

### First Holy Mass and first baptism

On October 28, the Prefect Apostolic Limbrock, Frs. Vormann and Erdweg as well as Brothers Eustochius, Canisius and Theodulph celebrated their first common holy Mass on Tumleo. They prayed in particular to St. Joseph under whose protection the station was placed.

The same day they baptized a two year old boy who suffered from such a terrible wound on his head that a few days later he died. In his baptism he received the name Anton Joseph (*ibid.*).

### Ecuador

On October 25 Fr. Neuenhofen wrote to Fr. Arnold:

Recently my position has changed – at least it seems like it; but for how long? Who knows. I am even appreciated by the government. All the liberals, from top down, respect me. The day before yesterday even the governor visited me in San Rafael. Yesterday he came twice to the house where I lodge, but didn't find me since I had already left. .. Their behavior after such a past is pretty strange. My motto towards that is, as always: Be careful! ("Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote" [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], No. 5, February 1897, p. 40).

### Steyl – Missionary Sisters

On October 29, Mother Maria wrote to Fr. Arnold: I "humbly ask permission to hold the 40 day devotions to the Holy Spirit. It would be a great joy for us to be able to contribute a little to advance the greater glorification of the Holy Spirit" (Stegmaier, transl. Jacqueline Mulberge, *Mother Maria Helena Stollenwerk, Groundwork*, pp. 403-404).

In her chronicle Mother Maria writes: "Reverend Father Superior did not allow us to have the night adoration as a 40-day devotion because he thought it would be too strenuous for the Sisters. We then sought another way of holding the 40-day devotions in honor of the Holy Spirit and prayed the Holy Spirit rosary daily in community after evening prayer. The rosary was also prayed at work during the day" (*ibid.*, p.404, footnote 2).

### Steyl – Statistics of the Mission house and the convent of the Sisters

On October 30, 1896 Fr. Blum sent the following statistics for the year 1896 to the parish priest of Tegelen:

The mission house numbered 32 priests, 232 Brothers, 17 apprentices, 315 students, 5 laborers. In the convent of the Sisters there were 85 Sisters.

### CHRISTMAS IN CHORONA TIME

*For Christmas I wish you the richest blessings of the eternal Word.  
Out of love for us it has become a human being (Arnold Janssen)*

The editorial team of The Arnoldus Family Story joins this wish of our founder  
Jürgen Ommerborn, Clemens Jansen and Jacqueline Mulberge SSpS



## Divine Word Missionaries Secretariat Arnold Janssen Steyl

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MISSIONSHAUS STEYL | POSTFACH 24 60 | D- 41311 NETTETAL  
MISSIEHUIS ST. MICHAËL | ST. MICHAËLSTRAAT 7 | NL- 5935 BL STEYL

## The Arnoldus Family Story

### AUGUST 1896 – Ecuador

On August 24 Arnold Janssen wrote to Fr. Neuenhofen in Ecuador:

"I thank God for the courage which he has given you to persevere courageously in spite those miserable circumstances under which you have to live. That tells me that He has led you to Ecuador and I hope that there He will guide and lead you in everything according to his most holy intentions. Just seek to cooperate faithfully with the grace of the Holy Spirit so that you will make yourself worthy of his special guidance (Josef Alt, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach Südamerika* (letters to South America), vol I, p. 185).

### Kaiser-Wilhelmsland / New Guinea

On August 13, 1896 the first Steyl missionaries had arrived in Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen [the German colonial name for Madang today]. It wouldn't take long before some of them got sick with malaria. It was at this time that they met the German planter Kärnbach who had a plantation on the island of Seleo. He suggested to them to leave Madang and move to the island of Tumleo. There the climate was much healthier.

The Prefect Apostolic, Fr. Limbrock, himself suffered from malaria and therefore he sent Fr. Vormann to Tumleo. Accompanied by Mr. Kärnbach, Fr. Vormann visited the island on August 24 and immediately liked the island and asked Mr. Kärnbach to buy a plot of land for the mission.

Upon his return to Madang he gave his positive report to Fr. Limbrock which led to the decision to leave Madang. He sent Frs. Vormann and Erdweg as well as Br. Canisius to Tumleo - ahead of him and Brothers Eustochius and Theodulph who all three suffered from malaria. After six weeks Fr. Vormann was to return to Madang and report again to Fr. Limbrock.

On August 30 the first three missionaries went first to the island of Seleo, the home of Mr. Kärnbach, where they arrived on August 31 and stayed for a few days. Their first task was to bring the various parts of their house, prefabricated in Steyl, and other tools ashore.

### SEPTEMBER 1896 - Kaiser Wilhelmsland / New Guinea

On September 2, Frs. Vormann and Erdweg as well as Br. Canisius went by boat from Seleo to the nearby island of Tumleo, their new home. In Seleo they had loaded the parts of the prefabricated house on some boats and at Tumleo they had to unload them and take them ashore for the last time. After travelling from Steyl to Madang, from Madang to Seleo the house finally arrived on Tumleo island. It had been loaded and unloaded three times before it could be rebuilt on Tumleo island.

