

# *Communities of the Word*

STORIES OF THE CHICAGO PROVINCE



## THE GIRARD STORY, 1912 – 1989

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### **EVENTS LEADING TO THE FOUNDING OF SACRED HEART MISSION HOUSE**

During the last ten years of his life, Father Arnold Janssen was very generous to the new foundation of the Society in the United States. He provided some forty Brothers, twenty priests, and fifty-three Sisters in a short span of ten years.<sup>1</sup> The presence of such a number of able men and women led to phenomenal growth in the foundation of the Society at Techny, Illinois. With growth came the option to spread the presence of the Society in the eastern section of the United States. The catalyst for expansion was the visit of Father Wilhelm Gier in May 1912. During that visit two major decisions were made; the first, to close St. Joseph Technical Institute at Techny, and the second, to open another mission house in the eastern part of the United States to prepare candidates for the foreign missions.<sup>2</sup>

Early in 1912 Father Francis De Lange, provincial superior, set out to locate an appropriate site for a new foundation. He first approached the archbishop of New York, Cardinal John Farley. The archbishop made ambiguous promises about something big about to happen, something Father De Lange misunderstood to mean financial help for the new mission house. Finally the archbishop suggested to his visitor that he return at a later date. When Father De Lange did present himself some time later, he was scolded by the archbishop's



Sacred Heart Mission House.

secretary for showing up without prior notice. Then he learned that in the previous year (1911) the American Catholic Foreign Mission Society (Maryknoll) had been established, and that therefore “there is no place for such an institution (as the SVD) in the Archdiocese.”<sup>3</sup>

Moving westward, Father De Lange stopped in Scranton, Pennsylvania, but the bishop was not available. Next he presented himself to the bishop of Rochester, Bishop Thomas Francis Hickey. Father Peter Janser recounts in the Girard chronicle: “His Lordship of Rochester received him most kindly, however, as soon as he came to the point of his visit, it was roughly refused.”<sup>4</sup>

Continuing on, Father De Lange tried unsuccessfully to make an appointment with the bishop of Buffalo. After this series of setbacks he arrived in Erie, where he was introduced to the aged Bishop John Edmund Fitzmaurice<sup>5</sup> by Msgr. George Winkler, and immediately a warm welcome was extended to the Society. Father De Lange was soon busy looking for appropriate land. He found such, he thought, on the road from Cambridge Springs. Satisfied with his good fortune he returned to Techny.

On April 15, Father De Lange came back to Erie in company with Father Janser, hoping to purchase the property. But they were disappointed, for the estate had been sold.<sup>6</sup>

Various real estate men were approached. A location was discovered four miles east of Erie, near East Lake Road. The property had a beautiful view and excellent travel accommodations to the city, but it had too few buildings. A less satisfactory estate was found near Fairview, a 300-acre property about ten miles drive south of Girard. The price, however, was exorbitant. Eventually a farm that had belonged to former congressman William C. Culbertson was shown him. It contained the homestead of the senator and a barn. The property of 120 acres ran along the rail line of the Cleveland and Erie Traction Company. An adjoining farm was also for sale. It, too, contained a small home. An option on both properties was taken in April, and a month later the property was shown to Father Blum on his way to Techny to begin his visitation.<sup>7</sup> The sale was completed, and Fathers De Lange and Janser moved into the Congressman Culbertson house.

They were not alone in the house, however, as the former occupant, a Mr. Charles Good, remained for about two weeks. Speaking of this period, Father De Lange relates the early morning race to the poultry house. The chickens were considered common property, and the rule that “possession is nine-tenths of the law” being in force, the new occupants and Mr. Good all made special efforts to arrive at the coop first to get the freshly laid eggs.



Original Culbertson home.

On August 14 Mr. Good moved away, leaving the Fathers alone in the large house. The next day, August 15, 1912, Father Janser said the first Mass in the newly acquired residence. On August 20 of that year, Brothers Wiho Kolkmeier,<sup>8</sup> Peter Fuchs,<sup>9</sup> and Dignus Greef<sup>10</sup> arrived to begin making improvements on the house and to care for the farm.

The journal of the Girard community explains how the name of the seminary was chosen. On the morning of the Feast of the Sacred Heart, Father Provincial De Lange asked Father Janser what he thought might be a proper name for the new house. “Sacred Heart Mission House” came the immediate reply from Father Janser. “Entirely my thought!” said Father De Lange.<sup>11</sup> When Father William Gier, the superior general at the time, who was conducting a visitation of the North American Province, was approached on the subject, he readily agreed that it be named Sacred Heart Mission House.

Shortly after taking over the house, Father Provincial De Lange<sup>12</sup> departed for Techny, leaving Father Janser<sup>13</sup> and the three brothers. He promised to send additional men to assist them shortly. A few days after Father De Lange’s departure, William Benz, the first seminarian, arrived and promptly assumed the role of chief cook, errand boy and laundry man.

A week later three Holy Spirit Sisters arrived: Sisters Foureria,<sup>14</sup> Coletta, and Hiltrudis. They occupied another farmhouse on the newly acquired property. With the arrival of the Sisters the little community was all too happy to get away from the recurring diet of eggs soft-boiled for breakfast, hard-boiled for dinner, and poached for supper, served up by William—his own version of the 57 Varieties of the Heinz Company.<sup>15</sup>

The living conditions were difficult; the priests, Brothers, and seminarians were all crowded together. The chapel, visitors’ parlor, refectory, and kitchen occupied the entire first floor. The rooms of the second floor were classrooms and study halls during the day and bedrooms at night. The seminarians’ dormitory was in the attic. When, after several years, Father Janser was replaced as rector by Father Arnold Jurgens, Father Janser wrote, “Thank God! I could not endure it any longer.”<sup>16</sup>



SSpS Sisters at their convent in Girard.

On October 4, 1912, the school began with seven seminarians.

### **THE NEW SEMINARY BUILDING, 1918**

In 1916, classes at the mission seminary were temporarily suspended and the seminarians were transferred to Techny to allow for the construction of a larger seminary building. Permission to build was given by Father Superior General Blum, who, in addition to giving permission, sent a suitable cornerstone from Germany. It never arrived, for the ship on which it was sent sank, a victim of World War I. Instead of firming up the corner of the new building, the stone now lies somewhere on the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1917, after Father Provincial Adolph Burgmer had repeatedly scrutinized the plans, permission was given to proceed with the construction. A Chicago firm was awarded the contract for a three-story fireproof building, 135 feet by 50 feet. Ground was broken on August 24 and work on the building was quickly begun. On September 30, a second cornerstone, to replace the one lost at sea, the gift of the Most Rev. John E. Fitzmaurice, bishop of Erie, was laid with great ceremony.<sup>17</sup>



The seminary building under construction.

