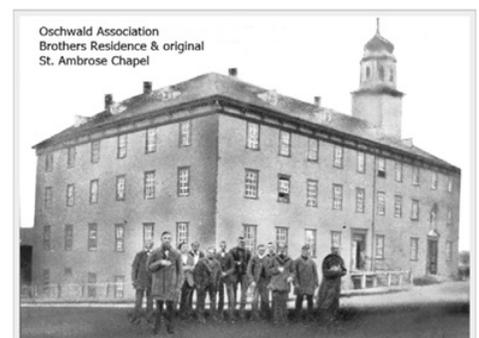


SALVATORIAN SEMINARY

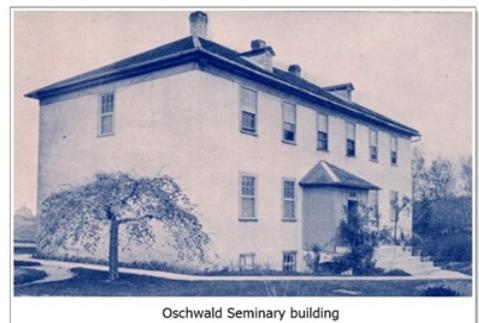
– St. Nazianz, Wisconsin –

1909 - 1968

In 1892, just eleven years after founding the Society of the Divine Savior (Salvatorians) in Rome, the Founder – **Fr. Francis Jordan** – sent missionaries to the United States. It was the Society’s second mission outside Europe; the first had been established in Assam, India, two years earlier. The first Salvatorians in the USA settled in the Pacific Northwest states – Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Soon after beginning their work in those states, they also began ministering in California. Not even a half-decade went by, when a request was made to begin another ministry in the USA – this time in Wisconsin. In the eastern part of the state, not far south of Green Bay, a little village by the name of St. Nazianz had been established by German immigrants in 1854. Its founder, Fr. Ambrose Oswald, had left Germany along with 113 of his parishioners because of the oppression that the Catholic Church in Germany was suffering under the direction of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. Some of those original colonists were single men and women who belonged to a secular institute that Oswald had created. They professed private vows of celibacy and lived in common – the “Sisters” lived in a convent in the center of the village, and they ran a small hospital and an orphanage. The “Brothers” lived in a monastery on the south end of the village, and they managed a farm, a saw mill and a blacksmith shop. Fr. Oswald had also created a seminary on the Brothers’ property for the training of priests. He died in 1873, and he was succeeded by Fr. Peter Mutz, who had studied in Oswald’s seminary. In 1896, Mutz was ready for retirement and he sought the help of a classmate, Fr. Ludwig Barth, who was now a pastor in Milwaukee. Barth was being assisted in the parish by Salvatorian Sisters, who began working there a year earlier. Barth knew that the Sisters were part of a community that also had priests and Brothers. They got in touch with Fr. Francis Jordan in Rome. The villagers had a simple – and generous! – offer to make: “Send some Salvatorian priests and Brothers to take care of the Oswald Sisters and Brothers as well as the parish in the village, and the Brothers’ property is yours. You can begin your own seminary there, if you wish.”



Oswald Association
Brothers Residence & original
St. Ambrose Chapel



Oswald Seminary building

Intrigued, Fr. Jordan personally came to St. Nazianz with two Salvatorian priests and two Brothers in August 1896. Within ten days the agreements were signed, the Founder returned to Rome, and the four Salvatorians remained to begin their new ministry. Salvatorian Sisters began ministering in the village that same year. They accepted the old hospital and the orphanage from the aging Oschwald Sisters to be used as their convent, and they began teaching in the parish school – St. Gregory’s.



In 1898, the Society built a larger St. Ambrose Chapel on the south property, and in 1903, they broke ground for a new monastery building, which they completed in 1906. More and more Salvatorians arrived from Europe to work in this new foundation, and by 1909 they were ready to open the first Salvatorian seminary in the USA. The first students of the school began their classes in September 1909. Their goal was to become priests – whether that be for the Salvatorian community, another community, or a diocese. It was always the student’s choice, and

the Salvatorians promised to exert no pressure on any student to join the Society. That promise continued through the years of the seminary’s existence.

In 1939, a new building was added to the property, and it became the primary building for the seminary itself. A large dormitory and semi-private rooms made up the third floor; classrooms and study halls were on the second floor; a library (*which later became a language lab*), infirmary, music room, parlor and staff rooms were on the first floor; and the basement floor housed a small chapel, shower rooms and lockers, and a luggage room.



From 1909 to 1962, the seminary included four years of high school and the first two years of college. Patterned after the classical seminary program, this was known as the “minor seminary” years. In 1962, the Salvatorians opened a full four-year college in Waukesha, Wisconsin, and those first two years of college classes in St. Nazianz and in the other Salvatorian seminaries across the country were moved there. Salvatorian Seminary then became a “high school seminary.” That pattern was being repeated by many seminaries across the country around that same time.

But the early 1960's also brought about a new phenomenon that no seminary seemed prepared for – a serious decline in vocations. The generation born after World War II was seeing a new world opened up for them – new careers, more opportunities, a booming economy, a world offering so much more than their parents had. With so many new possibilities to consider, religious life and priesthood no longer seemed to have the appeal they once had. While other high school seminaries started to close their doors completely by the late-1960's, Salvatorian Seminary chose another path: beginning in September 1968, it would continue as JFK Prep – a leadership high school academy for both young men and young women. That school remained open until 1982, when the finances of running a “small private school” were no longer feasible for the Salvatorians.

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