

# Communities of the Word

STORIES OF THE CHICAGO PROVINCE



## THE EAST TROY STORY, 1921 – 2012

*Rev. Edward Peklo*

### THE BEGINNINGS, A NOVITIATE PLACE

In his book, *In the Light of the World*,<sup>1</sup> Ernest Brandewie treats the beginning of East Troy in the context of the need for Techny to overcome space problems—thus, the decision to move the clerical novitiate of the Society from Techny, Illinois, to East Troy, Wisconsin. In February 1921, Novice Master Father Herman Richarz and Brother Wendelin Meyer visited a possible site in California, but its distance from Techny was the deciding factor in not moving the novitiate to that far western state.

In May of the same year, several possible sites in Wisconsin were visited, with a piece of property on the northwest side of Lake Beulah, near East Troy, chosen as the best site. The current house on that property can still be seen from the lounge and dining room of the present Divine Word residence in winter when the trees are bare. Its purchase was first announced in *The Christian Family*:<sup>2</sup>

Techny, with its many departments, could not well serve the purpose of the novitiate, which is to train the future members of the Society in the principles of the spiritual life and this is best achieved amidst the seclusion and quiet of a retired spot. Such a spot has at last been found in the confines of one of our great states, Wisconsin, in the northern part of Walworth



County, on the shores of beautiful Lake Beulah, in the parish of East Troy, and under the jurisdiction of the Most Reverend Archbishop of Milwaukee. Far removed from the cities of men and amidst the privacy and wildness of nature, “The Novitiate,” such is the new home’s name, will undoubtedly fulfill the purpose to which we have assigned it.

The property of the novitiate consists of a tract of land of about sixty acres, for the most part wooded but enough farmland for the purpose of the new venture. There are two cottages on the property and a few smaller buildings; but we fear the new Novices will often feel winter’s icy breath, for the cottages were destined for only summer accommodations. A new and appropriate building will be thought of at some future date.

The news that the Society has bought a home for Novices evoked considerable discussion at Techny, especially among the fraters (Latin: fratres), as the seminarians are called.

The buildings were not ready and not fit for occupancy by the new novices; there would be many rooms and things to be remodeled and surroundings

to be improved; to hire men would drain the almost empty pocket-book; these conspicuous facts constrained the superiors to turn a favorable eye upon the Seminarians and allow them to spend a few weeks at the Novitiate for the purpose of making ready the quarters for the coming Novices and their future brothers in religion . . . at least one group of them headed by the Very Reverend Father Provincial. . . .

During the following month work was the order of the day, seasoned with boating, fishing, swimming, etc. And by the time of the arrival of the new novices their quarters and surroundings were in excellent condition. To be sure, things were not so accommodating as at Techny, their old home, but still, a little self-denial is exactly what the Novice is looking for.

From this point on, Father Herman Richarz, the first novice master in the United States, made a regular report from East Troy in *The Christian Family* magazine directed mainly to benefactors. The report appeared in the section, “Bits of News of the SVD.”<sup>3</sup>

The first group of twelve pioneer novices moved in on September 9, 1921. A few quotes from some of those reports by Father Richarz give some indication what life was like for the novitiate community:<sup>4</sup>

Anybody that thinks the Novices on Lake Beulah are spending their days in idleness and pleasure has an altogether wrong conception. True we go swimming as a matter of necessity, but when winter comes we will have to break a hole in the ice to get a bath, or go without it. We also do some rowing, not in order to get exercise, for we get plenty of that in other ways . . . but because it is the most dependable way we have of reaching East Troy by the shortest route.

He then goes on to beg help, “in filling our coal bin . . . for making our houses during the winter, I’ll not say comfortable, but even habitable” (November 1921, p. 311).

By their first Christmas, a furnace had been installed and they no longer needed to bathe in the lake. On that first Christmas Day itself, Father Richarz remarks in *The Christian Family*:

At four o'clock in the afternoon we had Christmas vespers, and in the evening, recreation was much enlivened by the "surprise" packages sent by the Fraters (seminarians) at Techny, which contained almost everything imaginable, from a baby's rattle (for our baby-novice), and a rusty cap-pistol and a bunch of old and broken keys for our guardian, to a pair of woolen socks (entirely too small) for Brother Winand. It was one round of merry laughter. (February 1922, p. 55)

In March 1922 it was announced that Father Francis Hillebrand was replacing Father Joseph Bermann, who was being transferred to Girard, Pennsylvania. Father Hillebrand's task was to lay "out plans for the grounds and future new buildings" (p. 83). By then, the novices had also cut and packed away, for summer use, fifty tons of lake ice. It is also mentioned that "our two hogs" were butchered and that someone had donated "a fine Holstein, giving all the milk the novitiate needs" (p. 83). So it seems a farm was functioning from the very beginning. Later on it is also mentioned that there were horses.

In the May 1922 report, Father Richarz quotes from the letter of a benefactor:

"With deep sorrow I read in *The Christian Family* your appeal for a rug for our dear Lord's house (the Chapel). Although I am a poor woman, who has to work every day, I will send you the money I have saved for so many things I was going to buy with it, and I shall feel happy to do without them, to make the home of our dear Lord Beautiful." (p. 138)

Such generous, selfless donations are clearly a significant part of the history of the East Troy community.

The May 1922 report also states that besides the advantages of the East Troy site for the novitiate, "It is also an excellent place for members of the Society to take a much needed rest after the steady strain of hard work." (p. 139)

Father Richarz delightfully expands on this in the July 1922 issue:

Were the reader to visit our shore, he would find it dotted with improvised tents manifesting life and animation where before solitude reigned supreme.

Yes, Techny has come out en masse together with a large commissary train. The Fathers have manifestly left their professorial gravity on the chair and instead of the oft-handled book now wield the fishing rod, ply the oars or gather in pleasant conversation beneath wide-spreading oaks; the Brothers, many of whom never enjoyed this recreation, having laid aside all business and trade cares, are as if they were drinking at the fountain of youth. Their former lack of appreciation for relaxation instantly disappeared, and the trial has made them strong supporters of the cause; lastly the Scholastics have firmly resolved to remedy the loss of energy sustained by a year of laborious study by making this surpass any previous outing at the resort. (pp. 194–95)

While the May issue indicated that Father Hillebrand with the help of novices was engaged in surveying and laying off distances and directions for building, the July 1922 issue tells us,

Brother Winand, too, has his “hands-full,” for besides taking care of the horses, cows, pigs, etc., he is taking great interest in his truck garden with its long rows of tomatoes, cabbage, beans, and a variety of other vegetables. . . . Brother Alfridus [Moller], besides being cook, finds time to raise a flock of young chicks.

It also mentions the novices spend time “in the fields amid the pleasant changes of farm life.”

The November 1922 issue describes that the new novices spent time in September shortly after their arrival, picking apples, shucking corn, and digging potatoes. “In between times, hazel and hickory nuts were gathered; wild grapes were also picked—in fact anything that added to our winter food supply was garnered.” (p. 195)

In the meantime, the plea to benefactors continued to help buy coal. The hope for new dwellings for the novitiate before the 1922 winter set in did not bear fruit; the province could offer “absolutely no assistance at present.” (December 1922, p. 335)

Father Richarz makes it abundantly clear in his writings that winter was a time of suffering for the community. In October 1923 he informs his readers,



Father Herman Richarz and the 1923-24 Novices.

With the Novices, all is now progressing well. . . . But we, dear reader, as we watch the leaves slowly changing from green to brown, begin to grow uneasy. Thoughts of another Wisconsin winter, such as we have spent on the lake in previous years, begin to haunt us. . . . We shall soon find it necessary to use our furnaces, but—our coal bin is empty!

Then in December 1923 he writes with much poignancy, Winter is here with a vengeance. The storms are raging and howling, piercing cold enters our frail summer homes through the many chinks and cracks in the walls. All of us have our difficulties and, with us here at the Novitiate, winter, coal, and building is, of necessity, a subject of frequent recurrence. How consoling it is to receive a helping hand.

In April 1924 Father Richarz put his creative mind to use with the following imagery:

Jack Frost has packed up his set of snow-blizzards, hail storms, and howling winds and is reluctantly leaving his favorite playground. The old frosty-bearded villain had a season of rare sport at our expense. His nipping blasts and cutting winds found no trouble in penetrating our loose-ribbed dwellings



Novitiate and seminary, 1924-1993.

and making of our Novices a group of “breezy, goose-skinned, blue-nosed, red-eyed, tooth-chattering creatures.” (p. 124)

The poor condition of the buildings was not the only pressing concern. In the April 1923 issue of *The Christian Family*, Father Richarz, after describing how the interest in the foreign missions is growing in our country, comments,

Even now it is only with difficulty that we are able to accommodate the present novices in our small quarters. Where then shall we make arrangements for the still larger next year’s class, and the other classes that enter each year? Something must be done, and that . . . soon!