The work initially advanced rapidly, but owing to severe winter weather, it had to be discontinued until the following spring. The building was then quickly brought to completion. The new Sacred Heart Mission Seminary was solemnly dedicated on September 8, 1918, only six years after the humble beginning in a crowded farmhouse. The Most Rev. John Mark Gannon, then auxiliary bishop of Erie, officiated at the ceremonies. On September 26 and 27, the Fathers and Brothers with their furniture and books moved out of the Culbertson home into the new building.

The community was now ready to move on. It consisted of Father John Bermann<sup>18</sup> and Brother Wilfrid Hillebrand<sup>19</sup> as well as Father Arnold Jeurgens, rector,<sup>20</sup> and Brothers Homobonus Stiller,<sup>21</sup> Peter Fuchs, Wiho Kolkmeier, Linus Finkeldey, and Andrew Schwetner.<sup>22</sup>

The following month ten seminarians applied to begin their studies for the missionary priesthood. Jacobs, one of the students, observed that their principal diversion from study was work. They were often engaged in removing the debris from the construction site and developing a park.

In 1919 Father Anthony Mullin was appointed first prefect of the growing student body, now numbering sixteen. Up to that time the office of prefect was discharged by the rector. Additional SVD confreres continued to augment the community. On January 7, 1920, Brother Gabriel Cloos<sup>23</sup> arrived, having made his first vows a few months



The original building completed, 1918.

before. For the next forty years he served as majordomo (a pretentious word for janitor). In November of that year Brothers Fridolin Iten and Andrew Schwetner finished the two attractive ponds embraced by a bridge leading to the front steps of the seminary. (The pair of swans that for years graced the ponds were named Jake and Lina.) The following year the student body had grown to twenty-eight, including fifteen newcomers. About that time Mr. Frank Knoll<sup>24</sup> began coming weekends to teach the violin, a task he carried on for over twenty-five years. In 1921 an additional 145 acres of land on the opposite side of Highway 20 was bought for farming and cattle raising.

Besides adding land, the staff was augmented by the arrival of Fathers John Bermann, Herman Patzelt,<sup>25</sup> John Munster and Joseph Murphy.<sup>26</sup>

On July 21, 1922, Father Hugo Aubry,<sup>27</sup> newly appointed rector, arrived from Erie by streetcar and walked to the seminary from the station in town. Also that year, Fathers Henry Kammeyer,<sup>28</sup> Hauber,<sup>29</sup> Augustine Lubadel,<sup>30</sup> and Maximilian Hoffman joined the teaching staff. The number of students had grown to seventy.

May 1923 was significant for the acquisition of the first automobile for the use of the community. Father John Klafil also joined the staff; eighteen new students came to the seminary.

The work of the Brothers, priests, and Sisters bore its first fruits when, on June 23, 1924, the first commencement exercise was held.

The four in the graduating class were Christian Baker<sup>31</sup> and Anthony May,<sup>32</sup> who eventually reached the missionary priesthood in the Society, and Edward Jacobs and Edward P. Ultrup.

### **THE WEST WING ADDITION**

Although the structure erected in 1917 had at first seemed adequate for the mission house community, the number of students and members increased so rapidly that an addition became imperative. Before taking any decisive step, Father Aubry prudently consulted two local diocesan priests. He reported to Father Provincial Jeurgens, “Father Hasse, our Westphalian friend, told me very plainly that, if we are sure that we can soon fill the new house with candidates, we should go ahead and contract the debt. He doubted however that we will succeed there.” The reason he gave was that “missionary interest,” to his mind, “is not great in America.” The view of the other priest consulted was, “By no means should we go into so heavy a debt at these times.”<sup>33</sup> However, their advice did not deter the energetic and ever forward-looking Father Aubry. The groundbreaking fell auspiciously on June 27, 1924, the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

The plans for the extension of the building on the west—containing provisions for a chapel, auditorium-gym, music practice room, and swimming pool—had to be sent to the generalate in Rome for approval, as was customary. On prior consultation, Bishop John Mark Gannon had urged the inclusion of a swimming pool in the plans so that the seminarians would have an outlet for their energy during the long winter months. The idea of a swimming pool in a seminary did not meet the approval of the general administration in Rome, and consequently the plans were disapproved. A Solomon-like decision was crafted, however. The same plans were resubmitted, but the title on the plans no longer read “Swimming Pool” but rather “Roman Bath.” With that significant change the plans were approved and permission given to proceed with the building. The chapel in the new wing of the seminary was blessed in 1926 by the ever friendly and cooperative Bishop Gannon. The main altar and the two side altars were donated by the Rev. F. Heibel and were transferred from St. John’s Church in Erie. Tellers-Kent installed the 414-pipe organ.

Father Hugo Aubry was rector for two terms spanning the years 1922–1928. These were years filled with considerable anxiety over the

funding and construction of the building. Somehow the building was completed and paid for.

William Benz, the very first student to enter the mission house in 1912—whose amateurish attempts to feed the community with a menu consisting of several of the “57 Varieties” and three styles of eggs—returned to the Sacred Heart Seminary in 1925 as an ordained priest.<sup>34</sup> Also Father Ralph Thyken arrived to join the faculty and brought his fund-raising skills to help support the community. The following year Father Joseph Kempinski, with his outstanding musical skills, added significantly to the cultural life of the seminary.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time the Sacred Heart Mission Chain, a group of devoted women in Erie under the leadership of Mrs. Ben Schlaudecker,<sup>36</sup> raised funds for the construction of a new convent to serve the Holy Spirit Sisters. The structure was completed and blessed in 1927.

By 1928 the seminary accommodations were again considered inadequate for the increased number of confreres and students. Permission was granted to the new rector to add a fourth floor. It provided space for a dormitory, washrooms, and a recreation hall. In addition, the new construction also provided an attic for storing trunks and a bell tower to cap off the whole of the building.



The completed Sacred Heart Seminary with Jake and Lina.



The seminary orchestra.

In July of that year Father Maximilian Hoffman<sup>37</sup> had been installed as the new rector. Up to that time he had been prefect of the seminarians, spiritual director of the Brothers, and instructor in mathematics and Latin.

The commencement exercises held in June 1929 were presided over by a longtime friend and supporter of the seminary, Bishop John Mark Gannon, who graciously presented the diplomas.<sup>38</sup> The orchestra, under the direction of Father Joseph Kempinski, played for the occasion. This was considered the finest orchestra in the history of the seminary to that time.<sup>39</sup>

Over the years there was a frequent change of community members. Father Maximilian Hoffman assumed the role of rector in 1928. Father Peter Paunder came from Techny in 1929 to serve as spiritual director for the seminarians and served for many years as farm boss. He remained a popular and devoted confessor of the priests and nuns throughout the Erie diocese until his death in 1957. Father John Berman was lost to the community when he was transferred to England to add a native-English-speaking confrere to that province.

