appear before God.

On that great day, will his vesture appear more resplendent!

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**A Compendium of Fr. P. Vignola's Life and the Early Times of the
Stigmatine Congregation³:**

1812

Jan. 01: Peter Vignola – born on the first day of this year – he would be followed by four brothers into the Priesthood – and would be the 3rd Superior General.

1856

Nov. 28: Fr. Vincent Vignola entered the Congregation. He was to be followed later by his brother, Fr. Peter Vignola, who became the 3rd Superior General.

1857

Oct. 14: Fr. Lenotti preached a private retreat to **four Priests** who had come to the Stimate to make their annual Retreat. One of these Priests was Fr. Vincent Vignola, one of five blood brothers, all of whom were Priests. Later on, Fr. Vincent Vignola entered the Congregation and some time later, he was followed by one of his brothers, Fr. Peter Vignola – who went on [with Fr. Vincent's deciding vote in the Chapter] to be elected the 3rd Superior General of the Congregation. He was first elected on September 16, 1875 by the 6th General Chapter, and held this post until his very sudden death almost 16 years later, on August 23, 1891.

1858

Jan. 14: Frs. Lenotti and Peter Vignola started a Novena in honor of the Holy Espousals at Garda. Due to the intense cold, Fr. Sandrinelli, the Pastor, would allow only two sermons a day.

Jan. 23: The Feast was celebrated much like last year – Bishop Riccabona came for morning Mass, and Monsignor Marchi, his Vicar, gave the evening Benediction. **A Life of Fr. Bertoni**, written by **Fr. Cajetan Giaccobe⁴**, was distributed to the people. The Novena at Garda preached by Frs. Lenotti and Peter Vignola ended today.

Jan. 24: Fr. Sandrinelli, Pastor at Garda, wrote to Fr. Marani, to thank him for the Novena to the Espousals that Frs. Vignola and Lenotti preached

³ Source: A Stigmatine Calendar – cf. Bibliografia.

⁴ Cf. Bibliography.

there. He said that he had been having a great deal of trouble in his Parish, but that the atmosphere was now much better after the Novena.

1859

Jan. 20: Fr. Peter Vignola, Arch-Priest and Pastor of St. Firmus Major in Verona, met his brother, Monsignor Paul Vignola, Rector of the Cathedral and broke the news that he, Fr. Peter, was entering the Stimate at age 47 to begin his Novitiate. He would follow his brother, Fr. Vincent, who had already entered. Fr. Peter would remain in the House of the Stimate for 32 years.

1860

Feb. 02: The Mission at Soave, preached by Frs. Lenotti and Peter Vignola, was in full swing today. The first Mass was at 7:30 a.m., and there was a High Mass at 10:00 a.m. At 2:00 p.m., the boys assembled in one Church of the town - and the girls at another for services.

Mar. 04: The Bishop of Padua, Bishop Manfredini, wrote to Fr. Marani, Superior General, to thank him for the fine Retreat just preached to the Seminarians there. The Rector of the Seminary, Fr. Lawrence Sartori, wrote in a similar vein. This Retreat had been preached by Frs. Lenotti and Peter Vignola.

Mar. 05: A Fr. Cajetan Modena, a Camillian, who had assisted in the Confessions at the Retreat for the Seminarians preached in Padua by Frs. Lenotti and Peter Vignola, wrote this day to Fr. Marani. He said that the older Professors at the Seminary had told him that it was the best Retreat they had had there since one that the Jesuits had preached there 20 years earlier.

Aug. 25: Frs. Lenotti and Peter Vignola preached the Annual Retreat to the **Clergy of the Diocese of Feltre**. After this, they then preached to the **Clergy of the Diocese of Belluno**. Bishop Renier was most exuberant in his praise of the Fathers. Fr. Lenotti expressed the hope that Fr. Sperti's offer to the Congregation to come to Belluno would be accepted. [It was not, however, but the Fathers of the Congregation did serve the Diocese some 50 or more years later, by taking over as the **faculty of the Diocesan Seminary**. Fr. Francis Cappello, SJ – a latter-day 'Confessor of Rome', whose Cause of Canonization has progressed, served with them].

1864

Jan. 23: Bishop di Canossa came to the Stimate to celebrate the Espousals with the Community. Fr. Peter Vignola noted that there were many rumors in clerical circles concerning the poor relations existing between the Bishop and Fr. Marani, Superior General.