An answer to that concern came quickly. On August 28, 1923, a parcel of property on the opposite shore of Lake Beulah was bought. (This property continues to be owned by the Chicago Province to this day.) It is curious that nothing is mentioned in Father Richarz’s monthly article in *The Christian Family* about this purchase. He does describe the progress of a new building going up but does not indicate it is on new property. In the Chicago Province Archives there is a formal written description by Father Richarz dated November 1, 1924, when the cornerstone of the new building was laid.

The place on which this building stands was purchased August 28, 1923 from Mrs. Kate Lawlor of East Troy for the sum of \$27,000. It comprised at that time 175 acres of land, partly farmland, partly Lakeland, partly wasteland. . . . On May 19, 1924. . . we went across the lake . . . after supper . . . and blessed the building grounds. . . . On July 10, 1924 construction work began. . . . The faithful work of the novices will never be forgotten. Their names are Louis Benoit, Peter Boerding, Frances Gronotte, Leo Hargarten, Henry Jungbluth, Alphonse Lesage, Harold Rigney, Joseph Ford, Joseph Smith, Eugene Stoll, Edward Stubenrauch. They worked many a day for ten long hours and never complained. . . . Also the scholastics of Techny worked for many an hour on the new building. . . . The new novices that arrived on September 8 also had their share in the work. . . . The corner stone laying took place on the Feast of All Saints. (The date of this writing.)

He also provides a list of all the workmen engaged in constructing the new novitiate building.

In the January 1925 issue, Father Richarz writes from the original novitiate site,

Now that the leaves are off the trees, we can see the dark outline of the new structure up on the hill, seventy feet above the lake level. In its present state it looks rather dismal, in a sense; but in another sense it has a certain beauty about it, since it is a monument commemorating the self-sacrificing offerings of generous Catholic hearts.

The section on the novitiate in the May 1925 issue of *The Christian Family* is headlined, "At Last, A Departure Without Tears." The move, Father Richarz writes, took place just before March 19, the Feast of St. Joseph. In the Chicago Province Archives there is an article, from November 1948, by a Frater J. Urbick titled "The S.V.D. in the U.S.: Holy Ghost Mission Seminary." It looks as though it may have been a research project while the author himself was in his second year of novitiate. How much is truth or myth can't be verified.



To quote the diarist on the moving experiences would constitute a lecture in itself. Suffice it to say that they had “quite a time of it!” They risked the fast-melting lake and the horses broke through; they hauled loads of furniture over roads knee-deep in mud with a biting wind and a drenching rain adding their bit of discomfort to the situation. Everything appeared a bedlam; one of the men hired to help move with his wagon, quit with an exasperated “It’s impossible!” But he didn’t know novices! The moving was completed and in 5 days, on the Feast of St. Joseph, the Solemn High Mass of Thanksgiving was sung. Not till July 23, however, was the building solemnly dedicated.

The new building was dedicated as the Holy Ghost Novitiate.

In the June 1925 issue, Father Richarz comments on the new site:

This is the region of wooded hills and lakes, and on one of these wooded hills in an oak grove, stands the new Novitiate, overlooking Lake Beulah. It is all very beautiful and inspiring, certainly a fit place for this monument which stands witness to the charity of many benefactors. It is a plain, strong and durable building, in which everything that might savor of luxury has been omitted, as is only proper.

This building stood strong and served its purpose until 1993.

Given the suffering caused by winter in the original novitiate, this tale of the beginning years of East Troy ends with Father Richarz’s comment in December 1925, on winter in the new building:

Brrr Cold! Winter has made itself felt very early this year. But it no longer holds out the awful dread of the past four years. Winter in those years in summer cottages was the cause of great solicitude and worry. We are in our new buildings now, which has a good hot-water heating system and which at the same time proves to be very economical. The problem of fuel, however, is still there and remains to be solved.

Father Richarz died in February 1927. There are no reports in *The Christian Family* from East Troy for the months of April and May,



Fr. Felix Glorious, Novice Master 1928-1958

and when they resume in June, the following comment is made in the Novitiate section,

Very Rev. Father Provincial paid us a very brief visit. . . . He warmly eulogized our deceased Novice Master, good Father Richarz . . . characterizing him as “a man of industry,” especially industry of time, “a plain man detached from the world,” “a man we could take as a model, a saint.” Needless to say, we agreed with him from our own experience.

His place was temporarily filled by Father Bruno Drescher until December 9, 1928, when Father Felix Glorius was welcomed as the new Magister (i.e., novice master), a role in which he served until 1958.

The September 1932 issue of *The Christian Family* describes a “change of abode somewhat out of keeping with Canon Law . . . sanctioned with the approval of the Holy Father for a period of 5 years.” It allowed the clerical novices to summer at Techny while the Techny scholastics spent a month at East Troy.

### **NEW VENTURE: HIGH SCHOOL SEMINARY**

By 1936, because of the large classes, plans were drawn up to add to the novitiate building; it became known as “The Glorius Wing.” In 1937, however, after a visitation of the superior general, the novitiate

was transferred back to Techny and the Techny Preparatory Seminary, a high school program, was transferred to East Troy.<sup>5</sup> By the end of that first year, 100 students were attending what became known as Holy Ghost Mission House. The first rector of this new endeavor was Father Francis Humel. He remained for three years, but becoming the provincial of the newly established Eastern Province of the Society he moved to Girard, Pennsylvania. His successor in the office of rector was Father William Bauer. Known as an able administrator, he served in that position for two terms during the hectic days of World War II. He was succeeded in turn by Father Louis Shaffhauser.

(It should be noted that there are two main sources for what follows: [1] A house chronicle, which was begun on July 7, 1937, and kept off and on until October 1, 1973, and, [2] the minutes of the East Troy House Council.<sup>6</sup> These minutes begin on September 19, 1937.) Whoever the initial chronicler was, he was a delightful storyteller. For May 1, 1938, he writes,

Father Schaffhauser and Father Harold Rigney left for Chicago, to get their wonderful car. Mr. Clark managed to find one for them for \$35.00. They may have to get out once in a while to push it, but that is not so bad for \$35.00.<sup>7</sup>

The novices left East Troy on August 7, 1937, and with the arrival of the new high school students on September 7, a new era had begun.



The seminary library.

The first high school term began on September 9. The SVD staff consisted of Fathers Francis Humel (rector), Joseph Stein (vice rector), Augustine Lubadel, Harold Rigney, Henry Kruft (choir director), Louis Schaffhauser, Charles Erb (prefect, i.e., dean of students), and Charles Malin (procurator), and Brothers Columbanus Martin, a “traveling Brother” (one who sold magazine subscriptions door to door), Eugenius Gasper, Gallus Grunfelder, Fidelis Emmenegger, Longinus Posch, Joachim Oros, Francis Lukovic, and Louis Chavez (in temporary vows).

Within this first year, supply work (helping out in neighboring parishes on the weekends) began (and still continues) in local parishes. The nearby towns helped by the priests from East Troy were: East Troy, Eagle, Mukwonago, Lake Geneva, Genesee Depot, Monroe, and Elkhorn. The chronicler mentioned that, at times the Brothers had to attend Sunday Mass in East Troy because all the priests were out on supply (e.g. September 5, 1943).

In this first academic year several small but interesting facts are noted in the chronicle. First, the first-year students of Holy Ghost Mission Seminary took on the unbeaten East Troy High School baseball team and beat them, 7-4. Second, the academic year was a quarter system and the first graduation was held June 19, 1938, with Archbishop Samuel Stritch of Milwaukee in attendance. The director of the Propagation of the Faith gave the commencement address.

Third, fraters (seminarians) from Techny again spent some summer time at East Troy. It seems that the first year was a great success! The seminarians must have enjoyed this summer time away from Techny. There is this comment in our chronicle, in the summer of 1939: the “Fraters beat the Jesuits in a game of softball at the ‘Island’” (July 16). There were at least three reported games with the Jesuits that summer.

Meanwhile, of course, the high school program continued during the school year. Lest it be thought those were the days of docile, cooperative seminary students, the chronicle describes the following for January 22, 1939:

The boys had a big time of it tonight in the Militia Orans (MO) meeting (i.e., Mission Club). Father Schaffhauser told them since he had to make up all the entertainment for the meeting, he was going to make it easier for himself and unite the MO under



A Militia Orans (Mission Club) meeting.

the Sodality and thus one entertainment would be sufficient. Whatever possessed him I do not know but he met with so much opposition that the whole thing had to be put off for a few days. The boys are all up in the air about it.