Another loss to the community, one that was lamented by Father Hoffmann, was the departure of Brother Crispin Weitz, whose skills were needed in Europe. Father Hoffman wrote to the provincial, "With him we lose one of our best Brothers, one who has done wonderful work as shoemaker and painter and worker on the farm.<sup>40</sup> I rather would miss four other Brothers than him."<sup>41</sup>



Hiking to Devil's Backbone.

Father Harold Rigney<sup>42</sup> was a very popular teacher on the seminary staff from 1933 to 1937. He stimulated love for science subjects by taking the seminarians on nature hikes and explained rock formations in geologically interesting places like Devil's Backbone, a favorite hiking destination. He also explained in a clear manner the then theologically controversial theory of evolution.<sup>43</sup> The other instructors were envious of his success in getting the students to spend time on science projects rather than on their subject assignments.

Another much-esteemed member of the staff was Father Emil Lesage, who took care of the older students and taught German.<sup>44</sup> He also gave interesting inspirational reflections to the seminarians prior to evening prayer.

### **THE DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN PROVINCE INTO THREE PROVINCES<sup>45</sup>**

By the early 1930s it became evident that administering the many parishes and schools in the North American Province had become an extremely complicated task, especially prior to air travel and modern communications. The North American Province spanned the entire United States from coast to coast and from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. In addition, the number of members of the Society had increased substantially. Following his visitation of the province in 1937, Father Superior General Joseph Grendel wrote that the Holy See had given permission for the division of the one province into three

provinces: the Western Province, headquartered at Techny; the Eastern Province, with Girard as the site of the provincial headquarters; and the Southern Province, with its headquarters in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi.

The actual division of the one province into three provinces took place in 1940. Father Francis Humel became the first provincial of the newly established Eastern Province.<sup>46</sup>

This reorganization provided for a common scholasticate and novitiate and, for the time being, a two-year college at Girard. From 1934 to 1941, Sacred Heart Seminary served the entire Society in America as a central college.

The story of the seminary progressed with the periodic change of Rectors. Father Adolph Burgmer was rector from 1934 to 1940 during the period of construction and the beginning of the Second World War in Europe.<sup>47</sup> He was followed by Father Anthony Deppe, who had a great deal of interest in music and personally conducted the twice weekly community singing practice.<sup>48</sup> He was an avid landscape artist and did much to beautify the grounds of Girard, including designing the cemetery. He also was very solicitous for the Sisters serving the community.

One of the stalwarts of the seminary was Father Walter Hafner,<sup>49</sup> who was recruiter (vocation director) from 1942 to 1958, with great success.<sup>50</sup> During the best of those years the seminary at Girard boasted of 192 students in the four-year high school. Father Prefect Emil LeSage was heard to say, “Too many, too many students! The boys are standing four deep at the sinks in the mornings to wash up!” Recruiter Wally replied, “Father, never too many seminarians!”<sup>51</sup> Fourteen years later, from those “standing four deep” would come an ordination class of ten Girarders (students who attended Girard).<sup>52</sup> In later years, Fathers Elmer Nadicksbernd and Walter Ostrowski would continue this important work of recruiting.

Over the years, missionaries would give talks to the seminarians intending to instill a love for the missionary vocation. On one occasion Bishop-elect Noser was solemnly introduced to the student body.<sup>53</sup> Father Charles Erb entertained with unique stories and jokes.<sup>54</sup> In October 1944 the apostolic delegate to the United States, the Most Rev. Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, accompanied by the Most Rev. William D. O’Brien<sup>55</sup>—the auxiliary of Chicago, who for decades ordained priests at Techny “gratis”—and Bishop Gannon of Erie, visited the



Bishop John Mark Gannon, Father Anthony Deppe, Cardinal Thomas Tien Ken-Hsien (Tienchensing), Father Francis Humel, Father Maximillian Hoffman.

seminary and spoke to the community about the great need of the Church for missionaries. On March 7, 1950, Superior General Alois Grosse-Kappenberg visited the seminary.

Certainly, of all those who visited the seminary, the highest dignitary to visit was Cardinal Thomas Tien Ken-Hsien (Tienchensing),<sup>56</sup> who arrived on April 11, 1946. The whole seminary student body was at the Erie Union Train Station at nine in the morning to receive him. The band under the leadership of Father Raymond Weisenberger provided the music for the occasion.

The cardinal first went to the bishop's residence and rested before entering the cathedral in procession to celebrate Mass. That afternoon about two-thirty, he arrived at the seminary amid the cheers of the students assembled at the entrance. Solemn Benediction followed immediately. The next day a banquet was given in the cardinal's honor in the gymnasium. On this occasion the music entertainment was provided by the seminary orchestra lead by Mr. Knoll. Father Joseph Vos, a missionary from China, interpreted for the cardinal.

The visit naturally created a great deal of interest in the China mission.

During Father Deppe's term as rector, the Mission Manor<sup>57</sup> was severely damaged by fire. While insurance covered some \$23,000 of

the damage, the mission house spent almost \$40,000 to make the Mission Manor once more habitable.

A custom of the time was for each house to keep a journal of events and visitors. In April 1943 an entry reports that a number of the boys became sick after eating what they thought was wild horseradish. The explanation they gave for their behavior was, “They wished to imitate the hermitical life of the early fathers.”<sup>58</sup>

A student was also regularly assigned to make a daily entry into a journal. The entry in the student journal of December 16, 1943, stated tersely: “Bad luck! The Brothers’ house burned down.” The house had stood since 1850.

When Father Humel was elected to the Society’s General Council in Rome in 1947, Father Robert Hunter assumed his post as provincial. Over the years the mantel of rector fell on the shoulders of a series of men. Following Father Deppe (1940–1944) as rector was Father Emil Lesage (1944–1952). Then followed Father Raymond Weisenberger (1953–1955), Father Robert Studeny (1956–1958), Father Casimir Murawski (1959–1964), Father Edward Wald (1965–1967), Father Chester Nowicki (1968–1970), Father Raymond Sanders (1971)<sup>59</sup> and Father Gerald Hellem (1972–1978).

Father Hellem’s term of office occurred at the time the seminary closed as the students moved to St. Mark’s Seminary in Erie, Pennsylvania, and the provincial administration was transferred to Washington.

Father Elmer Nadicksbernd served a short time until he went on sabbatical in the winter of 1979. Father Joseph Fleishaker served as *praeses* of the Girard community from 1980 to 1985 at which time Father Gil Gawlik took over until 1989.

