

Ecuador

Fr. Arnold to Fr. Neuenhofen

On March 13, Fr. Arnold wrote to Fr. Heinrich Neuenhofen. He repeated the invitation to take part in the General Chapter. Then he added: "Since at present you are without any priestly support, so seek to receive the necessary strength from prayer, meditation and the pious celebration of the holy Sacrifice" (Josef Alt, Arnold Janssen SVD, *Briefe nach Südamerika*, Bd. 1, S. 207).

Fr. Neuenhofen to Fr. Arnold

On March 23 Fr. Heinrich Neuenhofen informed Fr. Arnold of his renunciation of the right to take part in the General Chapter. He declared, "that in full and respectful appreciation of your invitation letter of January 23, I waive this right because of the needs of the diocese here, and, as I would like to believe, also in the interest of the Society, and this waiver is also valid for the case that during the coming months I see the need to leave the country. In that case the right would be cancelled anyway by the dissolution of the mission."

That very same March 23, Fr. Neuenhofen informed Fr. Dold in Brazil that he would not attend the General Chapter (*ibid.*, p. 202, footnote 5).

USA – On March 29, 1897 – Br. Wendelin writes to Fr. Arnold: Mission to the Amerindians and African Americans

He informs Fr. Arnold that he had just come back from Philadelphia. There he had been advised by Rev. Th. Hammeke, a cousin of Br. Raphael Nies, SVD, that the SVD should come and set up an orphanage for boys. "But perhaps at the same time we could set our sights on another form of work, i.e. a mission among the Indians and Negroes. I am sending Your Reverence, attached to this letter, an annual report on these missions, so that you can get an overview of them. A large field of work is spread out in the South and in the West. [...] Yesterday I visited a Sister by the name of Katherine Drexel, who annually distributes from the interest realized from her capital some \$250 000 to the Indian missions. She has already heard of our Brothers, and would like to have some for the Mission Stations in the West. Of course, priests are also in great demand there." On the other hand, it was very hard, Wendelin reports, "for a religious congregation with just a convent and church to gain a strong foothold here in a city and to exercise an extensive activity" (Josef Alt, transl. R. Pung/P.Spring, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to the United States of America*, Nettetal 1998, p. 15, footnote 3).

*May the risen Savior fill all of you with new courage,
new strength and a new spirit of sacrifice in His holy service*

(Arnold Janssen)

Happy and blessed Easter!



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The Arnoldus Family Story

1897 – FEBRUARY – USA

February 2 / 12

On February 2nd Fr. Blum wrote to Br. Wendelin that Fr. Reinke who had been appointed to the USA would not be coming. Br. Wendelin then wrote to Fr. Arnold Janssen: "Fr. Blum has informed me that Rev. Reinke will not be coming to us now. Although I deeply regret this, I must however admit that this is better; with his poor health he would not have been able to withstand the harsh American climate for long" (Jos. Alt, transl. R. Pung/P. Spring, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to the United States of America*, p. 13, footnote 1 to letter 7).

New Guinea

February 12, 1897: Fr. Arnold writes to the Apostolic Prefect, Limbrock:

Official correspondence with the German government in Berlin

Fr. Arnold advises the Apostolic Prefect on how to handle his correspondence with the German colonial government in Berlin:

"If you have a matter to discuss with the Government, the best thing is to send a confidential letter to Dr. Hespers if possible.... plus a calm matter of fact letter which he can present officially. 'If your official letter needs a bit of zest to it, you can send along a private letter to Dr. Hespers. If you send this through me, I'll forward it to Dr. Hespers and perhaps add some supportive remarks of my own if necessary'" (Josef Alt, transl. Frank Mihalic, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to New Guinea and Australia*, Rome 2001, pp. 17-18).

Dr. Hespers was a priest of the archdiocese of Cologne and member of the Cathedral Chapter. At the same time he was a member of the Imperial Colonial Council in Berlin. He made himself very indebted to the Catholic Missions in the German colonies (*ibid.*, footnote 2 to letter 10).

Invitation to the General Chapter

The forthcoming General Chapter is the next topic of this letter to Rev. Limbrock: "I have already invited you to the General Chapter which begins on 29 September 1897, and I am doing it again. The reason is that privately I would like to have your advice and support. Since you are acquainted with two missions [China and New Guinea], you will be all the more knowledgeable in many things. You will surely be able to work to the beneficial advantage for your mission. I believe that according to the rule you will also have the right to both attend and vote at the Chapter. But that depends on whether or not Fathers Neuenhofen [Ecuador] or Dold [Brazil] take part (*ibid.*, p. 18).

Behave with dignity

As a PS Fr. Arnolds adds these words: “In official correspondence, for example with Dr. Hespers, you must use a choice of words that befits a Prefect Apostolic. Much depends on that. When it is necessary we must be able to know how to preserve our personal dignity; otherwise others won’t respect it either. Doing that is therefore not against humility. Naturally, we are not to play the grand Master!” (cf. *ibid.*, p.18).