The chronicle describes a great deal of mission interest at the seminary: there was the Militia Orans (mentioned above). This was a group of study clubs dedicated to particular missions which came together occasionally to compare notes. There seems to have been a particular interest in Peking University, as we find it recorded that “Peking University Days” were held. What helped the young seminarians maintain mission interest is told by the chronicler on February 13, 1939. He states, “Three of the Fathers sent in their names from here for the African mission: Father Rector was one of them, along with Father Charles Malin and Father John Feeley.”

Since the property at East Troy had originally been farmland, there was naturally a farm connected, at some small distance from the seminary buildings. Regarding the farm, the following is chronicled:

The boys helped to clean up the farm. We are taking over the farm now and are going to try and make [it] go on a running basis. The old farmer who was renting it up till now tried to walk away with almost everything. (April 12, 1939)

\* \* \*

They started to plow and plant today. Brother Gallus [Grunenfelder] has charge of the farm. Two neighboring farmers are helping us get in the seed. They are doing a fast job of it. (May 5, 1939)

It's not clear who is actually in charge of the farm as we read in the May 19, 1941, chronicle: "Father Stein's farm is making progress."

Both the chronicler and the House Council minutes often reflect the many and varied issues that needed to be addressed. These issues range from internal affairs, dealing with the religious members of Holy Ghost Mission House, to concerns which directly affected the students and the running of a high school, to recruitment strategies in promoting the high school and mission interest.

Thus we see that the House Council minutes at this time often express dissatisfaction with the small geographic area the province has assigned this mission house for vocational recruitment: Michigan and Wisconsin. Finally, the January 15, 1939, the minutes record that East Troy has been "apportioned" Illinois (except Rockford diocese), Wisconsin (except LaCrosse diocese), Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio.

There is, also, always the need to be good neighbors in your surroundings. It's difficult to get a reading of the relationship between the seminary and the town, but the chronicle does note that Mayor Clancy and his council, Father Sampon (local pastor), and Mr. Kurtzrock were entertained at a dinner and a showing of the movie *Missionaries of Tomorrow*. A good time was had by all. (April 16, 1941)

As is always the case changes in the formation of seminarians to better their preparation for the priesthood were being considered. So it was in 1941. Before that year, graduates of East Troy who wished to continue with their studies in the Society went on to the college-level program in Epworth, Iowa. Beginning in September 1941, however, the graduates from high school were to go to the novitiate at Techny, Illinois. The August 22, 1941, House Council minutes record the first voting cast after this change:<sup>8</sup>

All were in favor for the admission of the following high school graduates to the Novitiate: Nicholas Hanz, Vincent Fecher, James Artzer, John Landis, John Bettin, John Fincutter.

The formation program continued with this configuration until 1958 when a two-year college was introduced at Miramar, Massachusetts, immediately after high school.

The years between 1941 and 1945 were years of war. The whole

country was taken up in the war effort. Holy Ghost Mission House was not immune. Yet the first time the chronicle mentions World War II was on July 6, 1942:

The 115 fraters arrive from Techny for their summer vacation. It was thought . . . that due to the war and emergency conditions, they would not come.<sup>9</sup>

For November 2, 1942, we read,

There is talk of gas rationing, also of coffee and meat rationing. These little sacrifices must be made by all in order to help win the war.

And again on February 19, 1943, the chronicle noted,

In the evening, quite to the surprise of all, other rationing of peas, dehydrated goods, etc. went into effect. Just a few days before that canned goods were rationed. We are gradually feeling the pinch of war in our way, but we are willing to make the sacrifices demanded of us.

The war may also have had something to do with the number of students attending East Troy. In 1942 only forty-six young men were numbered. Even though the numbers were down there remained at Holy Ghost Mission House a fairly large number of priests and Brothers. The Brothers living at East Troy on November 1, 1942, were, in the kitchen, Brothers Archangel Pryzbylski, Conrad Schmid, and Ralph Braun. Those doing “outside” maintenance: Brothers Cornelius Spitko and Marion. The inside maintenance was left for Brother Cletus Lesage. Office work was the concern of Brother Gilbert Baumgartner. Brother Gallus Grunenfelder was kept busy on the farm.

Was it the war or some other attachment that attracted former students to return to East Troy? We can’t answer that question, but a rather interesting development was taking place. On July 5, 1943, the chronicle notes, “Former students came to spend their vacation days with us.” This was easy to understand as it is very clear from the chronicle that East Troy was used as a vacation spot by many Brothers and priests, and as a picnic site for local parishes and religious.

The members of the East Troy staff, however, also sought recreation outside the beautiful surroundings of East Troy. The Saturday, October 16, 1943, chronicle names five members of the community, Brothers and priests, who went to Madison, Wisconsin, for a Notre

Dame football game. Notre Dame won, it proudly notes! Father Lubadel, a member of the faculty, must have been a great sports fan. He is mentioned throughout the chronicle as attending a variety of professional sporting events and was often the instigator and planner of the outings.

World War II continued to be a part of life at East Troy. Due to the devastations of the war in the Pacific missions, the chronicle records, on January 11, 1944, a request from the Society's Generalate to American SVDs. It reads,

To all American-born priests asking for volunteers for New Guinea. In all twenty Fathers are wanted. From our community Fathers William Kraus, Stephan Appelhans and William Bauer volunteered. Only Father Appelhans was selected. [The farewell ceremony for all of those chosen was held at Techny on August 6, 1944.]

Noting the early small numbers of students in 1942 the community tried to increase the number by the hard work of the staff. During this time the chronicle speaks often of the priest members of the community going out to parishes, schools, vocation clubs, and so forth, to give vocation talks and show movies on the missions and the Society, sometimes going as far away as Chicago. Summertime saw vocation trips to northern Wisconsin and as far east as Detroit and Toledo.



Fathers Lubadel, Bauer (rector) and Mullaley (left-to-right).



Johnson-Jacobi-Torrey-R. Risse-Fleming  
Kaliz-Fr. Bauer-Marks-G. Gawlik



The 1945 graduation class.

In the mid-1940s the chronicler also notes how many lectures Father Lloyd Rushmann gave on his mission experience in China. A number of the priests were also very involved in preaching at Forty Hours devotions and in giving retreats to both SVD and non-SVD, with Father Frederick Gruhn being the one most often mentioned. The name of Holy Ghost Mission Seminary was certainly becoming well known throughout the area.

As in the rest of the country, World War II continued to be an influence on life in the Seminary at East Troy. Beginning in the summer of 1944, the two highest classes returned thirty days after the end of the school year for summer school, which ran right to the beginning of the new school year. A confrere living at East Troy at the time (1940s) said that this was connected with the classification of East Troy as a \*\*\* "Divinity/Seminary School," by U.S. military recruiters. Being so classified deferred the students from the military draft of World War II. To forestall the drafting of our students into the military they had to be in class eleven months out of the year. A year later the upper classes of students stayed on at Holy Ghost Seminary after the regular school year, until early August.

The number of students at the high school programs at East Troy and Epworth, Iowa, seemed to be a matter concern. The July 28,

1944, House Council minutes record a “special meeting to discuss the transfer of some of our students to Epworth as decided by the Provincial Council. Those students who came from the LaCrosse [Wisconsin] Diocese were selected.” Whether any subsequent adjustment occurred in the two student bodies is not clear.

Our chronicler records some happy news on May 7 and 8, 1945. He announces the victory in Europe over the Axis Powers:

During the first class Father Nicholas Bisheimer was listening to the radio and heard that General Eisenhower had announced V-E Day, that is victory in Europe. Therefore all repaired to the chapel, sang the *Te Deum*, and enjoyed the rest of the day a free day. (May 7)

\* \* \*

On the real V-E Day, May 8, the first two classes were dropped so that the community could listen to [President] Truman’s speech.

Victory in the Pacific was a bit more subdued. The chronicle states there was no “free day” or “repairing to chapel” at the time of the announcement of V-J Day—“peace with the Japs,” as it was phrased.<sup>10</sup>



Field day—pole vaulting  
Paul Gootee on the right

Students and Classes competed on Field Day.

The chronicle abruptly came to an end on July 21, 1946, and begins again only on July 21, 1958. Most of the material for the intervening years is taken from the minutes of the House Council. Thus we read on February 22, 1947, that the House Council, with the expressed approval of the provincial, decided to open the house to the holding of lay retreats. Milwaukee men were anxious to have us open our facilities to them. . . . It was thought best to hold about 6–8 the first year while we are still feeling our way, with the first retreat perhaps beginning on June 28, with a “free-will” offering to be set at \$8.00.

