

For your reflection

All of us men and women in the worldwide Arnoldus Family are called to write a new and exciting chapter of the Arnoldus Family Story. If we do so, it is possible that today and in future young people will feel attracted to us and will continue our family story. "For any meaningful story has contagious power: It is passed on; and no one can stop a rolling snowball." (Edward Schillebeeckx OP, "Dominikanische Spiritualität, in Ulrich Engel, (ed.), Dominikanische Spiritualität, Benno Verlag Leipzig, p. 48 – transl. JO)

AT THE SERVICE OF PROPHETIC DIALOGUE

Ecumenical Dialogue

Within the Roman Catholic Church, the most eminent institution in the service of ecumenical dialogue is the "Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity". It was described in the May newsletter.

On the Protestant side, the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC) deserves first mention. It was founded in August 1948 in AMSTERDAM /Netherlands. At that time 147 churches belonged to it; today it "brings together more than 340 churches, denominations and church fellowships in over 100 countries and territories throughout the world, representing some 550 million Christians." Among them are Reformed, Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist and Orthodox Churches. The WCC's headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland.

What is the WCC?

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This basic formula, to which all WCC members have to subscribe, was agreed upon during the third plenary assembly of the WCC in New Delhi in 1961.

The Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC, but it has close working connections to the Commissions of Faith and Order and World Mission and Evangelism; there is a further joint working group WCC – Roman Catholic Church (sources: WCC, Wikipedia – WCC).

Interreligious Dialogue

Basic course for Muslim-Diplomats

"Interreligious dialogue is a duty, not an option", Pope Benedict XVI said in a meeting with diplomats from Moslem States in September 2006. In accordance with this principle, in May 2007 a 3-week introductory seminar on the Catholic Church was held for diplomats from mainly Moslem nations of the Mediterranean region and the Near East at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Seminar topics included the organisation and function of different offices of the Holy See, the task of the Apostolic Nunciatures, and the humanitarian engagement of the Church, as well as her peace efforts.

According to Cardinal Bertone, Vatican Secretary of State, the Holy See's special interest at the moment is directed to the countries of the Near and Middle East. The Cardinal said:

There is no solution in sight with regard to the conflict in the homeland of Jesus. The Holy See engages itself with all its power and in all possible ways: in the first place with prayer, with interreligious and diplomatic encounters, during meetings with the region's Heads of State and with all who work for peace there in order to eliminate the courses of these conflicts.

(source: Radio Vatican)

MOTHER JOSEPHA:

**It is our task
to open the hearts of all people to LOVE!**

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The Arnoldus Family Story

On April 25, 1905, Arnold Janssen wrote a circular letter to all priests, Brothers and Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters in New Guinea. He signed it: "Your mutual father in the Lord." He saw himself as the father of a large family, the Arnoldus Family as we say today.

In these newsletters we recall important events from the life of our "mutual spiritual father". In May the newsletter ended with the words: In the evening of August 7, 1861, the retreat before ordination began.

A few hours earlier Arnold had written to his parents informing them of his forthcoming ordination and first holy Mass:

Dear Parents, the event for which you have been yearning so long is soon to take place. ...on Thursday, 15 August, I will be ordained and taken into the company of the Lord's priests. Two days later (Saturday the 17th) God willing, I will have the supreme privilege of offering to the Lord the sacrifice of his Son and our Savior for the first time! – Rejoice with me and praise the Lord who has guided my steps so lovingly and now wills to do this great thing to me. He will show me the greatness of his love in even greater measure in the coming days. Pray fervently for me and offer up your good works that the Lord may grant that I will not be an unworthy priest in his sanctuary. See, his great goodness is already holding an outstretched hand to grant me many favors through my priestly ordination. Perhaps he is only waiting for you to pray that they become a reality for me. Do it, do it faithfully; the Lord wants to give me a means by which I will be able to repay you generously. I will remember you at my first holy Mass. ... I was thinking of celebrating my first Mass in Goch on Saturday, August 24, or the following Monday. Let me know what you think. If I do not hear from you, I will write after a week and fix a date. ... Farewell, until our next joyful reunion, God willing. Your son, A. Janssen, diac [diaconus] (Alt, Journey in Faith, pp. 22-23).

On August 15, 1861, in the Cathedral of Muenster, Bishop John Bossmann, Auxiliary Bishop of Muenster, ordained 9 deacons, one of them being Arnold Janssen. On August 17th Arnold celebrated his first Holy Mass in the "Ueberwasser Church" which was connected with the Major Seminary. He recalls:

On this day we read in the epistle the words: 'Qui parce seminat, parce et metet; et qui seminat, de benedictionibus, de benedictionibus et metet.' (One

who sows sparsely will reap sparsely as well – and one who sows generously will reap generously as well.); and in the gospel it says: *‘nisi granum frumenti cadens in terram mortuum fuerit, ipsum solum manet; si autem mortuum fuerit, multum fructum affert.’* (Unless a wheat grain falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest.) These words made a deep impression on me. – My good father had come to Muenster for the celebration and attended my first holy Mass – and, if I am not mistaken, also ordination. I only went home at the beginning of September; it was a weekday when I celebrated my first Holy Mass at home quietly. In those days a public celebration did not take place on such an occasion (Herman Fischer, Arnold Janssen, p. 56 – transl. JO).