February 12, 1897: Apostolic Prefect Limbrock writes to Fr. Arnold

Request for Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters

In this letter one topic is Fr. Limbrock’s request to Fr. Arnold soon to send Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters.

“If all goes well, I would like to believe that it would be good if with the next group of missionaries there would also be some Sisters. But you would have to let us know in good time so that we can have a house built and furnished for them.[...] It would be necessary that some of them could teach in the girls’ schools we plan to open. The Sisters must also be healthy; none with heart or kidney or liver troubles, none with weak stomachs or nerve problems. It is highly desirable that Sisters know a bit about nursing, especially about dressing wounds and sores and skin diseases. Here we have many open wounds on the feet and large ulcers” (*ibid.*, pp. 22-23, footnote 5 to letter 12).

China

February 26, 1897 Fr. Arnold writes to Bishop Anzer (Excerpts)

“The General Council has decided that a General Chapter should be held this year. It is to open on the Feast of St. Michael, 29 September 1897, here in Steyl. Official notice will follow in the *Nuntius Societatis*, which will be sent out these coming days. If through some mishap, the *Nuntius Societatis* does not get there soon, then this letter can be considered as an official convocation of the General Chapter on 29 September 1897 in Steyl. A. Janssen.”

“This General Chapter is especially important because it is to flesh out the rule *De Regimine Societatis* (the governance of the Society), which will then be submitted to the Propaganda [congregation in Rome responsible for the missionary work of the church]. They asked for it last year already, but then they granted us a delay until the next General Chapter. So I am really counting on your being present...”

“For the time of your absence from China, I would very politely request you to appoint Rev. Freinademetz (whom I am appointing to substitute for you as Provincial) to be your substitute also for the administration of vicariate affairs. That would befit his title as pro-vicar, an office which you bestowed on him earlier. Foreseeably, you will be able to consecrate for divine services the church at St. Gabriel’s, which is dedicated to the Holy Spirit, and which should be finished this year” (Josef Alt, transl. Frank Mihalic, Vincent Fecher, *Arnold Janssen, Letters to China*, vol. 1 (1879-1897), Rome 2002, pp. 481-483).

Steyl

Official invitation to the Third General Chapter in the Nuntius Societatis Verbi Divini (excerpts)

On January 6, 1897 Fr. Arnold had signed the letter of invitation to and convocation of the Third General Chapter. However, only in February was this letter officially published in the *Nuntius Societatis Verbi Divini*

“Herewith I invite all who according to our rule are entitled to participate in the General Chapter to do so,,,! ”

“The opening of the Chapter will take place in Steyl on the Feast of the holy Archangel Michael on September 29 of this year. Will all participants please arrive in Steyl in time. Until then it will be our task to pray fervently to God the Holy Spirit for a successful Chapter, so that he may enlighten the participants of the chapter with his divine light and graciously grant that the Chapter may bring forth many blessings and graces for the whole of the Society. How important the General Chapters have been so far in this regard [1884-1886 and 1890-1891]. May the coming Chapter also prove to be as rich in blessings [as the previous ones]. ”

In order to implore from God the Holy Spirit this grace and blessing, I decree that from Pentecost of this year until the end of the Chapter the sequence *Veni Sancte Spiritus* be added to the daily *Veni Creator*. The sequence, however, should be sung or prayed at a different, suitable time in the course of the day. These two hymns are to be offered for the General Chapter – except for individual cases where imminent needs recommend a different intention. In the same way, during the time just mentioned, the rev. priests should remember to make a Memento for the same purpose in their daily holy Mass (*Nuntius Societatis Verbi Divini*, no. 2, February 1897, p. 5).

MARCH 1897

Steyl – Convent of the Cloistered Sisters

In the convent of the Cloistered Sisters adoration during the night was introduced this month, “at first only once a week and with the tabernacle open. The Sisters often prayed for periods of up to two or three hours, kneeling on the floor or on little seats more suitable for small children” (Karl Müller, transl. Frank Mansfield SVD, *Contemplation and Mission*, Rome 1998, p. 35).

Togo

March 6/7, 1897 – Arrival of the first Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters in Lomé

Sr. Superior Bernarda writes: “Finally we reached the goal of our journey, partly on March 6, fully on March 7. The waves of the sea were too strong and so we had to wait to go ashore until the next morning. Rev. Superior Bücking and Fr. Hoffmann met us on the shore. We took the path to the church.... When we arrived there, Rev. Fr. Schönig addressed us briefly, then there was Benediction, High Mass, sermon.... After the service we first freshened up at the missionaries’ place and then we were taken by Rev. Fr. Superior to our home. It was a much more beautiful house than we had expected” (in: “Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote” (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart), 24, No. 9, June 1897, p. 72).