

and a loving adoration of God the Holy Spirit, in union with the Father and the Son as they dwell in the heart by grace. ...

“May these pious exercises also serve to guide you more and more into that spirit which God the Holy Spirit demands from the members of the Society for the edification of one’s neighbor and for building up and making firm the spiritual structure of the Society” (Alt, transl. Frank Mihalic, Vincent Fecher, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to China*, vol. I, pp. 493-495).

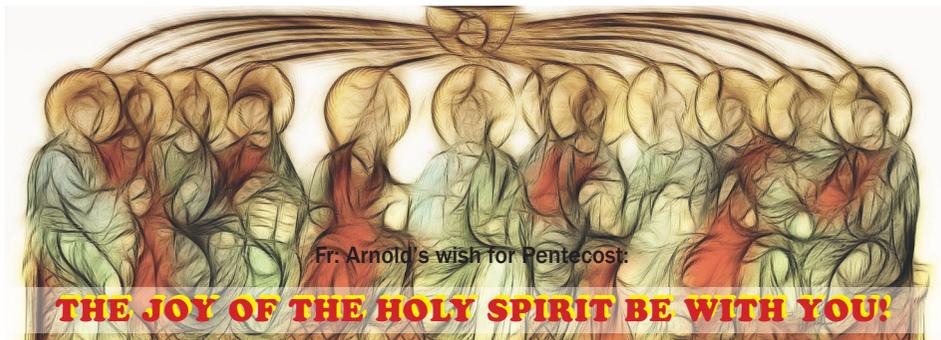
JUNE – New Guinea/ Kaiser Wilhelmsland – Personnel

On June 2, Fr. Arnold wrote to the Prefect Apostolic Fr. Limbrock among other things: “This autumn I won’t be able to send anyone to either China or Wilhelmsland. You have enough personnel for two stations now and I don’t want more to be set up, nor that they be too far away from one another. How sad it is in Togo, where one has to abandon a station or appoint a newly arrived missionary as head of a station before he has learned how to obey. You must expect that because of a breakdown in health or a trip to Europe [for health reasons], half or more of your personnel can be out of action. For that reason there should be no more than two stations for the time being and they should not be too far apart. They should, however, be far enough apart so that later a circle of schools and chapels can be set up around each station. For that same reason they should not be too near to each other.” ... “Please send me more information about the activities of the priests, Brothers, and workmen; about the means of transportation; about the method of providing flour and other necessities; a sketch of the harbor and of the house” (Alt, transl. Frank Mihalic, *Letters to New Guinea and Australia*, pp. 19-21).

On June 3, Fr. Arnold wrote a further letter to Fr. Limbrock. Regarding Sisters he wrote: “Capable Sisters for New Guinea are presently being considered. [...] But I will not send them until I can be sure of their effectiveness, nor before a proper house with cloister and parlor is ready for them. ...

“In the future I can reckon with only a relatively small number of missionaries and Brothers working in New Guinea because the climate will either snatch them away or send them back to Europe. Centers should be 3-6 hours from one another. The villages located between them must be supplied with teachers and chapels.

“I beg of you to see to it that with regard to spiritual matters a good foundation is laid and the rule be kept as faithfully as possible” (*ibid.*, pp.22-23).



Fr. Arnold's wish for Pentecost:

THE JOY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BE WITH YOU!



Divine Word Missionaries
Arnold Janssen Secretariat Steyl

VOLUME 15 | NO. 5 | MAY 2021

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

The Arnoldus Family Story

1897 – APRIL

New Guinea / Kaiser Wilhelmsland

First school book

The missionaries saw it as one of their tasks to build schools. However, the many different languages spoken in New Guinea posed a real problem for the missionaries. On April 2, 1897 Fr. Erdweg wrote to Fr. Arnold:

“The language problem has until now made schoolwork impossible. But before long we’ve got to give it a try” (Jos. Alt, transl. Frank Mihalic, *Arnold Janssen, Letters to New Guinea and Australia*, p.19, footnote6 to letter 10). Therefore, at the request of Fr. Limbrock he had compiled a primer. “That little book will need a lot of changes as we go on learning the language, will have to go on being corrected; but if we want to make any kind of beginning at all, we cannot do so without a small handbook. ... The matters that are to be in the primers must be, if possible, printed with normally used type faces. The same goes for handwriting and script: the children must have before them letters of the same size, if they are to learn to write properly (cf. *ibid.*, p.20, footnote 4 to letter 11).

MAY – St. Gabriel / Vienna – ordination

On May 1st Auxiliary Bishop Angerer of Vienna ordained 17 confreres as priests.

Togo – Death of Sr. Superior Bernarda

On May 1st, two months after her arrival in Togo, the superior of the Holy Spirit Sisters, Sr. Bernarda Althoff, died. During her English language studies in England she had already become ill. However, since the doctor hoped that a sea voyage would do her good, she travelled to Togo. At first she was all right, but very soon her condition deteriorated and she died of TB and encephalitis.

In Steyl the Sisters were shocked; however Sr. Bernarda’s death did not dampen the Sisters’ zeal for the mission in Togo; on the contrary, many sisters were full of enthusiasm.

USA – Appointment of Fr. Peil

On May 10, Fr. Arnold wrote to Bro. Wendelin in the USA:

“Fr. Peil has been assigned to North America” (Alt, transl. Robert Pung and Peter Spring, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to the United States of America*, p. 17).

