



“Passion for Remembering”

THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF 1918

“A YEAR OF ARMISTICE AND ANGUISH”

In 1892, Salvatorians began arriving in the United States. Within a decade the numbers increased considerably. Most of the Salvatorians who came here were originally from Germany or its surrounding countries. Most of them spoke German. By 1910, young native-born American men and women were entering the community. By 1918, things should have looked promising for the Salvatorians in the USA. But all was not well ... especially in the homelands of those who came here.

The world was at war. All throughout Europe, homes and villages were being destroyed. Soldiers and civilians were being killed by the thousands daily. Salvatorians who lived here anxiously awaited news from Europe. Much of what they heard was not good. In early 1917, the United States too had declared war on Germany and began sending many soldiers, doctors, nurses, and others overseas. The “war effort” affected everyone. Anti-German sentiments were being freely expressed in public, and all German-born persons in this country – including Salvatorians – had to register with the government. By 1918, there was little peace – even in people’s hearts.

Five significant events – from across the world and even in their own backyards – affected the Salvatorians living here in the United States. For them, 1918 was

“A Year of Armistice and Anguish.”

- ◆ *The St. Nazianz Fire*
- ◆ *World War I*
- ◆ *The Death of Father Jordan*
- ◆ *The November Armistice*
- ◆ *The Spanish Flu Epidemic*

"1918 - A YEAR OF ARMISTICE AND ANGUISH"

ST. NAZIANZ FIRE



On April 5, a huge fire took place in St. Nazianz, Wisconsin. Established in 1854 by immigrants from Germany, the villagers were proud of their heritage; they followed German customs and often spoke in German. In 1896, Salvatorians came to the village. But by 1918, people were growing angry with Germany over the war, and anonymous threats were received by some of the German-speaking people in the village. Although never proven, arson was suspected as the fire's cause. That fire resulted in major changes for everyone in St. Nazianz.

WORLD WAR I

Although the war was being fought in Europe, people in the USA were directly affected by it. America was sending soldiers and other support personnel overseas, and many were being killed. Families of soldiers had to find work outside the home to support themselves, and people had to ration certain products that needed to be exported to Europe to help in the war effort. Most Salvatorians in this country had come here from Europe, and they were concerned about family members and Salvatorians back in their homelands.



FR. JORDAN'S DEATH



On September 8, the Founder of the Salvatorian community lost his battle with stomach cancer. For over three years, he and other German members of the Society had to live and work in neutral Switzerland because they would not be safe in their homeland nor in Rome. All this took a heavy toll on the Founder. Surely he suffered as much from a broken heart as from the affects of the disease. He was buried in the parish church in Tafers. In 1956, his remains were finally brought "home" – to the Motherhouse in Rome.

ARMISTICE

On November 11, 1918, "at the eleventh hour ... of the eleventh day ... of the eleventh month ..." a treaty was signed in a railcar in Paris. Armistice was declared. Soldiers throughout Europe laid down their weapons and a tenuous "peace" finally settled in. But it came only after great losses. Millions had been killed – soldiers and civilians alike. The "Great War" was over but the world was forever changed. History would show that even this peace was only temporary. War would be fought again.



THE "SPANISH FLU"



The casualties of the war were devastating, but nothing could have prepared people for what was yet to come. Carried around the world by soldiers returning home, the "Spanish Flu" claimed more than 50 million lives globally. The greatest number of deaths were among young adults, including four of the first American-born Salvatorians – two from the Society and two from the Congregation. How terrible it must have been for the community, seeing some of its "first-born spiritual sons and daughters" dying so young.



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