1866

Jan. 06: Fr. Joseph Riolfati, Pastor and Dean at Riva, wrote to Fr. Marani, Superior General, to thank him for the excellent Novena for Christmas preached by Frs. Lenotti, Bassi and Peter Vignola. Fr. Riolfati said that in his 30 years in that parish he had never seen anything that could compare with the work of these three.

1870

Apr. 28: Fr. Peter Vignola had been ordered by the Superior General, Fr. Marani, to preach a Triduum for the Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, the 5th Sunday after Easter this year. At the last moment, Fr. Marani cancelled the Triduum – Fr. Vignola humbly obliged, but he found it difficult.

1871

Jul. 01: Sunday - **Fr. John Mary Marani, Superior General, died this day in the home of his niece, Mrs. Massalongo.** It was about 2:30 p.m. – he was 81 years old a month and 27 days. He died ‘in exile’, as the government had confiscated the property in October 1867.

Jul. 03: Fr. Marani’s funeral was held at 7:00 a.m. this Tuesday morning. The revered body was carried out of the Massalongo home for services and then laid to rest in the cemetery. His slogan as General had been Parati ad omnia! [Be prepared for all!]

After the funeral, the First Session of the 1st General Chapter was held in the Massalongo home. The motion to choose a permanent Superior General was rejected 12-1. A Committee was chosen to add an **Appendix to Part XII** of Fr. Bertoni’s Original Constitutions: the members were Fr. Rigoni [President], Fr. Lenotti and Fr. Bassi.

Jul. 04: The Second Session of the 1st General Chapter returned to the Stimate from the Massalongo House. Fr. Vincent Vignola was assigned the task of informing Frs. Lanaro, Morando and Sterza [all three had voted for Fr. DaPrato] – that Fr. Lenotti had been chosen

temporary Superior. Fr. DaPrato was elected 2nd Councilor; Fr. Rigoni as 3rd Councilor and Fr. Peter Vignola as 4th Councilor.

Sep. 03: The three members of the Capitular Commission: Frs. Rigoni, Lenotti and Peter Vignola – went out to Villazzano for their last meeting before the 2nd General Chapter was to convene.

Sep. 06: The Capitular Commission [Frs. Rigoni, Lenotti, and Peter Vignola], preparing the **Appendix to Part XII** of Fr. Bertoni's **Original Constitutions**, left Villazzano for Verona, after three days of meetings.

Sep. 11: The 2nd General Chapter convened at the Stimate – 16 Capitulars were present [the only Priest absent was Fr. Bragato] to pass judgment on the *Appendix to Part XII of the Original Constitutions*, prepared by the Capitular Commission [Frs. Rigoni, Lenotti, Peter Vignola], chosen by the 1st General Chapter [July 1871]. It was decided at this Chapter that only **Apostolic Missionaries** could wield any authority in the Congregation – during Fr. Marani's administration, none were appointed.

1872

Jul. 03: Fr. Sembianti wrote from Bassano in response to the Superior General's [Fr. Peter Vignola] questionnaire concerning the sale of the *Trinità*. Fr. Sembianti wrote that if the Congregation had to sell to the Ottolini Sisters, if, in the future, the Sisters were ever to sell, the Congregation should have the first option to buy it back from them.

Sep. 04: Fr. Lenotti, Superior General, wrote to Fr. Vincent Vignola, Superior at the Student House at Sale di Povo, that it would be more in accord with the traditions of the Congregation that if the Fathers who were sent to the Parish Church at Povo, not to stay for dinner – he also asked the Fathers to recite Vespers and Compline in common in the afternoon. Fr. Vignola wrote back and said the latter would not be possible, as they all had different schedules and it would be difficult to assemble them for that in the afternoon.

1875

Sep. 02: The Students went for an outing to Sezano – when they returned in the evening, Fr. Lenotti's condition had become grave. Dr. Corradi brought in a specialist, Dr. Morganti. He suggested that Fr. Lenotti should be anointed. Right after Night Prayers, about 9:15 p.m., Fr. Peter Vignola,

Director, brought Holy Viaticum. In a clear voice, Fr. Lenotti asked pardon of God and his Confreres, and then received Holy Communion.

Sep. 03: There was no change in Fr. Lenotti's condition – about 9:00 p.m., his Confessor, Fr. Beltrami, went to his room and suggested that he be anointed again for this new crisis. Fr. Lenotti asked for Fr. Peter Vignola, Director, and then Fr. Beltrami anointed him. His breathing was quite heavy.