Father Edward Borkowski was put in charge of the retreats with Father Rector as general director. Fathers William Popp and Charles Malin gave the retreats that first summer. The seminarians from Techny still came for summer break, so timing for the use of facilities had to be staggered. [There is no indication how many years these retreats ran.]

The territory for recruitment seems to have been a continuing concern at this time. On April 14, 1947, the House Council notes the boundaries for vocation work between Epworth, Iowa, and East Troy, Wisconsin. This was the new arrangement: “East Troy had all of Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Chicago. Epworth would have all of Iowa, Illinois (except Chicago), Missouri and West, and Mississippi.”

SVD community issues were also considered. At a previous meeting, on March 24, it was decided to say “the *Veni Creator* and the responses at morning prayer in English, so as to enable the Brothers to understand and appreciate them more.”

Again on July 18, 1947, the council discussed putting up partitions in the Brothers Dormitory, “thus give them private rooms, especially Brother Gallus,” who at the time was fifty-three years old!

In November 1947 Brother Gallus asked to retire from the farm, since “the work was too much for him.” So discussion began on hiring someone to help Brother. At the same time, it was decided to no longer send the dirty laundry to Techny as it had been from the beginning. (That must have been quite a weekly trip!) The laundry folks at Techny

had been complaining that it was “too dirty and too much.” From then on the boys were to “send their laundry home to have it done by the parents.”

Meanwhile the after effects of World War II continued to weigh on East Troy and the Society. So it happened that in October 1947, the house was informed that it would be “expected to support two [SVD] houses in Europe as our share of war relief, and it was agreed [by the council] to set aside about \$200.00 for that purpose.” (October 13) That meeting also mentions planning a farewell celebration “for our three departing missionaries, Fathers Bates, Borkowski, and Brother Damian [Lockman].”

By this time in the history of East Troy there were a number of former students who continued to keep in touch with their high school. Could they be encouraged to continue their interest in the mission of the Church and of the Society? The February 13, 1948, minutes have the first mention of an “Alumni Association: seems to be making headway. It was pointed out that a spiritual objective should also be stressed to the organization, especially a prominent part in Catholic Action.”

It seems some kind of questionnaire had been sent out to alumni about the “newly formed organization” because the February 21 minutes say the responses are “very favorable to the idea.” The first meeting of alumni was scheduled for March 21 in Chicago, and the first elected president of the club was Tom Coughlin. Perhaps this is the beginning of East Troy’s very good and still positive relationship with alumni.

The April 1, 1949, minutes of the House Council relate a very significant moment in East Troy’s history:

Present at the meeting was Father Provincial, Father Joseph Tenover and the House Council. The purpose was to discuss the future. Father Provincial told us that the Epworth boys would come here next year, and the Juniors [junior college students] would go to Epworth. Though not definite we should figure on it. Most of the discussion centered upon the possibility of having a summer camp for boys here this year. Father Provincial gave the pros and cons, stating that the biggest difficulty was what to do

with the seminarians. A camp in northern Michigan was offered to them and they might accept that. At the present he could not discuss any seminarians as counselors [for the proposed camp], since he was awaiting Father General's approval first.



Camp Richards operated from 1949-1986.

### **CAMP RICHARDS**

So it was that Camp Richards came into being. It was named after the confrere who could be considered the founder at East Troy, Father Herman Richarz. Camp Richards opened in 1949. This camp would have its part to play in subsequent years of East Troy. An article in the September 22, 1996, issue of *The Week* on the history of the East Troy seminary stated,

The camp proved to be very popular for many years and offered campers its beautiful, natural

surroundings until 1986, when labor costs and insurance liabilities forced the camp to close its doors forever.

February 14, 1950, witnessed the first mention in the House Council of vocational directors and the “urgency of establishing some working agreement between the Vocational Directors . . . It has become a problem.” The problem itself is not mentioned.

In the last years of the 1940s, a Quonset hut gymnasium had been built. The House Council minutes in 1948 speak of planning its dedication and an open house but no specific date is given for that. However, in an undated report, *The Militian*, a student publication, vividly covers what happened on March 15, 1950:

The quonset gymnasium was no more, but losing it gave rise to plans for a more permanent gymnasium building, along with a new classroom/dormitory wing, and a new chapel.

A booklet printed for and titled the *Dedication of the Chapel, School Addition and Gymnasium of Holy Ghost Mission Seminary* celebrated on September 28, 1952, moves the story ahead with this description:

The beginnings of this marvelous development [the new buildings] go back to the disaster of March

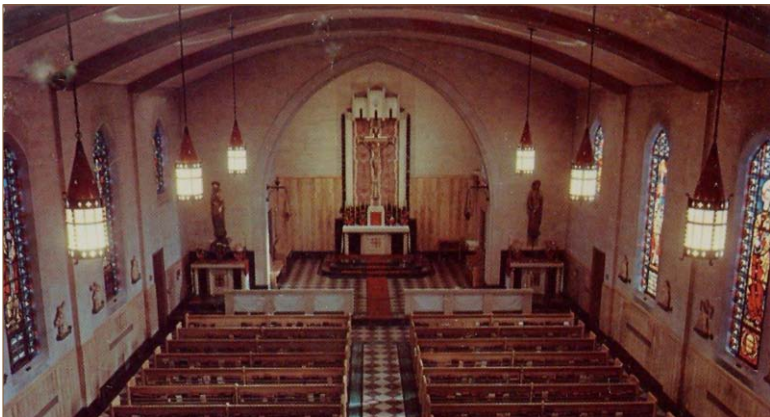


The main entrance of the new wing.

1950. During the early morning hours of that day fire broke out in the Quonset hut gymnasium and in but two hours the whole construction was leveled to the ground. The cause of the fire was never determined. The loss was large because the building was only partly covered by insurance. . . . Soon after this disaster the then Superior General of the Society, the Very Reverend Aloysius Grosse-Kappenberg, on a tour of visitation of the American Provinces, visited Holy Ghost Mission Seminary.

There were then more students in the house than could be accommodated as desired by regulations. Father Superior General saw the need for larger quarters, the usefulness of a gymnasium and the desirability of a special chapel. Consequently he ordered the plans be drawn up for such additions. Construction of the new gymnasium was begun in June 1950. A year later in June, 1951, ground was broken for the new chapel and in the summer for the boiler room and the new addition.<sup>11</sup>

The dedication of the new additions took place on September, 28, 1952. The House Council minutes during this time make no mention of how this large building project was financed. Father Robert Studeny was rector during this time, followed by Father William Bauer.



The new seminary chapel.

The 1950s were a time of growth and increase in the number of high school seminarians and young boys attending Camp Richards. The official minutes of the House Council reflect that growth and a constant discussion of what is needed to keep up with it—everything from more desks to more horses for the camp and a new bulk milk tank for the farm.

There were, in early 1950, discussions by the House Council as to the feasibility and desirability of the students going home for the Christmas vacation. The decision was made to allow the students to go home for the Christmas holidays. They started this practice in December 1950.

Another, not so momentous decision was reached. The community was allowed to have a television. It seems that, according to the February 12, 1953, House Council meeting, the community was not in favor of this decision. It is not clear what the community really thought. Nonetheless on November 4, 1958, we read this note in the chronicle: “The new TV set arrived. Unfortunately, the broadcasters don’t arrange their newscasts and educational programs to harmonize with our daily order.”

On a different note, as a matter of good public relations, the House Council agreed during the March 14, 1953, meeting that

It would be good propaganda as well as inspiration  
and a timely lesson for the audience if we staged the  
Mysteries of the Mass for the public on Passion &  
Palm Sundays. Tickets were to be printed and sold.

This play became an annual event that lasted at least until 1961.

The July 10, 1953, meeting of the House Council finds the first mention of recruiting Sisters to reside at and serve the community at East Troy. Previous informal discussion has always “thought it was a good idea,” but little came of it until this meeting. Thus it happened that the first Sisters came in the capacity of cooks and laundry workers. These Sisters were German Augustinians from Aachen; they arrived in December 1955 and remained until February 1959. They were followed soon after by Sisters from a Spanish community, Franciscan Tertiaries of our Lady of Good Counsel, who arrived from Madrid in the winter of 1959.<sup>12</sup> The chronicle of June 15, 1961, tells the story of their arrival:



In the evening, eight refugee sisters arrived here [from Cuba] . . . members of the community that does the domestic work, one will remain here, one will go to Spain and six will go to Perrysburg.

