

For your reflection

The next Synod of Bishops from all over the world is planned to take place from October 5 – 26, 2008. Its theme will be: The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church.

Arnold Janssen called his first foundation “Society of the Divine Word”; inspired by the theme of the next synod it might be appropriate to reflect once on Arnold’s and the founding generation’s understanding of the expression “Divine Word”. In Rule 1, statute 3 of the “General Constitutions and Statutes” of the Society of 1891 we read:

The expression “Divine Word”, which appears in the name of the Society, we understand in a threefold way. For the Divine Word is

- a) the word of the Father, which is the Son;
- b) the word of the Son having become a human being, that is the gospel of Christ;
- c) the word of the Holy Spirit which is Holy Scripture as a whole, and the word of the prophets, the apostles and priests insofar as they speak under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

[transl. JO]

AT THE SERVICE OF PROPHETIC DIALOGUE

Ecumenical Dialogue

The ecumenical movement is at the service of the unity of the Church. However, the understanding of “unity” presents a serious problem. Walter Cardinal Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, says: “There is agreement on the fact that unity does not mean uniformity. What we seek is full visible communion (*communio*) as ‘unity in diversity and diversity in unity’. But when we look more closely this formula is anything but unambiguous.

The Catholic Church – and in this it is in principle in agreement with the Orthodox position – understands this to mean a unity of *one* faith, in the *same* sacraments and in *one* apostolically grounded episcopal office. Diversity is on the other hand possible in the forms of expression of that faith, in the sacramental rites as well as in the canonical formation of the hierarchical structure...”

On the Protestant side unity in diversity is understood differently. According “to an opinion which is often expressed today”, “for unity a basic consensus in regard to the Gospel and the dispensing of baptism and the Lord’s Supper in accordance with the Gospel is sufficient”; “essential differences in the understanding and the form of ecclesial office are acceptable.”

On this basis churches have adopted altar – and pulpit fellowship, even though they have a different understanding of the Eucharist and the church and ministry.

In a summary way Cardinal Kasper says in regard to the understanding of “unity” that “*there are different ecumenical concepts of the church unity to which we aspire; we are not at one regarding the destination of our ecumenical journey.*” This certainly is one of the most profound problems of the contemporary ecumenical situation. (Kasper, *Ecumenism in Transition*, The Pontifical Council For Promoting Christian Unity, Information Service, N. 123 (2006 / III-IV, p. 101 f).

The first: Love! The second: Love! The third: Love! 70 x7 Love! And seven million x 7 also Love! How much Love? Let us love one another as Jesus has loved us! (Josef Freinademetz)

A Hundred Years Ago

September 28, 1907: In the chronicle of the Motherhouse of the Missionary Sisters in Steyl (1904-1907, Sr. Paula, Anna Jostock) we read: “Today our Reverend Mother Superior gave us once again interesting and joyful news about that mission territory which very recently had been entrusted to the SVD: a part of the Philippines. Already soon some missionaries are to travel there ... As Reverend Mother promised us, Sisters will also be allowed to go there soon” (pp. 92f). However, it was to take until 1909 before the first SVD missionaries reached the Philippines; the first Missionary Sisters went there in 1912 and the first Adoration Sisters in 1923.

All good things grow slowly

(Arnold Janssen in 1883 to John Baptist Anzer)

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The Arnoldus Family Story

As in the previous two newsletters so also in this one we will try to become a bit more familiar with the Apostleship of Prayer and once again we use the book by Fr. Ramière: *The Apostleship of Prayer; A Holy League of Christian Hearts, United with the Heart of Jesus, to obtain the triumph of the Church and the salvation of souls*. The page numbers after quotations refer to this book unless otherwise stated.

Our topic is the “*nature of the Apostleship of Prayer – the sources of its efficacy*”. The first source – PRAYER itself – we got to know in the September issue of our newsletter. The second source is ASSOCIATION; our prayer is a prayer in community; therefore the Apostleship is a “league” of Christian hearts.

Communitarian prayer possesses great power as Jesus tells us in Mt 18:19:

“In truth I tell you once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven.” And immediately afterwards He explains this efficacy which association gives to prayer: Whenever two hearts unite in prayer, a third prays with them, whose prayer cannot fail to be heard by God the Father, because that heart is His own. Ever present to each of His members, *He is present in a special manner to those who form a close union amongst themselves. “For where two or three meet in my name, I am there amongst them” (p. 109).*

What is the deepest reason for that power of “association”, for the power of prayer in community? For Fr. Ramière it is the following:

The God we Christians believe in is a triune God, our God Himself is “association” or the “ineffable union” of the three Divine Persons. This God’s happiness does not consist in Him withdrawing into Himself and selfishly enjoying his own riches. Rather “it is in the ineffable union of the three Divine Persons, in the eternal, continual, and full communication of their attributes, that the perfection and happiness of God receives its completion. Power, wisdom goodness and all the Divine attributes are in God the Father to an infinite degree; nevertheless, He can only exercise these attributes in so far as they are communicated to the Word, and to the Holy Spirit ...”