## **THE STORY CONTINUES**

The story of Girard, however, is not finished. During the term of Father Robert Studeny, Father Harold Rigney, who had been president of Fu Jen University in Peking and had been a prisoner of the Communists for four years, was the guest of honor at the graduation meal of the class of 1956. By July 1958 extensive renovations of the kitchen, laundry, and boiler room under Father Studeny were completed. These would greatly facilitate the tasks of the Sisters and Brothers.



The Brothers community with Father Deppe (rector).

In 1960 Father Joseph Bitar developed the Girard Latin Course based on his own life experience of learning a number of languages by being immersed in the spoken language with structured study afterward.<sup>60</sup>

In 1962 the seminary organized a three-day celebration of its Golden Jubilee. For five decades it had successfully prepared young men for foreign missions and for service in the States. The Jubilee celebration extended over three separate days, one each for Sisters, clergy, and lay friends.

Father Chester Nowicki was appointed rector of the financially strapped community in Conesus, New York. His task there was to turn around a difficult financial situation. His strategy was to organize direct mailings to friends asking for help. Each day as the returns came trickling in, he would make token payments on the debt owed the electric and fuel companies and food suppliers. Within three years he had worked a transformation of the finances at the mission house at Conesus by his prudence and leadership. Thus, because of his proven skills, he was then transferred in 1968 and appointed rector of the community in Girard. Within three years under his leadership the same results were achieved at Sacred Heart Seminary. One of the strategies he employed was to dispose of the farm that was no longer needed to feed a large community of religious and students. On October 30, 1969, a public auction was held, disposing of all the machinery, the

swine, and finally the high-quality cattle.<sup>61</sup> In later days Father Chester would speak of the evenings when the staff, lacking funds to purchase any kind of drink, would sit down together for an “ice cube party.”

## THE STUDENT BODY

For most of the history of Girard, the student body was composed of high school lads entering after the eighth grade at the age of fourteen or fifteen. Often the idea of becoming a missionary was instilled by the influence of cooperating and pious Sisters in Catholic grammar schools. Then, too, the *Little Missionary* magazine, which was initiated by Father Bruno Hagspiel,<sup>62</sup> was eagerly awaited by the students. It served to make them aware of the missionary possibility.

Many who entered the seminary came with an initial desire to try it out, demonstrating a responsiveness to grace. Their coming disproved the pessimistic judgment of Father Hasse “that missionary interest, to his mind, is not great in America.” Credit must also be given to generous parents who were willing to give up their sons for the Church and happy to pay the monthly tuition to make that possible.

The academic life of the students was intense, including Greek, Latin, German, and of course, English and math. Because of the detailed schedule of activities in the seminary, it was possible to fit in regular study, prayer, and recreation. There was always a daily provision for sports. It was customary in SVD seminaries to divide the student body by alphabet into the American and National Leagues for intramural sport competition. Each spring, music lessons were available for those interested, but singing practice was mandatory for everyone.

One of the characteristics of the training seems to have been an emphasis on drama. Each class would have an opportunity for stage experience. In 1955, for example, the freshmen class put on *Who*; the sophomore class, *His Father's Son*; the junior class, *Doctor Chuttenhause*; and the senior class, *Heaven's Alive*. In addition there was a Passion Play titled *Unto the End*.

Oratorical contests were held annually. The unspoken goal was to keep the lads so busy that they would not become homesick. The third Sunday of the month was Visiting Sunday, when the lucky ones had their parents arrive to give some parental affection and perhaps to leave a relief package of cookies and candies.



Sacred Heart Mission House student body.

### **CLOSING OF SACRED HEART MISSION HOUSE**

In the mid-1960s, amid the dramatic social and attitudinal shifts occurring in America, the running of high school seminaries was no longer deemed an effective manner of preparing young men for the priesthood and religious life. Accreditation of the schools also demanded that the faculty not only have a grasp of the subject matter but also have specific degrees in the subjects being taught. For a missionary congregation to provide qualified teachers for all the subjects of a high school curriculum in nine minor seminaries was impossible.

Gradually, one after the other, all of the nine Divine Word missionary seminaries in the States were closed, leaving only the seminary/college in Epworth, Iowa, running.<sup>63</sup>

It happened then that the students and some staff members<sup>64</sup> moved to the diocesan high school seminary, St. Mark's in Erie. At the same time in 1968 the Holy Spirit Sisters ended their years of service in the kitchen and laundry. On June 12 four ladies from the Mission Chain, who had built the convent for the Sisters in 1927, paid a farewell visit. On June 15 the Sisters, priests, and Brothers had a farewell meal together. Finally, on June 18, Father Rector Wald drove the Sisters to their motherhouse in Techny.

With the departure of the students, the Sacred Heart Seminary buildings served as the administrative and financial center for the boys and SVD teachers at St. Mark Seminary. For the next decade the



The Mission Manor.

complex was maintained by a small number of Brothers and priests. Meanwhile, the community<sup>65</sup> took up residence in the Mission Manor situated across the highway from the seminary site.

Brother Cletus Lesage wrote from Girard in 1979, "It is high time we sell this place. It is falling apart. I know, I have been the maintenance man for 8 years."<sup>66</sup> The departure of the seminarians and the provincial staff left the seminary building deserted. One evening several young men broke into the seminary building and went on a senseless rampage, destroying the toilets and urinals and smashing the heads off the statues in the chapel. Some Girard citizens, noticing lights moving about in a supposedly empty building at night, called the local police and the culprits were arrested.<sup>67</sup>

Father Gilbert Gawlik<sup>68</sup> was appointed praeses<sup>69</sup> on August 15, 1985. He was told to "make the Mission Manor more presentable" with the hope of eventually establishing another apostolate in the area. He first struggled with improving the living conditions in the house and then with getting one of the sickly and reluctant confreres to move to a care facility. But the next Provincial Chapter of the Eastern Province put a closure on further development with a decision to move out completely from Sacred Heart Mission House seminary.<sup>70</sup> Initially Father Gawlik sought a buyer for the building. (The Girard Village administration even considered the possible use of the building for senior citizens.)



The demolition of the Sacred Heart Mission Seminary building.

However, after the vandalism on the seminary building, Father Gawlik was given the unhappy task of seeing to the building's demolition and the moving of the bodies in the cemetery to Techny.<sup>71</sup> His first step was to obtain bids from three companies for the demolition of the buildings. The offer of VLF Enterprises of Niagara Falls was the lowest bid, and the contract was signed with that company on June 27, 1988.