Bishop Boßmann

PRIEST AND TEACHER IN BOCHOLT (1861-1873)

Bishop John G. Mueller of Muenster sent his newly ordained priest to Bocholt. “Bocholt was,” so Arnold tells us, “a flourishing parish with 5,000 souls within the city boundary and 4,000 in the countryside. The pastor was Fr. Vahrenhorst... Together with him there were nine or ten other priests in the parish, many of whom dined with him at noon and evening as paying guests (Alt, Journey in Faith, p. 24-25).

What kind of a man arrived in October 1861 in Bocholt? What did Arnold look like?

He was “only about five and a half feet tall and of slight build. ... He had blonde hair, eyebrows and eye lashes, brown eyes, and a nose described in his military report as “prominent”. His voice was somewhat high-pitched and not very resonant. He would usually walk rather fast, putting the right foot down firmly and seeming to drag the left slightly. In going up or down a flight of stairs, he almost seemed to hop” (Bornemann, Arnold Janssen, p. 16).

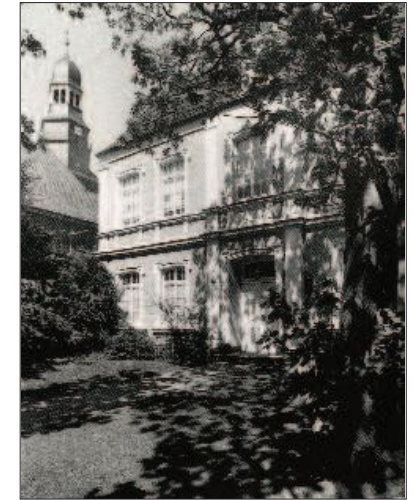
Arnold had been sent to Bocholt as second teacher in the local junior secondary school. The first teacher and school principal was also a priest, Rev. John Waldau, five years his senior.

“The school was the successor of an old Latin school which had become run-down and had only a few students”, Arnold narrates (Alt, Arnold Janssen, p. 24). It was a catholic school, but open to students of all denominations.

On October 15, 1861 Arnold took up his teaching duties at the school. He taught “eight periods of mathematics, six of Latin, four of German, and two each of French, geography and penmanship”, altogether 24 periods. (Bornemann, Arnold Janssen, p. 15)

Arnold took great care with the preparation of his classes and the scientific experiments.

He also made an extensive collection of teaching aids for his subjects. In physics, for example, he had apparatus to demonstrate the laws of hydro-mechanics, sound, heat, magnetism and electricity, 37 items for the latter alone. His mineralogical collection consisted of more than 300 items. For paleontology there were representative fossils from many of the geological formations found within the Muenster district. His large botanical collection included microscope slides, and even a small crocodile was among the more than one hundred items of the zoological collection. He was equally thorough in assembling a teacher’s library (ibid., p. 16).



Bocholt Junior Secondary School

Arnold was on pretty good terms with his fellow-teachers; a reason for that may have been that he supplied the beer for them, thanks to a connection he had with a brewer in Weeze, his mother’s birthplace. He also got wine for them from the Ahr Valley or from Ruedesheim (ibid., p. 19).

His students had a “healthy respect” for Arnold, since he was a very strict teacher. “His look was sharp and insistent.” On the other hand, as Arnold’s first biographer, Fr. H. Fischer SVD, writes, “at the right time he also knew how to share in their happiness”, for instance during an excursion about which he wrote to his parents in June 1866:

Today we went for a walk with the students. They had three trumpets, a saber for the commanding officer, two drums... and there was a nice black-red-gold flag at the front. We left at half past one, first played cops and robbers, then had coffee. Then the boys just hung around, played blindman’s buff, and we finished with another round of cops and robbers. It was unfortunate for me that, as the only cop, I fell into the hands of a large number of robbers under the leadership of the principal, Fr. Waldau, and was captured by them (Alt, Journey in Faith, p. 27).

Arnold had been sent to Bocholt as a teacher, not for pastoral work in the parish: “I was not obliged to engage in pastoral ministry but I did give a hand by hearing confessions on Saturdays and Sundays and often preached for others, especially the pastor (ibid., p. 25).

Arnold spent 12 years in Bocholt and, looking back over those years, he said: “My years in Bocholt were happy but very strenuous” (ibid. p. 26).