The Sisters served here until September 1970. From then on, laypeople were hired to serve in the kitchen with periodic help from in-house SVD chefs.

Father Charles Malin became rector in 1958. Since the chronicler began his recording again on July 26, 1958, this will again be the source of much of the following.

With Sister communities having been invited to be a part of the staff it was imperative that livable quarters be provided for them. Planning for the new Sisters convent began in July 1958. It was finished and dedicated on May 10, 1959.

The August 20, 1958, chronicle has the rector going to Elkhorn, Wisconsin, “to see if we could close down our farm by joining the soil bank.”

On August 22, we read, “Father Provincial Bisheimer gave permission to change the name of the house to Divine Word Seminary,” beginning January 1, 1959. This move from the name “Holy Ghost Mission House” to “Divine Word Seminary” brought East Troy into line with the other high school seminaries in the Province. The freshman class in 1958 numbered fifty-eight, and the total student body was 133. There were ten priests and six Brothers in the community. The vocation directors at the time were Fathers Kenneth Reed and Eugene Scherzinger. The future seemed very promising.

To help pay for the many students, Camp Richards continued to operate during the summer. The chronicle for 1961 gives us an idea of how many attended Camp Richards that year: “The first [camp] period—126, second—219, third—209, fourth—175. Season was a success!” The summer of 1962 saw “close to 250 per period” (chronicle, August 18, 1962).

Meanwhile as early as March 1960, “Plans for a girls’ camp were disclosed and further investigation approved” (March 14). But within a month’s time, permission was denied by the superior general for both the girls’ camp and an unrelated request to build a new faculty residence (April 16).

Minutes of a House Council meeting of January 31, 1964, report a discussion about buying the nearby Morelli farm, which was for sale, and turning it into a girls' camp operated by laypeople, with the procurator (treasurer) suggesting a possible gross income of \$100,000 per year. "Estimates were considered a bit optimistic." The council expressed itself in favor of this matter. In time, the discussion moved on to placing the camp on our property where the farm was and purchasing 200 acres of the Glen Thomas farm along the west side of Seminary Road (March 8, 1965). Both of these options were approved by the House Council in March 1965. Nothing came of these discussions, as we see the next mention of a girls' camp is in House Council on September 1978 (thirteen years later), when there is the discussion of the possibility of having one week of camp for girls just before the boys' camp begins. "The staff could possibly come from some Sisters in the area plus some college girls." The idea ended up being "postponed for the time being."

Continuing with the discussion of Camp Richards, we read in the House Council minutes of October 26, 1984,

There was a lengthy discussion concerning the summer camp. Income was rather low for the recently completed season. Reason seems to be lower enrollment. Opening all weeks to girls will be done for the '85 season to see if this will help enrollment.

The season will be shortened to 7 weeks also.

Then on August 8, 1986, when the need for a new camp director came up, the retiring director recommended to the House Council that "he felt it would be better to close down now, when our reputation was excellent. . . . In this way he felt it could be opened at a future date." On September 9, the House Council decided to approve the decision of the House Assembly<sup>13</sup> to close Camp Richards.

Refocusing on the seminary students, the enrollment for the high school seminary in September 1960 was 156 students; tuition was \$35 per month. At a November 13, 1960, House Council meeting it was decided that, due to a lack of space, student numbers needed to be limited to 150. Still, total enrollment on September 5, 1961, was 171 students. In 1962 there were 167 students, and in 1963, 170 were attending Divine Word Seminary at East Troy.

By 1963 a new Divine Word high school seminary in Perrysburg,

Ohio, had been built. This would impact the school at East Troy. Thus the note in the House Council minutes:

Vocational directors should be advised to prepare prospective students south of Chicago for Perrysburg. . . . Other houses should be filled before a building program is begun here, that is, the excess of East Troy should be sent to Perrysburg, and the excess of Perrysburg to Girard.

This House Council approval also met with the approval of the provincial. On January 17, 1961, the House Council voted in favor of “expansion for about 250 boys, not more, if quarters for the Fathers and Brothers would be included.” (They were talking about an expanded building program.) Whatever was to be built, however: “Father Provincial has set a limit to the cost of the building at \$800,000.00.” (June 16, 1961)

In August 1961 the House Council offered the following proposals to the Provincial to finance the building of a student wing and SVD residence:

1. We ask the Superior General to delay the building of the new college since there is sufficient room at Miramar for the next few years and use the money the Province would put into Epworth to pay for our buildings.
2. Some of the Techny farmland be sold, and the money be given to the Province on a non-interest loan and the money be used to finance the building here.

At the same meeting they also discussed a fund-raising campaign and the idea of a board of trustees.

Father Rector Malin asked the House Council members on January 8, 1961, to consider the farm situation: “whether it really pays to operate a farm on our small scale.” Issues began to be raised about the work demand on the farm Brothers and how it kept them from community life and prayer.<sup>14</sup>

As the student body grew there was a strongly felt need for accreditation of the high school so that those not continuing with their formation would fit in, academically, with those from other schools as they sought to enter college. The chronicle of September

24, 1962, reports a three-day visit and examination by the North Central Association of Secondary Schools to judge “whether we are to be recommended for admission to the North Central.” The telegram announcing admission came on March 21, 1963. The chronicler notes “that there were just fourteen high schools attached to the minor seminary division of studies that belong to the Accrediting Association” (March 28, 1963).

The ongoing House Council discussions on finances for the new buildings, what buildings to put up if all the necessary finances were not available, and frustration with the Generalate and Province over the whole question occupied House Council meetings for a good part of 1961. The minutes of October 15, 1961, record,

The Superior General and the Provincial encouraged us to proceed with building plans, and now that building is cancelled, at least the student wing, this house is left to hold the bag with the bill [for the architectural blueprints].

The House Council minutes of November 15, 1961, focused primarily on the approval to purchase an incredible list of small items for the house and school. It concludes with this observation: “This meeting of the Council resembled a Democratic Congress with a Republican President, in the manner it spent money.”

At this same meeting one of the favorite student activities was also discussed: “raiding the food wagon from the dining room of the Fathers and the Brothers. It was decided that this be stopped.” (One wonders if they succeeded!)

An interesting insight on community values is evident in a House Council discussion on colloquium at meals on November 19, 1961: “Talking at meals is time consuming, and it gets us out of the refectory late.”

January 1962 again saw the House Council voting in favor of building a student wing and SVD residence. The council did continue to look for ways to cut costs for a new building with a faculty residence having priority. Then a heavy blow came from the Provincial Council. On February 20, 1962, it was announced that, due to the high cost of the new college building in Epworth, Iowa, the Provincial Council had turned down the request for a new student wing at East Troy. Still, a new proposal for a student wing was submitted again a month later, on March 19.

The next official statement is found on November 13, 1963, in the chronicle, where it is simply noted, "The moving into the new Residence, Tien Hall, is completed." No new school wing was approved. This new residence building for the priests and Brothers was blessed by Cardinal Tien, for whom it was named. A member of the Society of the Divine Word, he was the first Chinese to be named a cardinal. The dedication took place on September 20, 1964.

## **DISCUSSIONS ON CHANGES**

The chronicle reports on a House Assembly that took place on November 28, 1963. There was an overriding issue in the community on the possibility of expanding Divine Word Seminary at East Troy into a high school for outside students, thus becoming "a day school for students desiring a high school education in a Catholic school." Voting of the House Assembly members (priests) was three for, four against, one noncommittal. This is the first written public mention of such a possibility.

Father Paul Burcher became rector in 1964, followed by Father Raymond Weisenberger in 1967. Student enrollment for 1964 was 189. In the 1965 school year it was 165, and in 1966 the enrollment was 145. Note the steady decline in the enrollment. On March 18, 1965, the House Council minutes report the beginning of a discussion that lasted for many months:

. . . the possible amalgamation of the Brother Candidate School from Techny with the Divine Word Seminary. It was the unanimous opinion (4-0) that if the candidates come to East Troy there be a complete integration of both schools . . . that all students entering the seminary be required to come up to the standards as they presently exist. [The Brother candidates would be required] to take only one or two years of Latin but no Greek . . . but they should be required to take all other branches including a foreign language, as a necessary preparation for college. The Council expressed fear that these two schools might be started without adequate facilities . . . especially staff. Finally, the Council hope[s] that our plans to eventually have 250 students here for the priesthood would not be hindered in any way by the

addition of candidates for the brotherhood. To add Brother candidates and have to cut back on priestly vocations would seem to be defeating our own purpose as a seminary. . . . With these considerations in mind, the House Council would be in favor of accepting Brother Candidates as part of our religious community.