In somber tones Father Gawlik described the demise of Girard: "A huge crane, with a five-ton bucket swinging from its boom, towered over the five storied building during the demolition. A terrible banging sound, like that of a clobbering giant, continued for four days. Many tried to close their ears to the sound, while others refused to even look. The crane is gone now. All that remains is an immense pay-loader and two large heaps of rubble and twisted steel that used to be the seminary and convent."

Obtaining permission from civil authorities to exhume and move the bodies was the next obstacle to be handled. This was followed by the search for a company to carry out the exhumation and transport the remains in a proper manner to Techny for burial in the SVD Techny cemetery.<sup>72</sup> Along with the remains of the dead, the cornerstone laid on that happy day in 1917 came to Techny and now lies quietly at the southeast corner of the old paint shop.

In April 2005 the board of trustees of Mercyhurst College authorized the purchase of 400 acres in Girard from the Society with the

intention of developing Mercyhurst West, a two-year college. It was meant to serve western Erie County, northwestern Crawford County, and northeastern Ohio. However, after the sale was completed, a change of administration brought the development plan of the college to a halt. What now remains of Sacred Heart Mission House, the two beautiful ponds, and the garden is an unkempt jungle of bushes and trees.<sup>73</sup>

### **POSTSCRIPT AND APPRECIATION**

During the fifty-seven years of the existence of Sacred Heart Seminary in Girard, a large number of Brothers, priests, and Sisters gave their energy, intelligence, and physical strength to the goal of the institution, the promotion of vocations to the missionary priesthood. One thinks admiringly of the Sisters preparing meals three times a day, seven days a week, and doing the laundry for all those years. To mind comes the humble work of the Brothers: all the cleaning of the toilets, the shoveling of the coal, the keeping of records, the meeting of guests at the entrance, the keeping of the grounds, the nursing of the students, raising crops, and harvesting honey. The priests, too, faithfully prepared and taught lessons; corrected “pensa,” those weekly assignments; did weekend supply to earn a few dollars; recruited; and motivated and directed the community.

Many members of the community, especially in the beginning, were emigrants from Europe with little or no knowledge of the English language and American culture, and with limited financial resources at their disposal. They came with European mores, prejudices and culture to a strange land to sacrifice their lives. What courage they displayed!

In later years many of the staff would have been born in America and felt deeply the disappointment of never having been able to fulfill their aspirations to serve in a foreign land, the very reason they joined a missionary society.

While a large number of candidates passed through the portals of the mission house in Girard, the community knew that only a fraction would actually persevere to ordination. Still they kept on accepting young men and serving them. The outcome was left to the grace of God. All of them—Sisters, Brothers, and priests—poured out their lives for the students and the hope of spreading the faith to other, far-distant mission lands. In addition to those candidates who remained in the

Society, a large number were also ordained for the diocesan priesthood. Alumni often have expressed their gratitude for the academic and religious formation they received while studying at Girard.

A list of some of the more notable diocesan bishops, priests and deacons of the seminary illustrates just a few of the many lives that the seminary influenced positively throughout the years.<sup>74</sup>

In addition, the staff of priests, Brothers, and Sisters, by their prayers, service, and faithful religious life, found in the seminary and its goals the instrument for their own sanctification. Likewise the laity and the diocesan clergy noted and expressed their appreciation for the more than seventy years of service by the priests who, in all kinds of weather, went faithfully on weekends to celebrate Mass and offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Msgr. Casimir Bogneak, dean of the Northern Region of the Diocese of Erie wrote, "The Bishop and the Diocesan Family are requesting the privilege of expressing our gratitude and appreciation to the Divine Word Missionaries for your 74 years of generous loving service to the church of Erie. . . . You have left your mark and we are most grateful."<sup>75</sup> Many people were moved to sacrifice to maintain the seminary, and they found in their involvement a channel for service of the wider Church around the world. The presence of the seminary was also a source of mission awareness for a large part of the country. Sacred Heart Mission House played a significant role in the missionary history of the United States.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Priests, Brothers, Novices and Postulants Transferred from the Girard Cemetery to the Techny Cemetery**

Father Andrew Adamek  
Father Christian Baker  
Father Theodore Bauman  
Brother Hugolinus Buecher  
Father John Buis (Buys)  
Brother Aloysius Christian  
Brother Gabriel Cloos  
Father Anton Deppe  
Brother Winand Dockendorf  
Father Lester Martin Dooley  
Brother Christopher Escherich

Father Joseph Faikus  
Brother Linus Finkeldei  
Brother Peter Fuchs  
Brother Francis Gaeger  
Brother Vincent Gerat  
Postulant John Raymond Griffin  
Father Bruno Hagspiel  
Father Peter Heier  
Father Maximilian Hoffman  
Brother Bernard Husmann  
Brother Gregory Kelch  
Brother Wiho Kolkmeier  
Brother Godfrey Koressel  
Brother Raphael Ledermann  
Novice Brother Laurence Malloy  
Brother Victor Marino  
Father Richard Mark  
Brother Kilian Mueller  
Father Casimir Murawski  
Brother Urban (Lucian) Oriens  
Father Peter Paunder  
Brother Radbert Pollok  
Brother Gerard Reiter  
Brother George Rupprecht  
Brother Meinrad Schmid  
Father Joseph Shendill  
Brother Homobonus Stiller  
Novice Frater Frederick Stoessel  
Brother Anthony Waldmann  
Brother Philip Weiser  
Father John Widers  
Father George Zetts

### Laymen Transferred to the Techny Cemetery

Mr. John G. Bleicher  
Mr. Andrew Cornelius Burke  
Mr. Steve Janich  
Mr. John Savoni  
Mr. John Schmitt  
Mr. Reinier Vissers

### Rectors of Sacred Heart Mission House

1912–1916	Father Peter Janser
1916–1922	Father Arnold Jeurgens
1922–1928	Father Hugo Aubry
1928–1934	Father Maximilian Hoffman
1934–1940	Father Adolph Burgner
1940–1944	Father Anthony Deppe
1944–1952	Father Emil Lesage
1953–1955	Father Raymond Weisenberger
1956–1958	Father Robert Studeny
1959–1964	Father Casimir Murawski
1965–1967	Father Edward Wald
1968–1970	Father Chester Nowicki
1971	Father Raymond Sanders
1972–1973	Father Gerald Hellem
1974–1978	Father Gerald Hellem (praeses)
1979	Father Elmer Nadicksbernd
1979	Father Joseph Fleishaker (praeses)
1980–1985	Father Joseph Fleishaker
1985–1989	Father Gilbert Gawlik (praeses)

## Decline of Enrollment in Sacred Heart Mission House in the Later Years

As of September 1970 the SVD high school students attended St. Mark Seminary in Erie, Pennsylvania. This was a minor seminary run by the Diocese of Erie. The diocese made the decision to close the seminary as of June 1984.