Sep. 04: After midnight, Fr. Lenotti took a decided turn for the worse - he raved about the Aspirants in Trent passing by his bed. About 2:00 a.m. he asked for Fr. Peter Vignola – he then expressed the hope that he might be called to heaven on the day dedicated to Mary. He spoke with Fr. Sembianti and told him to exhort his students to be most observant of their vows and to be devoted to Mary and Joseph. Fr. Pizzini and Fr. Tabarelli came and he blessed them – to the latter, he said that his blessing was for always and repeated that several times. Bishop di Canossa came about 6:00 p.m., and blessed the dying Superior General. He was visited by his brother, Francis Lenotti.

Sep. 05: Sunday – **Fr. John Baptist Lenotti, Superior General, died on his 58th birthday.** His most productive, but too abruptly ended, administration of four years comes to an end. He had opened the first House of the Congregation outside of Verona, in Trent - he was negotiating for a House in Parma – he was carrying on negotiations with the Holy See for Papal Approbation of the Community, and was seeking a Foreign Mission field for the Congregation. Many of his efforts, then, would not reach fruition for many years to come. He died about the same hour he was born.

Sep. 06: Fr. Lenotti was waked in the little Oratory of the Immaculate Conception at the Stimate. It was noted that his face was yellowish, but he seemed to be at peace. **Fr. Peter Vignola was chosen Vicar until the Congregation could elect a new Superior General.**

Sep. 07: Fr. Lenotti's funeral was held celebrated this morning at the Stimate – 23 Masses were celebrated; Fr. Peter Vignola was celebrant of a High Mass of Requiem – Fr. Giacobbe led the procession from the Stimate to the *Trinità* – the Capuchin Fathers sang the burial service.

Sep. 26: **The 7th General Chapter convened and elected Fr. Peter Vignola as Superior General for five years.** The Councilors were: Frs. Sembianti, Rigoni [who was also re-confirmed as Procurator General], Vincent

Vignola and Benciolini. It was proposed that the Superior General prepare some members of the Congregation for the Foreign Missions as soon as possible – and that in the near future, the School at the Stimate be re-opened.

1876

- Mar. 16: The Bishop of Parma wrote to Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, to tell him that he was well satisfied with the work of the Congregation in Parma.
- Apr. 13: The mitred Arch-Priest of Bassano, Monsignor John Gobbi, requested Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, to send two Priests and a Brother to Bassano to establish a House for youth work. They would teach Catechism on days free from school and evening to adults. Fr. Vignola took the request under advisement.
- Sep. 26: Pe. Pedro Vignola, Superior Geral, convocou a 8^o Capítulo Geral, que se reuniu para discutir a Casa de Bassano. Quando Pe. Vignola foi questionado sobre as Missões Estrangeiras e os membros que estavam sendo preparadas para elas, ele afirmou que já havia designado alguns membros para estudar línguas e que estava em contato com a Sagrada Congregação para Propagação da Fé, em Roma. Foi decidido que o Superior Geral, no futuro, não teria que convocar Capítulos Gerais para aceitar novas casas para a Congregação.

1877

- May 05: Fr. Vignola, Superior General, wrote to a Clara Perenzoni that the members of the Congregation were very much opposed to the sale of the House of the *Trinità*, that had belonged to its original patrimony and that there were plans for its future use.
- Aug. 08: To accede to Bishop di Canossa's wishes [but, much against the wishes of the Congregation], Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, sold the *Trinità* to Clara Peranzoni, Superior of the Ottolini Sisters.

1879

- Mar 31: Bishop Benedict Riccabona, true friend of the Congregation, died in Trent. Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, came from Verona for the funeral. Fr. Zara noted in the House Chronicle that his memory would always be venerated in the annals of the Congregation – and that those who came after them, would always venerate his name.

Sep. 19: Fr. Benciolini's Golden Jubilee was celebrated – Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, ordered that a copy of the day's program be sent to every House so that there would always be a record of it in the Archives. Fr. Benciolini was celebrant; Fr. Peter Vignola was Deacon, and Fr. Charles Zara, Director of the Stimate, was Sub Deacon. At 3:00 p.m., there was an *Accademia*.

1881

Feb. 18: The 10th General Chapter convened to elect a Superior General. **Fr. Peter Vignola was elected for life.** The General Councilors elected were: Frs. Bassi, Sembianti, Vincent Vignola and Charles Zara. Fr. Marini was elected Procurator General.

1882

Jun. 15: Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, convoked a meeting of the General Council, and the ***Graduati Fathers*** – i.e., those Priests who had been raised to the title of ***Apostolic Missionary*** - to discuss Fr. Morando's proposal concerning Bassano. Five Priests were needed for the ever-expanding work there.