## USA

On September 5, Br. Wendelin wrote to Fr. Arnold regarding the founding of their own [mission] house. "People have generally advised me that we ought to go out and settle in the countryside, where property is cheaper, taxes lower, the water good, air clean, the surroundings beautiful and life agreeable. In any case I would advise founding only a small establishment in town" (Alt, transl. Robert Pung, Peter Spring, *Letters to the United States of America*, p. 11, footnote 5 to letter 6).

## Steyl

In Steyl the provincial chapter was held from September 5-7. "Among its 12 members were five delegates elected from the House Chapters of Steyl, St. Gabriel's and Holy Cross. Father Janssen, in his capacity as provincial of the Steyl province, presided at the meetings" (Bornemann, transl. John Vogelgesang, *Arnold Janssen*, Manila 1975, p. 339).

## Steyl / USA – Decision for the North American Mission

On September 8 there was a meeting of the General Council. In the minutes we read: "The question of a mission in North America has already been repeatedly discussed [by the General Council]. Today it was discussed once again by the joint General and Provincial Councils, all members being present here, following the Provincial Chapter held in Steyl from 5-7 September. Since it became quite clear that all are in favor of the establishment of this new mission, there must still be discussed in detail which priest of the Society should be sent there and placed in charge. It must be admitted that the direction of the said mission will be difficult and that therefore a prudent hand and a vigilant eye would be needed. The name of Fr. Peil was proposed, but it was generally agreed that Fr. Reinke would be more suitable for the post. One Councillor drew attention to Fr. Reinke's health and expressed reservations on that score, which were not shared by others. The Superior promised to thoroughly examine the question of health, but believes that Fr. Reinke's health will be satisfactory" (Alt, transl. Pung, Spring, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to the United States of America*, p. 13, footnote 1 to letter 7).

## Steyl – Missionary Sisters

In the convent of the missionary sisters Sr. Aufrida was suddenly healed from a serious sickness. According to herself, she owed the healing to the Holy Spirit. In a note without date, but probably from September 1896, Mother Maria wrote to the Sisters in Argentina about the Sister and the effect her healing by the Holy Spirit had on the Sisters in the convent, who all were convinced that the Holy Spirit had healed Sr. Aufrida: "Sr. Aufrida is so healthy: last Thursday she had three hours of nightly adoration. Furthermore, almost daily she eats only three times a day, last week, on the Ember days, she kept the prescribed fasting. Dear Sisters, pray in a special intention for the greater veneration of the Holy Spirit. The love for the Holy Spirit has increased very much in our convent" (Ortrud Stegmaier, *M. Maria Stollenwerk, Briefe an die Schwestern* (Letters to the Sisters, p. 74).

## OCTOBER 1896 – USA

*October 16, Fr. Arnold writes to Brothers Wendelin and Homobonus*

"There is some good news today, which you have heard perhaps already, though not from me. I have appointed Fr. Reinke to the North American Mission. But I will probably still have to find a good companion to accompany him. He is currently in the hospital in Essen where he was operated on, but the operation has proved successful. He will probably be able to begin his journey to North America some time in November. ...

I hope that you are living together in true brotherhood and that you are keeping the Holy Rule as well as you can, especially as regards regular rising, community morning prayer, meditation and weekly confession. May God the Holy Spirit bless you" (Alt, transl. Pung, Spring, *Letters to the United States of America*, pp. 12-13).

## Kaiser-Wilhelmsland / New Guinea

*On October 23, Fr. Arnold wrote to the Prefect Apostolic Limbrock.*

He knew that, because of frequent sickness and because of the Protestants already doing mission work there, the confreres wanted to leave Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen / Madang and move to healthier Tumleo island. He reminded Fr. Limbrock that the New Guinea Company had given the missionaries land in Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen, and he wrote: "I cannot allow you to turn down the permission you have received from the director of the New Guinea Company. A presence in that area is necessary for us; we should not turn down the chance to establish one.

Concerning the questions: "Where is it healthy? Where will I find people? Where will I be needed later on?" It seems to me that mangroves make an area unhealthy, and if there are too many mangroves in Friedrich Wilhelmshafen, then the station would not be able to keep going even if the harbor is good.

In this regard an important factor is the wind. You must diligently observe and keep a record of the wind direction. Mangrove haze is fever haze. Wherever the wind from the mangrove swamp blows becomes an unhealthy area.

So study the maps and the surroundings and keep gathering information especially from people you feel will tell you the truth. Don't trust the statements of those who don't want you around, and reread carefully what I have written to you before" (Alt, transl. Frank Mihalic, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to New Guinea and Australia*, pp. 14-15).

## *Arrival on the island of Tumleo*

At the beginning of October Fr. Vormann had returned from Tumleo to Friedrich Wilhelmshafen to give a report on the situation on Tumleo. Now the decision was made to move to Tumleo. Naturally, they had not received Fr. Arnold's letter of October 23. On October 25, Frs. Limbrock and Vormann as well as Brothers Eustochius and Theodulph left Friedrich Wilhelmshafen and moved to Tumleo where they arrived in the evening of October 27, 1896 (H. auf der Heide, *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl, Ein Bild der ersten 25 Jahre ihres Bestehens* [The mission society of Steyl, A picture of the first 25 years of its existence], p. 477).