The figures are taken from the *Catalogus*, the official SVD international directory. Because of the repetition of the same number over a number of years, it appears that the editor of the *Catalogus* was not consistently sent up-to-date information.

1963	110	1974	20
1964	125	1975	20
1965	125	1976	27
1966	98	1977	27
1967	76	1978	27
1968	45	1979	27
1969	50	1980	24
1970	36	1981	24
1971	20	1982	31
1972	20	1983	20
1973	no figure available		

### NOTES

1. Ernest Brandewie, *In the Light of the Word: Divine Word Missionaries in North America* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 44. Hereafter noted as EB with page number.

2. Throughout the text, the Sacred Heart Mission House is often referred to simply as Girard, as we customarily speak of other mission seminaries by the name of the city or town in which they are located, such as Epworth, Miramar, East Troy, Conesus and Perrysburg.

3. Girard chronicle, 1:3.

4. Ibid.

5. Bishop of the Erie diocese from 1899 to 1920.

6. 1962 Jubilee booklet for Divine Word Seminary.

7. EB, 66–67.

8. Brother Wiho Kolkmeier (1868–1946) moved to Girard and remained there until the end of his life. He cared for the community

farm: cattle, pigs and chickens. Brother Wiho had a special devotion to St. Therese of Lisieux and practiced many of her virtues. “At table he wanted only the last place in everything and preferred others to enjoy the better food. He was attractive to everyone whom he met because of his cheerful disposition and friendliness to one and all alike.”

9. Brother Peter Fuchs (1875–1946) served as vegetable gardener for the Girard community until 1924, when he was transferred to St. Michael’s Mission House in Conesus, New York. After four years he took over the vegetable gardening at the St. Francis Xavier Mission House in Miramar, where he remained until his death. In the fall of 1943 he won ten first prizes and seven second prizes for various vegetables he grew at the annual Victory Harvest Show at Plymouth, Massachusetts.

10. Brother Dignus Greef (1865–1934) was just three years in vows when in 1901 he was sent to the States to help the fledgling community at Techny. In 1912 he again was chosen to be part of the pioneer community in Girard. Later he returned to Techny and served in the post office, sacristy and entrance. He also served as the private secretary for Father Rector August Loechte.

11. Girard chronicle, 1:5.

12. After all of his involvement in opening the seminary in Girard in 1912, Father De Lange was transferred the following year to the Dutch East Indies, where his Dutch citizenship and his abilities were needed.

13. Right Rev. Peter Janser, the first rector (1912–1916) became the prefect apostolic of Indore, India, where he later served many years as a missionary.

14. Sister Foureria van Acken (+June 17, 1952); Sister Coletta Hanraets (+September 3, 1955); Sister Hiltrudis Morlock (+March 23, 1965).

15. “Heinz 57” is another formulation of the slogan of the H. J. Heinz Company. By 1892 the company was processing and selling over sixty products, starting with ground horseradish, celery soup, and pickles.

16. EB, 67.

17. Father Gilbert Gawlik had this stone brought from Girard to Techny in 1985. The inscription on it reads, “Sacred Heart Mission House AD 1917”.

18. Father John Bermann was assigned to Girard from 1915 to 1921. At that point he became a member of the novitiate staff in East Troy, Wisconsin. In 1928 he returned to Girard and assumed responsibility for the farm. In 1929 he was called overseas to serve in St. Richard's Seminary in Droitwich, England. After several other assignments he returned to Techny in 1942 to serve as farm boss. He died in 1959 of cancer.

19. Brother Wilfrid Hillebrandt (1876–1924) came to the States from Germany in 1903 and spent most of his religious life in Techny as superintendent of the mechanics shop and also as blacksmith.

20. Father Arnold Jeurgens (1884–1966) was born in Goch, Germany, the hometown of St. Arnold Janssen, his cousin. After ordination in 1909 he joined the community at Techny. When Father Janser, the first rector of Girard, was called back to Europe in 1916, Father Jeurgens became the second rector of Girard. He supervised the erection of the first new building. He returned to Techny in 1922 and settled down to a life of teaching homiletics and church history. "He was the soul of consistency. Very rarely ruffled, uniformly positive and cheerful, he established his own schedules and ways of doing things and adhered to them with perfect serenity year after years." (Father Joseph Connors)

21. Brother Homobonus Stiller (1866–1951) joined Brother Wendelin Meyer in the United States in 1898. In December 1924 he was transferred to Girard where he was stationed for the remainder of his life serving as porter, mail clerk, telephone operator, senior of the Brothers, and prayer leader. He was much loved by parents of the students. He died on March 27, 1951, at the age of eighty-five.

22. Brother Andrew Schwetner (1889–1969) was the first American-born Brother to enter the Society and persevere. In 1903 he enrolled in the St. Joseph Technical School at the age of fourteen. All his life, he did maintenance work, cheerfully and competently, in whatever house he was sent. On February 15, 1969, he died suddenly of a heart attack while waiting to catch an airplane to visit his brother in San Francisco. (EB, 44)

23. Brother Gabriel (Herman Cloos), was born in Dunkirk, New York, in 1898. He made his first profession in 1919 and arrived in Girard in 1920. He died in a convalescent home in Erie at the age of seventy-eight on December 22, 1976.

24. Mr. Knoll had made a living by playing the violin during the silent movie era.

25. Father Herman Patzelt was born in 1885 near Breslau, Germany, came to Girard and later worked in the SVD parishes in the South. He died of a heart attack at age sixty-three on September 21, 1948.

26. Father Joseph Murphy was born in Chicago in 1895. He was one of the first priests ordained in America, in 1921, with Fathers Peter Weyland and Florian Haas. Father Murphy died at the age of forty on September 5, 1935.

27. Father Hugo Aubry (1872-1969) was noted for his penchant for building. He was rector of Techny in 1913 and served two terms. He was provincial in 1936 when St. Michael's in Conesus, New York, was built. He became its rector in 1940. When he died in 1969 at the age of ninety-seven he was the oldest member of the Society in the United States. Father Aubry was easily distinguishable by his height and his profoundly deep voice.

28. Father Henry Kammeyer (1885–1938) came to the United States immediately after his ordination in 1912 and taught at St. Joseph's Technical School in Techny for ten years. In August 1922 he was assigned to Girard, where he was prefect of students and teacher for nine years. In 1931 he was transferred to England. After three years he moved back to Germany where he died at the age of fifty-two in the twenty-sixth year of his priesthood.

29. Father Hauber's name does not appear in the *Index Defunctorum*, suggesting he may have left the Society.

30. Father August Lubadel (1891–1972), ordained in 1914 in Germany, served in the army for the duration of World War I. He came to America in 1921 and taught Latin and mathematics at Girard for fourteen years.