Fr. John Peil was born in 1856 in Lommersen, Diocese of Cologne; he entered Steyl on October 11, 1880. In 1889 he made his first vows and in 1890 he was ordained

priest. His first appointment was the administration office in Steyl and in 1894 he became procurator in St. Gabriel's (Bornemann, transl. John Vogelgesang SVD, *Remembering Arnold Janssen*, Rome 1978, pp. 480-481).

Fr. Peil must have gotten the appointment for the USA by May 7, for on that day he wrote to Br. Wendelin: "Dear Brother Wendelin, ... I am delighted with this appointment. ...It appears that I can start on my journey sometime in July. If it were possible I would come sooner since you have been waiting such a long time. At any rate I will hasten things as much as possible. Two or three more will come too, if not with me, then soon afterwards.

I would be grateful if you could let me know soon what equipment I should bring along. Whether the necessary articles for the celebration of Holy Mass, like vestments, etc., also books and what kind, or whether all these things can easily be bought there."

China – Fr. Arnold writes to Bishop Anzer

On May 10 Fr. Arnold wrote to Bishop Anzer, informing him that the Prefect of the Propaganda "had granted permission that all mission superiors and confreres, who qualify to attend the General Chapter, may leave their mission for this purpose."

He gave his consent to the Bishop to buy a property in Taikia for the SVD on the condition that Steyl would reimburse him later. The confreres were to have a house for physical and spiritual renewal.

Then he continues: "From Brazil, petitions have been sent to me by the Apostolic Nuncio Msgr. Guidi and two bishops- all of urgent nature. Africa has lost four missionaries within a year's time, due to death and departures. Hardly anyone has volunteered for China:

On the other hand, interest will flare up again, once it is known that an institute has been established for physical and spiritual renewal [in Taikia]. It is also possible that something became known here how those who left for China these last few years had so many problems to put up with" (Alt, transl. Frank Mihalic, Vincent Fecher, *Letters to China*, vol. I, pp. 488-490).

Togo – Death of Fr. Hoffmann

On May 15, Fr. Jacob Hoffmann died in Togo; he had only returned to Togo in January from a convalescent leave. Fr. Hoffmann had been very good at learning the Ewe language. Already after 6 months in Togo he had been able to preach in Ewe. He wrote poems and songs in Ewe, in which he presented the Christian faith and morals. With great zeal those poems and songs were prayed and sung by the community of the faithful in church on Sundays. In a short time he produced a biblical story with pictures in the Ewe language for printing and use in school. Furthermore, he wrote a catechism and book of prayers in the Ewe language; to the catechism he added a special book for the missionaries, giving an etymological, as well as a short grammatical explanation. In that way he helped the missionaries to grow with greater ease into the spirit of the Ewe language. Finally he started to write a Ewe-German dictionary, but death prevented him from completing it (Karl Müller, *Geschichte der katholischen Kirche in Togo – History of the Catholic Church in Togo*, pp. 95, 96)

Steyl – Missionary Sisters - Mission appointments – new Sisters

On May 16th Fr. Arnold asked the Missionary Sisters which country they preferred for a mission appointment.

Already on May 17 he made the appointments: four sisters were appointed for Togo. He also gave several more "provisional" appointments for other missions so the sisters could prepare for their future ministry. On the same day he admitted eleven novices to first vows and on 27 May seventeen postulants to the novitiate (Stegmaier, transl. Jacqueline Mulberge, *Mother Maria Helena Stollenwerk, Groundwork*, p.414). Among the provisional appointments were also four for New Guinea (Alt, transl. Frank Mihalic, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to New Guinea and Australia*, p. 22, footnote 5).

Steyl – Mother Maria writes to Fr. Arnold

On May 27 Mother Maria wrote to Fr. Arnold. She asked him to admit more postulants. Mother Maria made that request because in 1897 the number of postulants had dropped considerably.

Then she asked for a special Vademecum for the sisters: "Would it not be possible to have *Vademecums* printed especially for the sisters? In some of the prayers there is usually the expression 'the sons of this house' and the prayer leader prays it that way. Is that a good thing during the retreats for lay women?" In response to that request, a "Small Vademecum or various prayers for the use of the Missionary Sisters was published in 1899".

Furthermore Mother Maria writes: "May I request that we be given more precise news of our sisters in Africa? The uncertainty leads us to suspect the worst" (Stegmaier, transl. Jacqueline Mulberge, *Mother Maria, Groundwork*, pp. 414-415).

China – Preparation for final vows

In the first years of the Society of the Divine Word the priests were ordained before final vows. That is the reason that on May 17, 1897 a one year novitiate in preparation for final vows was begun in Taikia. Fr. Vilsterman was the director of the program. Participants were Frs. Röser, Volpert, Nies, Henle, Peulen, Nægler and John Weig.

Fr. Arnold wrote a letter to them on May 28. He began with the words: "From the letter of Bishop [Anzer] I learn that you are about to begin the time of probation prescribed by our rule before taking perpetual vows. While receiving this news with joy and shared affection, I entreat you as your friend and at the same time, admonish you as your spiritual father in Christ, to make good use of this precious period of spiritual renewal." Towards the end of the letter he wrote: "I beg you to use this time [of preparation] in a holy manner, especially for prayer, meditation, a study of the rule, of the manual, and of asceticism in general. The main thing is, that you try to absorb everything into yourself the way you should. Therefore, it would be good to work out for yourselves some important ascetical conferences, like those that come up in a retreat. That way, a person's thoughts penetrate more deeply into the material; don't neglect, though, to apply it to yourself.

"It would be particularly useful if, during this time, you tried to make two things a part of yourself: a zealous recollection of your guardian angel, who is always with us,