This was again the topic of a March 25, 1965, meeting reported by the chronicle. Attending this meeting were the Provincial Council and all the East Troy Fathers, along with six priests from Techny. In the afternoon, Father Edward Dudink from Epworth came with most of the college students. There is no record of any Brothers attending this meeting. The meeting ended with

the idea that much more thought has to be given to the subject of Brother training and it might be the right thing to wait until after the next General Chapter to arrive at some decisions.

Another report states,

Concerning the Brother candidates a majority of a representative group of the Techny Brothers who met on April 7, 1965, preferred that the Candidate School remain at Techny. Some of the concerns expressed were: too many Brother candidates would end up transferring to priesthood, and the image of the Brother would be lessened at East Troy. If it had to be moved, then the Brothers wanted assurance that the Brother Prefect would have full authority, with the same voice as other members. A Brother should also be named as an Assistant to the main Prefect. To keep Brother candidates aware of their own vocation, they wanted separate conferences, mission club and athletic teams. Finally they suggested that this be done on an experimental basis.<sup>15</sup>

In February 1966 the Northern Province Board of Brother Formation recommended that the existence of a high school for Brother formation was a necessary “feeder,” and that separate facilities be provided for Brother candidates rather than combining with one of the minor seminaries of the Society. This board saw Techny as the best

location and recommended that this needed facility be provided by September 1968, when a considerably larger student body of candidates was anticipated. There was also to be a qualified teaching staff.

In August 1966 Father Joseph Connors, the provincial at that time, wrote, *A Preliminary Proposal to Renovate, Expand and Reorganize Divine Word Seminary, East Troy, WI, as a Secondary School for Future Divine Word Missionary Priests and Brothers*.<sup>16</sup> In it he presented the following academic reasons: “One larger school will provide better staffing, better curriculum, better academic equipment.” Furthermore, he noted that East Troy was accredited whereas the seminary at Perrysburg, Ohio, and the candidate school at Techny were not. (pp. 7–9)

He went on to list the following vocational reasons:

A new image of the role and function of the brotherhood is taking form, that of a high qualified specialist and leader in “pre-evangelization.” There are also corresponding emphases on fundamental changes in arrangements in community life. Students for both priesthood and brotherhood, as early as possible in their formation, are going to have to acquire a fundamental mutual respect and esteem for each other so that it will be second-nature for them to live and work together in complete equality in their later years as full-fledged Divine Word Missionaries. (pp. 9–11)<sup>17</sup>

The final decision to combine the two schools was made. The merger was to take place at the beginning of the 1968 school year, in September. This necessitated the building of an Industrial Arts Building.

Student enrollment for 1968, the first year of the merger, was 123. Student numbers, however, in 1969 dropped to ninety-three, and in 1970 to eighty-nine. Young high school students voicing interest in the priesthood and religious life seemed to have become fewer and fewer.

As part of a diversified faculty the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters (SSpS) were asked to join with the Divine Word priests and Brothers. The first Sister hired was Sr. Bertille (Frances Jane Klinge). She came on board in October 1970. In subsequent years, following her were Sr. Mary Linda (Ursula Krems), and Sr. Charles (Ruth Pfunter).

In 1971 Father Charles Heskamp became the rector of Divine Word Seminary in East Troy. That year the school opened with the small enrollment of fifty-two. During that fall there also began an ongoing discussion on the purpose and future of Camp Richards, the greatest need being “someone who can give time to the camping program.” “We also need to cut back on the projected number of campers as well as the number of staff.” (House Council, November 16, 1971)

Beginning the 1972 school year there were but forty-nine students, and only forty-six in 1973. It seems rather amazing that, at least on the House Council level, there are no recorded discussions of the drop in vocations until February 15, 1977, when the council minutes report,

The topic for discussion was the vocation problem—especially vocations among the Spanish speaking in the Chicago and Milwaukee area. Father Aloysius Zimmerman [vocational director] has written a news release for a Spanish speaking surname vocation drive. . . . Since the Vocation Director has to limit his time and energy to work the Milwaukee and Chicago area, former areas of vocations as Iowa, Upper Wisconsin, Minnesota and St. Louis have been untouched. . . . To better understand minority vocations a faculty workshop will be set up. The workshop could start off with ideas that would help the faculty foster better relations to all students, then continue on to help the faculty become aware of or sensitive to the minority heritage, especially black and Spanish.



There was great diversity among students in the 1970s and '80s.



The 1977 news release mentioned contained the following data:

According to CARA,<sup>17</sup> current high school seminary enrollment is 6.4% black and also 6.4% with Spanish surnames. . . . Divine Word Seminary, East Troy, WI has 54 students. Eleven (20%) are Black; four (7.4%) have Spanish surnames; and two are Vietnamese.

Total minority enrollment is 31.5%. Sensitivity to the cultural heritage of minorities is fostered. The faculty is aware that every person must be, must remain, and must accept himself, and be proud. Minority feasts are celebrated; respect is shown for special interests, art, styles, and customs. Minority membership on the faculty is minimal at present, a situation which will, hopefully, be remedied. . . . Special in-service workshop and activities are planned for the faculty to develop a deeper awareness of and appreciation for minority subcultures. . . . The High School Seminary seems especially important for minority groups.

Experienced priests in Black or Spanish speaking ghetto parishes give a resounding endorsement to the High School Seminary for their vocational prospects. Ghetto streets are not conducive to fostering ambitions towards religious ministry.

Three techniques are utilized by Divine Word Seminary to build up their enrollment of candidates for the missionary life, either as a Religious Brother or priest: 1. The VOCATION CLUB: The members receive regularly, gratis, vocational literature . . . sent to students from 5th grade up. 2. Weekend "LIVE-INS." This is a mini-retreat (at the seminary) for 7th and 8th graders. 3. Finally, later in spring, is "SEM WEEK." Boys interested . . . live with the seminarians, pray with them, and follow a light class schedule. . . . Virtually all the present enrollment of Divine Word Seminary have participated in one or more weekend "LIVE-IN" and most of them in SEM WEEK. . . . Priests, Brothers, Sisters and CCD

instructors are always welcome to visit Divine Word Seminary. Many are pleasantly surprised when they see what a modern high school seminary is like.

October 1, 1973, finds the last written chronicle until July 5, 2011, when it is resumed. In 1976 Father Aloysius Zimmerman became rector. Given personnel issues, the House Council meeting of January 21, 1978, reports for the first time the possibility of a lay principal. For the moment this was seen “not to be an acceptable solution . . . If no [SVD] can take the job we have to ask ourselves about closing.” Eventually Mr. Lou Wappel, a layman, did become principal, after having already served as the first lay dean of students.

Beginning in the 1979 school year, a new formation model based on moderator groups was introduced. By the 1981–1982 school year, fees were raised to \$1,000, split evenly between tuition and fees; the vocation director had no objection since compared to other schools “we were average.”

On February 7, 1980, the House Council minutes hint at a conversation about the ongoing development of the seminary over the next ten years:

The meeting was used to discuss the problems which are facing us today in the minor Seminary, that being, personnel, money, and student attitudes towards Religious Life in today's Modern World. The group agreed that the Minor Seminary is important if we are willing to search for and make available the best program for our students that would guide them in making a mature choice in their life. (Do they really know what they are here for?) We can fulfill this if we make them aware of what the Religious Life is, through our own life style, as Priests and Brothers and especially, mission awareness through guest speakers and mission exhibits here at Divine Word Seminary.

Mr. Lou Wappel was appointed dean of students for a two-year period beginning on March 16, 1981. In conjunction with this change, the office of director of formation was created to assure Divine Word identity.

At the August 27, 1981, meeting, the House Council raised for the first time (at the request of the provincial) the issue of an SVD,

Father Lawrence Wagner, becoming involved in Hispanic ministry in some local parishes. With that the question of too much supply work, especially for formators,<sup>18</sup> became a part of a general discussion about supply work. (This may have been in regards to the cost of running the seminary.)

The House Council minutes of February 4, 1982, take up the issue of finances as we read in the minutes, “All the students were basically on scholarships since the cost of a student per year [has risen to] around \$6,000 each. The present average that the students are paying is \$67.00 per month [about \$670 per school year] when it really ought to be around \$120.00 per month.” This discussion was connected with a memorial fund established in the name of Father Lawrence Bohnen. Other revenue sources often mentioned in council meetings were the yearly bazaar, mailing appeals and drives to benefactors, plus investment income and Camp Richards. The camp reported that profit for the 1982 season was good. Some \$45,708 was realized from camp revenue.