31. Father Christian Baker (1905-1970) spent much of his priesthood teaching at St. Augustine Seminary in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi.

32. Father Anthony May (1902–1985) began his studies in Girard in 1919. After ordination he taught in various house in the States, Girard excluded, but in October 1947 he was called to Rome to become the treasurer general of the Society. Following that he functioned as the treasurer of the Southern Province for ten years.

Next he filled that post in the newly formed Western Province. He was characterized by a cheerful demeanor.

33. Father Aubry, letter to Father Provincial Jeurgens, April 20, 1917.

34. Among other activities Father Benz would serve as recruiter for the seminary during the difficult period of decline in vocations.

35. Father Joseph Kempinski (1898–1960) was born in Ruda, in Silesia, near Breslau, German. He entered the Society at Holy Cross Mission House in 1913 at age fifteen. In 1922 he came to the United States and completed his theological training at St. Mary's Seminary in Techny. He was ordained in 1926.

36. Mrs. Schlaudecker's husband, Ben, met the first members of the community at the train station in Erie in 1912 and drove them to Girard in his automobile.

37. At the outbreak of World War I, Father Maximilian Hoffman (1888–1967) was inducted into military service, and he served in the chaplain corps until his honorable discharge in 1918. Max set off for his first assignment abroad to America in 1921. His forte was mathematics, which he taught along with Greek at St. Mary's Seminary in Techny. Shortly afterward he moved to Girard and taught there the next six years, was named prefect of students, and then served as rector for two terms. He spent the rest of his life teaching and lending a hand in various surrounding parishes.

38. Bishop John Mark Gannon (1877–1968) was consecrated auxiliary bishop of Erie in 1918 and appointed bishop of Erie in 1920. He often presented diplomas at graduation at Sacred Heart Seminary.

39. The orchestra numbers played at the commencement in June 1929 included selections from *Orpheus in Hades* by Offenbach, *Mignon* by Thomas, *Carmen* by Bizet, *Fifth Hungarian Dance* by Brahms, *La Traviata* by Verdi, *Tannhaeuser March* by Wagner, *Inflammatus* by Rossini, *Aida* by Verdi, *Undine Overture* of Lotzig, *Norma Overture* by Bellini, and *Lustspiel Overture* by Keler-Bela.

40. By trade a shoemaker, Brother Crispin Weitz (1884–1975) worked as a layman in St. Michael's Mission House in Steyl. Drafted into the army during the First World War, he sensed a call to religious life. In 1924 he was assigned to Girard, but in 1930 he was called to serve in Indonesia where he worked with his skills in a trade school in Ende, Flores. He was imprisoned by the Japanese in the Second

World War and even practiced his trade in the prison camp. He died in Steyl in 1975.

41. Father Hoffmann, letter to Father Provincial Hagspiel, July 25, 1930.

42. Father Harold Rigney (1900–1980), Chicago-born, obtained a doctorate from the University of Chicago and taught in Ghana, West Africa. He served as chaplain to the U.S. Air Force in North Africa. In 1946 he was invited to China to be president of Fu Jen University and was imprisoned by the Communists because of his lack of cooperation and his past association with the Air Force. His prison experience is vividly described in his book, *Four Years in a Red Hell*. Upon his release he spent time in England and in Epworth, Iowa, as president of Divine Word College. Among his accomplishments were a number of discoveries in the field of paleontology.

43. This memory of Father Harold Rigney as a teacher was furnished by his student, Father Charles Schneider.

44. Father Emil Lesage (1899–1979), the first of ten children, was born near Brussels, Belgium. The family migrated to the United States and settled in Moline, Illinois. He completed his last two years of theology in Rome and was ordained at Steyl in 1926. In 1928 he was transferred to Girard, where he taught and was prefect of students for thirteen years. Father Emil had three brothers in the Society; Father Alfons, Father Maurice, and Brother Cletus. Father Maurice taught science and was house procurator at Girard for three years until 1945; then he did several years of study in Chicago, after which he was transferred to Ghana, Africa. His special field of expertise was snakes. Brother Cletus had worked as a lithographer before entering religious life and so continued working in the Mission Press for eighteen years. In 1948 he was invited to Ghana to organize the Accra Catholic Press.

45. EB discusses the issue at length, 86–87.

46. Father Francis Humel (1889–1987) came to Techny in 1910 as a student in the Technical School and became one of the first students in the newly opened St. Mary's Seminary two years later. In 1932 he became the first rector of Epworth, and two years later, rector of Techny. In 1940 he was named the first provincial of the Eastern Province. In 1947 he went to the General Chapter of the Society and was chosen the first American general councillor. In 1958 he returned to the United States and was appointed rector of

the House of Studies in Chicago. When the Western Province was established in 1964 he was appointed provincial superior. In 1967 he moved into semiretirement at Techny.

47. Father Adolph Burgmer (1875–1970) was ordained in 1914. Although his physician informed him, “If you are careful, we can hope for three more years of life for you,” he died in Techny at the age of ninety-five.

48. Father Anthony Deppe (1901–1976) was born in Germany. Two brothers also became Divine Word Missionary priests. Father Anthony’s first assignment in America was to Girard. He served as rector of St. Michael’s Mission House in Conesus, New York, from 1937 to 1940 and Girard from 1940 to 1946. “On the first Sunday after my entrance he announced from the pulpit that the following boys, I included, would take violin lessons” (source: Father Raymond Quetchenbach).

49. Father Walter Hafner (1919–2002) went from Girard to serve as rector of the community in Bordentown. From 1961 to 1985 he managed the Mission Office in Pittsburgh.

50. It was my pleasure to have been a student at Sacred Heart Seminary from September 7, 1943, to spring of 1947. I have a copy of my admission letter signed by Father Francis Humel with a footnote by Father Walter Hafner: “Congratulations, friend! You are now on your way to the Sacred Priesthood” (source: Father Raymond Quetchenbach).

51. Ray Kunkel in *Word USA*, September 1987.

52. The ordination class of April 1960 consisted of Fathers Joseph Aul, Walter Bunofsky, James Franks, John Kilmore, Edward Herberger, Raymond Hober, Richard McGervey, Donald Murrin, Martin Padovani, and Donald Strike.

53. Bishop Adolph Noser (1900–1981) completed his theology in Rome, where he earned a doctorate in sacred theology and was immediately appointed assistant novice master at East Troy. In 1939 he was appointed first superior of the new SVD presence in Ghana, Africa. He was consecrated bishop by Cardinal Samuel Alphonsus Stritch in 1947. In 1952 Bishop Noser was given an auxiliary bishop, Bishop Joseph Bowers, an Afro-Caribbean from the island of Dominica. In 1953 Noser was assigned as vicar apostolic for Alexishafen, Papua New Guinea, to make room for the promotion of Bishop Bowers.