1883

Jun. 25: Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, expressed sincere sorrow hearing of Fr. Zara's death – and some bitterness at Fr. Carrara's departure [for the Jesuits].

Jun. 29: This day was celebrated the 'Name Day' of Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General – the new kitchen and refectory at the Stimate was used for the first time.

Jul. 25: Fr. Bellino Carrara wrote to the Superior General, Fr. Peter Vignola, from Trent, and informed him that all was ready for his [Fr. Carrara's] entrance into the Society of Jesus.

1886

Aug. 18: Fr. Louis Tommasi wrote on this date that the little booklet he was preparing on the lives of the early Fathers and Brothers was being done in great haste. It had to be ready within a month, for the Superior General's Golden Jubilee [Fr. Peter Vignola] the next month.⁵

⁵ This may be the booklet used for the '**Biographies of the Early Stigmatine Community**' [cf. Bibliography].

Sep. 24: Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, celebrated his Golden Jubilee as a Priest⁶ – almost all the members of the Congregation were present for the occasion. He was assisted at the Solemn Mass by his brother, Monsignor Paul Vignola. Fr. Paul Zemari, Pastor of Caldiero, gave an outstanding speech. That evening at St. Teresa's, there was an *Accademia* in honor of the jubilarian, in which Fr. Vignola was praised as the 'heir of the spirit, prudence and authority' of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni.

1888

Feb. 04: The 'Abbot' of Bassano wrote to the Superior General, Fr. Peter Vignola, and in no uncertain terms made his displeasure known concerning the community at Bassano, and regarding the Congregation as a whole.

Mar. 07: Bro. Louis Ferrari, long-time confidant of the deceased Superior General, Fr. Marani [he had accompanied the Superior General to see Pius IX in 1854, seeking the **Decree of Praise** which was then granted], died at the Stimate at the age of 76. On this same day, Fr. Peter Vignola informed the Abbot of Bassano, who was most displeased with the Congregation, that at the close of that school year, the Congregation would leave Bassano – thus closing its 12 years of service there.

Mar. 13: Bishop Francis Sogaro requested the services of Fr. Dominic Vicentini for Central Africa, but Fr. Peter Vignola refused. The Bishop presented the case to the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith which ruled that Fr. Dominic Vicentini should go to Africa for two years.

Jul. 14: Fr. Tabarelli, who had been sent to Rome by Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, to obtain Papal Approbation was assured that the documents he had brought with him from Verona were in the hands of a Consultor of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and regulars, a Fr. John Mary Camilleri, OSA – so, on this day, Fr. Tabarelli returned to Verona.

Oct. 11: **Fr. Camilieri, OSA, Consultor to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, gave a favorable reply regarding the Constitutions of the Congregation which had been presented to the Holy See by the Superior General, Fr. Peter Vignola.**

⁶ For this occasion, a Fr. Ferdinand Colombari edited a book - entitled *Reminiscences concerning the Fathers and Brothers of the Congregation of the Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops [1835-1883]* - published by the Prem. Tipografia Vescovile P. Colombari. An English Translation of these colorful biographies of the Early Stigmatines may be found on the St. Gaspar's web-site, www.st-bertoni.com, under **History – Early Biographies**. Cf. Bibliography.

1889

- Feb. 20: Fr. Camillieri, OSA, Consultor to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars made 21 Observations concerning the Constitutions presented to him by Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, who was seeking the Papal Approbation for the Congregation. One of the suggestions was that the Superior General no longer be elected for life – as Fr. Vignola had been. As the result, Fr. General began thinking about convoking the General Chapter of Elections.
- Apr. 21: It was stated that the deaths of Fr. Anthony Conte, Fr. Vincent Vignola [the Superior General's brother] and the serious illness of Fr. Morando, hindered Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, from accepting many offers to the Congregation at this time.

1891

- Jan. 17: Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, sent Fr. Julius Zambiasi to Rome to study physics and mathematics. Cardinal Parrocchi would assign him to teach at the Albano Seminary with Fr. Tabarelli.
- Aug. 23: **Fr. Peter Vignola, 3rd Superior General, died very suddenly this Sunday afternoon. He had just finished teaching Catechism at San Silvestro. [Frs. Bertoni – Marani – Lenotti - and now, Fr. Peter Vignola: all died on a Sunday afternoon!]**
- Nov. 07: Fr. Morando, the Superior at the Stimmate, celebrated a solemn Memorial Mass for the deceased Superior General, Fr. Peter Vignola.