We human beings, then, are created in the image of God; therefore Fr. Ramière writes:

“To this mystery of the companionship of the Three Divine Persons, the most sublime mystery of our faith, is allied the most excellent mystery of our nature. While all within us seems to subject us to self-love, an irresistible want in our nature

urges us to associate with others.” Our “better instincts in spite of us, compel us to go out of ourselves, and live in others, and in our union with them, to seek that strength, fullness of being, and contentment, which we cannot find in ourselves alone” (p. 112).

For those who do not know the Holy Trinity, this is an “incomprehensible mystery.”

But we Christians, who know by faith, that God is only truly happy because He is the Father and because His paternity allows Him to give Himself entirely to another self, we need not be surprised, that, having obliged us to imitate Him, He has made it impossible for us to enjoy our perfection and happiness alone, and that He has granted to association the power of increasing our strength and happiness a hundredfold.

This inexplicable mystery of the divine Trinity, then explains that which now chiefly occupies our attention, namely, the mystery of association and its incomparable power.

By prayer, every Christian is invested with the almighty power of God; but, as God the Father cannot simply exercise the infinite power which He possesses by the necessity of His nature, as by union with His Divine [Son] and [the] Holy Spirit, He becomes twice and thrice omnipotent, so the Christian cannot of himself alone make use of the almighty power given him by prayer, and if he wishes its fruitfulness to be infallible, he must unite his prayer with that of other hearts, animated by a similar spirit of charity (p. 113).

Not only the Apostleship of Prayer influenced Arnold Janssen and his work, but also other events / associations of an ecclesiastical or political nature. These we will consider as well, and we begin with two ecclesiastical organizations which were founded in France:

The Association for the Propagation of Faith and the Living Rosary Association

Arnold Janssen was 28 years and a few months old when he joined the Apostleship of Prayer on April 1, 1866. However, from early childhood on he had been familiar with the Association for the Propagation of Faith, since his father Gerhard had subscribed to the association’s magazine, the Annals or yearbooks for the propagation of faith. “That was like his daily bread,” another son of Gerhard Janssen, Capuchin Brother Juniperus remembers. “He would read the letters from missionaries with a warmth and enthusiasm I could never understand.” About the missionaries Gerhard would say: “These are the heroes of faith who sacrifice everything for God.” (Bornemann, Remembering Arnold Janssen, Analecta SVD - 42, p. 18).

With his interest in the missions and his admiration for the missionaries Gerhard Janssen was not alone. In the early 19th century, all over Europe we see the missionary



Holy Trinity - Seat of Grace
Upper church, Steyl

work of the Catholic Church flourish once again, a visible sign being the founding of religious missionary congregations as well as lay movements, the mission associations, which supported the missionaries financially.

The “first official mission association” was founded on May 3, 1822 in Lyons, France. It has its roots in the activities of a young French lay woman, *Pauline Marie Jaricot* (1799-1862). She is considered the foundress of this missionary movement. The official name of this association was “Association for the Propagation of the Faith”. According to Pauline’s suggestion the association was grouped into circles, districts and units. Ten members would form a unit, ten units a district and ten districts a circle. Pauline wanted the financial contribution to be small and the motto of this new association was: “Small contributions, but by many; a short mission prayer daily, but by millions.” The “short” mission prayer consisted of one Our Father, one Hail Mary and the invocation “St. Francis Xavier, pray for us”.



Pauline Marie Jaricot

The central office of this association was in Lyons. One of its tasks was to publish the association’s magazine, the “Annales de la Propagation de la Foi” – the annals or yearbooks of the propagation of faith which were soon translated into most European languages.

In a very short time the new Association for the Propagation of the Faith spread all over France and Europe. Thanks to the efforts of the medical doctor *Heinrich Hahn* in Aachen /Germany it reached the Lower Rhineland (Niederrhein), the home area of Arnold Janssen, as well and there also the family of Gerhard Janssen in Goch as Bro.Juniperus told us.

(Sources: www.missio.de – 29.10.2007; Annals of the Propagation of Faith (German edition from Einsiedeln, 1932) and K.J. Rivinius in E. Gatz, Geschichte des kirchlichen Lebens ..., vol. III, Herder, Freiburg, 1994, pp. 222f).

In 1826 Pauline Jaricot founded the *Living Rosary Association* for the conversion of souls and the strengthening of the Church in France. The Living Rosary consists in dividing the 15 rosary mysteries among a group of 15 ‘associates’, each of whom promised to pray one decade or a specific mystery, “every day for life”. In this way, each group of those 15 associates would pray an entire Rosary every day, forming a ‘living Rosary’. Pauline also organized the distribution of prayer-leaflets, pictures of saints, medals and rosaries. (Source: www.hail-mary-rosaries.com/Living – Rosary.html – 29.10.2007).

We also find the idea of the living rosary with Arnold Janssen. In a supplement to the first issue of his mission magazine “Kleiner-Herz-Jesu Bote” (Little messenger of the Most Sacred Heart), January 1874, he published his very own and most interesting version of the living rosary.