Father John Fincutter became the rector in 1982. For the 1982–1983 budget, the Provincial Council approved and made available \$200,000 for major repairs on the building, the heating system and other requested renovations. The approval letter included this comment from the provincial: “You can let me know whether we will have to budget more money a year from now for future renovations of the buildings at East Troy.” This surely indicates provincial confidence in the future of the seminary at East Troy.

On April 22, 1985, as part of the proposed budget discussion, one of the issues raised by the House Council was

the failure of many parents to meet the financial obligations they had promised when their sons were admitted to the seminary. It was decided to talk with the students of those parents concerned. It was also decided that if we received no response from some parents about their lack of payment, then those parents would be told that their sons would not be able to return to the seminary in September.

Contacting parents about tuition must have become a regular part of the Finance Office duties. The August 23, 1988, House Council received a report that read, “Some parents responded to the Business

Manager's letter about the past due tuition. A number did pay, so the effort was worthwhile."

Taking this stand on tuition seems a clear indication of the seminary facing a financial crunch. It also hints at the coming concern about how few graduates from the high school seminary at East Troy were continuing on to the college level at Epworth or going to other seminaries.

Father Anthony Clark became rector in 1987. In the first week of August 1990 the provincial secretary for education, formation, and recruitment visited East Troy to begin to address a number of issues. The following information is based on a three-page document titled: "Background to Evaluation of Divine Word Seminary, East Troy" (author unknown). The issues of concern stated in this document were, in part,

Fewer and fewer of the graduates of Divine Word Seminary are continuing with the SVD in preparation for priesthood or Brotherhood . . . . There has been a growing, if unofficial, importance given to Christian development and lay leadership training . . . which raises . . . a question whether it conforms to the priorities of the SVD charism and, most especially, whether it is a commitment the Chicago Province has consciously made or would wish to make at the high school level.

Partially due to the high turnover of formation personnel and apparently because of serious differences among individuals about criteria for expectations of the students/seminarians, there have been complaints about confused lines of authority, definition of roles and responsibilities, and even about the quality of candidates that have been accepted into the seminary. These complaints have surfaced in the Formation Commission and led to a request to the . . . previous Provincial Administration "to take some action for clarification of the actual mission of Divine Word Seminary (at East Troy) and the consequent structures of administration that would be consistent with its mission."

A committee of three with no one from the East Troy community on the committee was assigned to conduct the evaluation with the following three goals:<sup>19</sup>

1. Elicit the actual state of clarity, conflict, or ambiguity regarding the mission of Divine Word Seminary among SVD faculty and staff.
2. Elicit the actual state of clarity, conflict, or confusion regarding internal structures of decision making, appropriate implementation of roles and consistency between written policy or flow charts and actual modes of operation.
3. Make recommendations regarding the viability of Divine Word Seminary as an ongoing commitment of the Society of the Divine Word in the Chicago Province.

On October 19, 1990, the House Council discussed a letter from the provincial to the rector dated September 24, 1990. This letter outlined the general plan for an evaluation of East Troy, “which Father Provincial would like to see begun as soon as possible.”

The evaluation team had its first meeting with the community on December 20, 1990. The same day, the House Council met to begin planning for a House Chapter on January 2, 1991.

Each member should come to the Chapter prepared to express his ideas on the future of Divine Word Seminary, East Troy. . . . We mentioned a number of possibilities for the Seminary, including continuing as a seminary, open up to non-seminarians, with an emphasis on minorities, open to day students, close as an education institution on the high school level, develop a retreat center for youth—stay open as a seminary trying to get other religious orders—close as a seminary and remain a summer and winter rest and recuperation for SVDs. . . . If the Chapter should say that we have three years and then close, we should prepare a plan to wind down.

On January 12, 1990, the House Council wrote a letter to the delegates of the upcoming Provincial Council urging them to “carefully examine some facts”:

The issue of large numbers neither entering, persevering nor going on is true. But there have been periods like this before. There are reasons for the losses and the staff hopes to remedy the situation. . . . Remember that numbers are down in nearly all seminaries. . . . A major point to remember . . . is the effect which the closing of East Troy as a seminary could have on our ability to recruit candidates from the Vietnamese community in the future. . . . Now during a recession is surely not the time to empty another building, unless we are quite sure that we know what we want to do with it, when we want to do it, and why we want to do it. . . . Unless there is an alternate plan available to implement immediately, we propose that the Provincial Chapter allow the community at East Troy three years to a) improve its enrollment, and b) increase its rate of perseverance, both in the school and among its graduates. . . . Finally we recommend that a Vietnamese SVD be appointed as a recruiter for East Troy . . . and that a non-Vietnamese SVD be trained in the language and culture of the Vietnamese for future formation and recruitment work.

In spite of this appeal, the February 1991 Provincial Chapter voted to close the high school seminary at East Troy.

On May 18, 1991, the House Council announced the committee of four that would look after the distribution of “seminary materials and the distribution thereof . . . They will also look at the future of East Troy school facilities.” On March 11, 1992, the House Council wrote the provincial, recommending that,

the Provincial Council proceed with caution in moving to make a decision yourselves about the buildings. We ask this because of the uncertainty of our Formation programs in the Chicago Province and their locations in the future.

It also described two plans for the empty building being considered by the House Council:

*Plan A*: assumed that members of the Society would come to East Troy for vacations, retreats and retirement. This plan suggested private rooms in the student dormitory area that were wheel chair accessible. This would also provide a separate area for those on vacation.

*Plan B* was based on the same assumptions but then involved removing some of the present buildings, but adding a new more functional structure. The Rector concluded in a cover letter: “Many members of our Province have asked me to urge you to go slowly in making any decision to demolish the school buildings, Chapel and Gymnasium.”<sup>20</sup>



The end of the high school seminary era.

On May 25, 1993, the provincial received the following letter from the Generalate, which he forwarded to East Troy:

After discussing the various options, which were further explained and substantiated by the Visitor General, the General Council at its meeting of May 8, 1993, approved, in principle, the demolition of the

school buildings, chapel and gymnasium on the one hand and the remodeling (and) of additions to the Tien Hall on the other.

## THE PRESENT

Thus came to an end this chapter of the Divine Word high school seminary at East Troy. The school building, chapel, and gymnasium were demolished in 1993, and a new beginning faced the community.

At present, East Troy serves as a Divine Word retirement community and as a place of hospitality, vacation, and retreat for SVD members and other religious. For example, formation groups from Divine Word College come to East Troy for their yearly retreats. The annual preparation program for those about to take perpetual vows as Divine Word Missionaries is conducted at East Troy, as is the yearly retreat for the pre-novitiate candidates and sometimes for novitiate retreats/desert days. This connection with the men in formation plus the opportunity to help foster and strengthen vocations is deeply appreciated by the East Troy community. The community has been and continues to be open to hosting local parish councils for days of recollection. Picnics



The pre-novitiate retreat, November 2009.



and outings on the lakefront for alumni are always welcome. Various cultural groups from as far away as Chicago have come to East Troy for study and reflection. SVD family members and members of the community at Techny find a quiet place for prayers and reflection, as well as recreation. The Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters continue to use the convent on the property as a place of getaway and retreat.

East Troy has a wonderful history of serving the needs of the Society and the Church since 1921. It has been home to 166 Divine Word priests and Brothers, and 248 clerical novices. Student records report that it has educated and formed 1,962 students since 1937. It has been flexible and continues to be so in discerning and meeting the needs of each generation. Part of its clear, consistent gift to the Society and all those it serves is the beauty of its location on Lake Beulah and its surrounding farmland, woods, and marshes.

It is a beautiful, healing, quiet, recollected spot, perhaps too easily taken for granted, if not forgotten, in our very fast world and hard-working committed life. In that beauty and quiet is the grace that reminds us that God is the Creator of all and that creation and beauty has a value in itself and in that points to the giftedness and uniqueness of every person apart from their function or usefulness.



The current chapel.

## APPENDIX

Divine Word Priests and Brothers Assigned to East Troy, 1921–2013

(Based on *SVD Catalogus*. There was no *Catalogus* between 1942 and 1946. The year of appointment is listed. If a confrere was appointed to East Troy more than one, those years are noted as well.)