54. Father Charles Erb (1906–2002) enjoyed a long and colorful career as military chaplain during the Second World War and missionary in Ghana, Africa. He also served for a time as communication coordinator for the Society in Rome. After repeatedly urging the superior general to open a mission in northern Ghana, he one day was called in and told to do it himself. With the help of Father Joseph Connolly and a Dutch confrere, Father Henk Janssen, he did take up the challenge with great enthusiasm. A story he was fond of telling: He was visiting a chieftain in Ghana. In accord with polite custom, Father Erb asked the chieftain, who was surrounded by a bevy of wives and a slew of children, how the wives and families were. The chieftain then asked Father Erb through an interpreter how his wives were. Father replied, “We do it differently in America. There we collect postage stamps.”

55. Bishop William D. O’Brien was appointed auxiliary bishop of Chicago on February 10, 1934, by Pope Pius XI. As an auxiliary bishop, he continued to serve as president of the Extension Society and pastor of St. John’s Church in Chicago, both offices that he held until his death. On November 18, 1953, he was elevated to the rank of titular archbishop of Calynda by Pope Pius XII due to his “tireless work” with the Extension Society. He was the first Catholic bishop in the United States who was not the head of a diocese to be named an archbishop.

56. Thomas Cardinal Tien Ken-Hsien (Tienchensing), (1890–1967) became the first Chinese cardinal and the first archbishop of Beijing, both in 1946. Leaving China after the Communist takeover in 1949 he resided for more than a decade at St. Mary’s Seminary in Techny. Pope Pius XII, reportedly irked that Cardinal Tien had left his post, gave him no new assignments. However, Pope John XXIII, worried that the People’s Republic was establishing its own Catholic hierarchy in China, made him apostolic administrator for Taiwan. The cardinal lived very simply at Techny; the only special treatment he requested was a pot of warm water with his meals.

57. The Mission Manor, situated across Highway 20 and east of the farm, was established to provide accommodations for guests of the seminary. For some time, the Holy Spirit Sisters, who taught in St. John the Evangelist Parish School in Girard, lived in the manor. Eventually quarters were found on the parish grounds for them. The Sisters continued serving the people of Girard as teachers in

the parish school until 1990. The last four Sisters departed from St. John the Evangelist Parish in June 1996. (Source: Sister Anita Marie, SSPS archivist)

58. The aspiring hermits were Barry del Pizzo, William Coyne, Anthony Breslauer, Albert Fanclough, Salvatore Farina and Albert Bugalo.

59. Father Sanders's term was cut short as he moved to Washington to serve as treasurer for the Eastern Province.

60. Father Joseph Bitar explains the psychology of the method in the introduction to his course. "Throughout my childhood, Arabic was the language spoken in my home, my parents having been immigrants from Lebanon. At the age of seven I began receiving private instruction in classical Arabic, French, Spanish and Modern Greek. My instructor followed no particular textbook but used question and answers exclusively and he had me do what I now consider to be a staggering amount of memorizing work."

61. In the Techny archives there is a book listing in detail the genetic history of each cow and bull. Father Nowicki was surprised to discover that many of the cows nurtured on the farm actually belonged to the farm hands.

62. The subsequent editors were Fathers Charles Erb, James Mullaley, Arthur Malin, and Francis Kamp. When interest in a magazine for grammar school children waned, a new publication was designed with a slightly older audience in mind. It was named *Missionary Youth*.

63. SVD high school seminaries closed in this order: Miramar, 1962; Conesus, 1965; Techny, 1972; Bay St. Louis, 1982; Bordentown, 1983; Girard/St. Mark, 1984; Riverside, 1987; Perrysburg, 1990; East Troy, 1991.

64. Among the priests teaching at St. Mark's in 1970 were Fathers Sylvester Jaworski, William Shea and Leo Dusheck, while Father Walter Ostrowski continued recruiting candidates.

65. In 1986 the community in the manor consisted of Fathers Gilbert Gawlik, Michael Bodnar, John Fonville and Thomas Lavin; and Brothers Denis Coneys and Paul Lengyel.

66. Brother Cletus Lesage (1908–1990), the fourth in a family of ten children, entered the postulancy at Techny in 1928 and made final vows in 1937. In 1948 he was invited to Ghana by Bishop Noser to organize a mission press. His job was to print as many catechism and prayer books as possible in the local languages. Cletus returned to the

United States in 1958 to work at Conesus and then Girard as maintenance engineer.

67. These details were provided by Brother Matthew Zemel.

68. Father Gilbert Gawlik (1926–2010) spent more than twenty years in the Philippines teaching and administering Mindoro College. He returned to the United States to become vocation director, a job he held for eight years. He spent several years in the late-1980s supervising the closure of the Girard mission house. Then he became development director for the Chicago Province, and later chaplain for the Techny Towers Retreat and Conference Center. Gilbert was also active in Marriage Encounter. During the last years of his life he suffered intensely from cancer and other bodily ailments.

69. The term “praeses” refers to the superior of a small community or house.

70. The Holland Metro Inc. Realtors determined a market value of \$45,000 for the land and \$80,000 for the building. St. Vincent Hospital considered purchase for a promotion department, and a representative of the Holy Ghost Fathers looked into a possible purchase. (Chicago Province Archives: Gilbert Gawlik, letter to the Provincial, September 24, 1996)

71. A list of the bodies reinterred at Techny may be found at the end of the chapter. The families of Father Edward Delaney and Father Ralph Roina requested that their bodies be buried elsewhere.

72. The cost of the transfer was \$11,390, as reported by Father Gawlik in a letter of July 11, 1986. (Chicago Province Archives)

73. The Society still holds title to a plot the size of a softball field directly behind the Saints Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Church. It is to be returned to the Society if and when the church closes. (Oral source: Brother Matthew Zemel)

74. Among the distinguished alumni of Girard are Bishop Rene A. Valero, Diocese of Brooklyn, first Hispanic bishop; Msgr. Edward Flinn, Msgr. Walter Kern, Msgr. Frederick Slaven, Msgr. Francis John Vaughan, Rev. James Dalzell, Rev. Thomas Bertolina, Rev. Steve Anderson, Rev. Victor Barlotta Jr., Rev. Frank Brett, Rev. Albert Ceranowski, Rev. Clarence Cerwonka, and Rev. Leo Wimett, to mention but a few. Among those ordained to the permanent diaconate are Jim Marchu and John P. Flanagan.

75. Msgr. Bogneak, letter to Fr. Provincial Lennon, July 24, 1986. (Chicago Province Archives)