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The Central Ecclesial Service in the Founder's Plan

[A Long Discussion with the Community, started on
Fr. Marani's term as Superior General]

[1] The General Chapters during Fr. P. Vignola's term as Superior General [Chapters 7 – 13]

An English translation of the General Chapters 1 – 19 is offered in our Bibliography. Follow a copy of some excerpts corresponding to the Central Ecclesial Service in Founder's Plan.

[2] Pondered again in the 9th General Chapter [Sep. 17-25, 1880]

IV. In the fourth place, there was a discussion also on the high school education for extern students⁷, and it was asked if it would be out of place to beseech the Congregation if it wanted to promote and decree the erection of a public High School, that there might be gradually continued the education, and the instruction imparted in our Elementary Schools, with such profit to the youth, and the applause of good people.

- And it was found that this had already been decreed, or better, discussed, in the Fifth General Congregation, having been unanimously recognized [as appears in its authentic Minutes] the necessity of taking part in the public education of the youth. There was imposed on the Superior to provide that some of our members might obtain legal qualification for his school teaching, so that there might be begun [with a view, though, of the Councilors], the erection of a public high school.

- However, it was believed proper to ask the General Congregation that, at the renewal of these same good intentions, to add authoritative decisions that would tend to direct practically, the attention of this matter of utmost importance, to the Superior. And this Petition is unanimously forwarded.

As for what pertains to the Elementary School, already established, it was observed that it would perhaps be more in conformity with religious décor, and to the old practice of our First Fathers⁸, that the little children of the first grade,

⁷ Once more there is the urgent appeal for the Congregation to return to the ministry of teaching, which was long ago considered as one of the principal ends of the Congregation, that was born and flourished with teaching [cf. Proposal of the House of the Stimmat, Feb. 24, 1874, to the Vth General Chapter – a consistent appeal almost immediately following Fr. Marani's death].

⁸ Clearly the Apostolic Mission of the Schools was for this time and place, a matter of utmost importance – and in accord with the first Fathers.

be given over to the care and the more fitting education of women teachers, and there be accepted only young boys of the second class, or at least, of the so-called 'First Superior Class' – and this proposal, too, is unanimously presented.

V. Lastly, in treating of the importance, especially of the moral and religious education of the extern students of our city, and more especially, of our neighborhood, with the erection of a sort of *Patronato*, there was one who said that the results achieved so far by the foundation of the House of Bassano were not entirely inconformity with its projected hopes, whether as regards the advantage of the youth there, and particularly, as regards the increase of the décor and opinion of our nascent Congregation.

- And following this, it was proposed to ask the General Congregation that it might wish to take into consideration these doubts [which because of the facts and data that reinforce them, unfortunately, are well founded], to examine also if it might seem better advice to gather in the forces that are too isolated, and too little productive, and in which the regular common life finds excessive inconvenience, and difficulty, to reinforce the other Houses, already solidly founded, and to establish a *Patronato*, so desired in our city, in this area.

And this last Petition also received a unanimous vote.

S. Maria del Giglio, January 29, 1880.

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[3] The 12th Chapter Decree [dated Sep. 24, 1890], declaring the “Schools” are equal to the Parish Missions in the Founder’s original Plan

The 12th General Chapter [September 24 – October 3, 1890] made this declaration, with an almost unanimous vote:

September 24, 1890 - 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon

At the beginning of the afternoon Session, the Chapter unanimously declared to accept with gratitude the Decree of Approbation of the Institute, ordering that it be promulgated in all the Houses of the Congregation, and that the promulgation be followed by singing of the ***Te, Deum***, in thanksgiving to the Lord.

Incidentally, however, at the reading of the **Decree of Approbation**, the question arose whether, therefore, from the context of the Decree itself, there was revealed and there ought to be held that **Schools are a Scope of our Congregation equally principal with the Missions, and with the other exercises of the sacred Ministry, especially indicated in the same venerated Decree.**

This question was put to a vote, there being 23 voting, with Fr. Francis Benciolini absent.

The votes were collected, and 21 [twenty-one] had answered Yes; and 1 [one] No – and 1 [one] having abstained from the voting.⁹

Therefore, it was admitted and **retained**, that the **Schools**, according to the context of the Decree of Approbation, are a scope of the Institute, equally principal with the Missions, and the other exercises of the Sacred Ministry, especially indicated by the Decree itself.

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⁹ This overwhelming and near unanimous vote in favor of the Schools – and implicitly, in favor of a broad understanding of Fr. Bertoni's Apostolic Mission – simply reflects the various General Chapters through the years, since the unanimous Proposal submitted to the Vth General Chapter [cf. Feb. 24, 1874] – where the schools were considered *one of the principal ends of our Institute*.