### Priests (102)

Father Herman Richarz	1923
Father Felix Glorius	1929
Father Hugo Aubry	1929
Father Francis De Lange	1930
Father Adolph Noser	1930
Father Lawrence Friedel	1933
Father Peter Stoll	1935/1950/1953
Father Joseph Busch	1935/1956
Father Henry Marusa	1936
Father John Graf	1937/1957
Father James Mertz	1937
Father Francis Humel	1938
Father Joseph Stein	1938
Father Charles Erb	1938
Father Augustine Lubadel	1938/1947
Father Henry Kruft	1938
Father Harold Rigney	1938
Father Louis Schaffhauser	1938/1947
Father Charles Malin	1938
Father Joseph Finger	1939
Father John Feeley	1939
Father William Kraus	1940
Father Joseph Garrity	1940
Father William Bauer	1941/1955
Father Joseph Kehrer	1941
Father Nicholas Bisheimer	1947
Father Joseph Shendill	1947
Father Frederick Gruhn	1947
Father Joseph Tenoever	1947
Father Henry Jungbluth	1947/1957

Father James Mullaley	1947
Father Joseph Bates	1947
Father Lawrence Bohnen	1947/1950
Father Edward Borkowski	1947
Father Chester Nowicki	1949
Father Robert Studeny	1949
Father Joseph Dearworth	1949
Father George Stephan	1950
Father Peter Butz	1950
Father Edward Dudink	1950
Father Francis Kamp	1950
Father Robert Myers	1950
Father James Zatko	1950
Father John Beemster	1950/1959
Father Walter Joyce	1953
Father Joseph Connors	1954
Father Cosmas Meyers	1955
Father Kenneth Reed	1955
Father Paul Jacobi	1956
Father John McHenry	1957
Father Henry Oppenberg	1958
Father James Richard	1959
Father Rupert Weindl	1961
Father Andrew Hadalski	1961/1979
Father Joseph Donohus	1962
Father Walter Bunofsky	1962
Father Edward Amelse	1962
Father Terence McDonough	1964/1979
Father Paul Burrichter	1964
Father Joseph Coyle	1965
Father Edward Baur	1966
Father William Shea	1967/1991
Father Raymond Weisenberger	1967
Father Charles Heskamp	1968/2005
Father Charles Scanlon	1968
Father John Rodney	1968
Father John Bergin	1968
Father Joseph Anhalt	1968

Father Ronald Jaeckels	1969
Father John Kolnik	1972
Father James Heiar	1972
Father Kenneth Anich	1975
Father Aloysius Zimmerman	1976
Father Timothy Lenchak	1977
Father Lawrence Bunzel	1978
Father Gilbert Gawlik	1978
Father Robert Mertes	1980/2003
Father Joseph LeBeau	1981
Father Lawrence Wagner	1982/2003
Father John Fincutter	1983
Father Lloyd Cunningham	1983
Father Anthony Clark	1985
Father Robert Kelly	1987
Father Thomas Cahill	1991
Father Pablito Tagura	1992
Father Paulino Belamide	1992
Father Sylvester Jaworski	1992
Father Bernard Fisher	1993
Father Thomas Lavin	1994
Father Ralph Wiltgen	1995
Father Joseph Kallanchira	1998
Father Jerome Ziliak	1999
Father Raymond Kunkel	2000
Father Paul McVinney	2000
Father Lucien Gaudreault	2002
Father Vincent Ohlinger	2002
Father Patrick Fincutter	2003
Father William Halvey	2003
Father Andrew Biller	2005
Father Edward Peklo	2005
Father Walter Miller	2012
Father Dia Ba Thai	2013

#### Brothers (66)

Alfridus Moller	1923
Winand Dockendorf	1923

Bernard Husmann	1924
Longinus Posch	1924/1951
Ananias Barfuss	1930/1934/1961
Bellarmino Zuenti	1930
Gallus Grunenfelder	1931
Rectus Fichtl	1933
Augustine Podmanik	1935
Columbanus Martin	1936
Fidelis Emmenegger	1937
Camillus Turkalj	1937/1947/1953/1955
Francis Lukovic	1938
Louis Chavez	1938
Eugenius Gasper	1938
Paul Tanner	1939
Joachim Oros	1939
Albert Johanning	1939/1950/1956
Gilbert Baumgartner	1940/1947
Ralph Braun	1940
Cletus Lesage	1941
Cornelius Spitko	1941
Conrad Schmid	1941/1952
Archangel Pryzbylski	1942/1957
Andrew Schwetner	1947/1953
Joseph Colwell	1947
Damian Lockman	1947
Norbert Lanterman	1947
Nicholas Carlin	1947/1955/1959
Jude Heeks	1952
Felix Lammers	1954
Joachim Wagner	1959
Titus Grawey	1962
Donald Urban	1965
Thomas Uhing	1968
Rene Gawlik	1968
Gerald Burr	1969
Raymond Vanden Bergh	1969
Anthony Kreinus	1969
Bernard Scherger	1969

William Blake	1969/1990
Dismas Bolte	1969
Anthony Clark	1969
George Richard	1970
David Bosak	1970
Kenneth Valois	1973
Wiley Bowers	1973
Gerald Jobin	1973
Gerard Raker	1974
Gary Craanen	1974
Robert Mauss	1975
Edwin Bushu	1978
William Prinz	1980
Dean Keller	1983
Kevin Diederich	1984/2007
Paul Cassabon	1987
Brian McLauchlin	1987
Ronald Fratzke	1988
Gary Bessler	1990
James Fisher	1990
James Zabransky	1990
Gerald Chidiac	1990
Raymond Albers	1997
William Morgan	1998
Vinh Ngoc Trinh	2006
George Haegele	2012

#### Rectors at East Troy

Father Francis Humel	1937–1940
Father William Bauer	1940–1946
Father Louis Shaffhauser	1946–1948
Father Robert Studeny	1948–1955
Father William Bauer	1955–1958
Father Charles Malin	1958–1964
Father Paul Burcher	1964–1967
Father Raymond Weisenberger	1967–1973
Father Charles Heskamp	1973–1976
Father Aloysius Zimmerman	1976–1982

Father John Fincutter	1982–1987
Father Anthony Clark	1987–1992
Brother Bernard Scherger	1992–2002
Father Robert Mertes	2002–2005
Father Edward Peklo	2005–present

(NOTE: The term “rector” was first used when the high school opened.)

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- . *Report on Laying of Cornerstone in East Troy, Nov. 1, 1924*. Chicago Province Archives.
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- . Numerous entries, June 1927 through September 1932.
- . *Dedication of the Chapel, School Additions, and Gymnasium of Holy Ghost Mission Seminary*, Sept. 28, 1952.
- East Troy House Chronicle: July 7, 1937—July 21, 1946; July 21, 1958–October 1, 1973.
- East Troy House Council Minutes: 1937–2000; 2005–2011.
- “Fire.” *The Militian* (East Troy student magazine), March 1950. Chicago Province Archives.

## NOTES

1. Ernest Brandewie, *In the Light of the Word: Divine Word Missionaries in North America* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 72.
2. *The Christian Family* magazine, published by the Divine Word Missionaries from 1906 to 1960. See this chapter's bibliography for more references.
3. This is the main source I have used for the years 1921–1927, quoting directly from both *The Christian Family* and a collection of the same East Troy reports, October 1921 to December 1927, as pulled together by Father Bernard Fisher and located in the Chicago Province Archives, Techny, Illinois.
4. From the reports of Father Richarz in *The Christian Family* magazine. Page numbers are noted in the text.
5. It remained a seminary high school program until the school was eventually closed in 1991, but we get ahead of the story.
6. The House Council minutes are quoted in various places in this chapter. They are identified by dates.
7. See the Bibliography for more information about the chronicle. The quotes are identified by dates.
8. The House Council voted on the students whom they thought were ready for the novitiate.
9. After the 1942 visit the seminarians from Techny did not come to East Troy for their summer vacation and work for several years—until 1945.
10. A derogatory term used by most people during the war to identify the Japanese soldiers and people during the war.
11. From the Chicago Province Archives, Techny, Illinois.
12. The mission seminary was made aware of this group of Sisters through the Divine Word Missionaries in Spain. This community served at our seminary in Estella, Spain.
13. A House Assembly consists of all the community members of a given religious house or unit acting as a “super” parliament. It can act in an advisory capacity but does not have any legislative authority.
14. The farm was closed in the late 1980s and the barns were given to the Fire Department on February 7, 1990, to use in a practice burn for trainees.



15. Joseph Connors, "A Preliminary Proposal," August 1966, in the Chicago Province Archives, Techny, Illinois.
16. Father Connors pages can be found in the Chicago Province Archives.
17. Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. This is a Church think tank associated with the Catholic University of America.
18. Those priests or Brothers directly involved in guiding the young men toward their goals.
19. Committee members: Father Stanley Uroda, vice provincial; Father Edward Norton, secretary of education; and Father James Braband, academic dean of Divine Word College, Epworth, Iowa. This committee was established by the Provincial Council, July 1990.
20. This is the end of written House Council minutes until 2005.