The Arnoldus Family Story

ARNOLD JANSSEN IN KEMPEN

Chaplain and Teacher with the Ursuline Sisters

From autumn 1873 on Arnold Janssen was chaplain and teacher with the Ursuline Sisters. His main duty was to offer daily Mass in the convent chapel. Furthermore he gave religion classes and filled in as a science teacher for a time in the girls’ high school run by the Sisters.

Remembering Fr. Arnold one of his former pupils, Mrs. Maria Kaiser, writes:

Rector Janssen taught me religion and physics at the Ursuline Convent in Kempen in 1873-74. He was always serious in class ... He often spoke to us about the missions which were very dear to his heart. He did not pay much attention to his clothes. He always wore the same cassock. Though it was always clean, the original color had long since faded. One day, though, to our joy he came to class wearing a new cassock (cf. Bornemann, Remembering Arnold Janssen, Analecta SVD – 42, Rome 1978, p. 47).

Another former pupil, Mrs. Wilhelmine Meckel, remembers:

I was a pupil of Rector Janssen at the Ursuline Convent. His lectures were so interesting and stimulating that even today [1933!] I can vividly recall his classes in physics. He made us study diligently and checked the assignments he gave us. We attended his Mass in the convent chapel and were deeply impressed by his piety (ibid.).

Mrs. Kleintitschen remembers Fr. Arnold in this way:

He was a small, unassuming person and led a withdrawn, retiring life. ... During class he was strict but kind. He taught us Bible History and liked to speak about the Passion of Christ and explain its various incidents. He frequently referred to the history of the Passion as narrated by the saintly Anne Catherine Emmerich whom he obviously esteemed very highly. Every Friday he led us students in the Way of the Cross which he prayed with great devotion (ibid., pp. 46-47).

Editor of the “Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote” (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart)

One of the reasons that Fr. Arnold had given up his teaching position in Bocholt had been “to find the time to publish a popular monthly magazine for the promotion of prayer and participation in the great intentions of the Divine Savior, especially the propagation of faith” (Alt, Journey in Faith, p. 41).
Since 1871 Fr. Arnold had small religious booklets and leaflets printed by the St. Boniface printing house in Paderborn. Therefore he intended to have his magazine printed there as well. Not later than August 17, 1873 he discussed his plan with that printing house. His magazine was to be a monthly mission magazine, “in the sense in which the term ‘mission’ was then understood in German-speaking countries” (Bormann, Arnold Janssen [Engl. edition], 1975, p.36).

In those days the distinction was made between “home mission”, that means mission in Germany, and the “foreign missions”, that is the mission to the Catholic German emigrants to North America and the mission amongst non-Christian peoples (in the so-called pagan countries). Mission in Germany was the pastoral care for Catholics who lived in predominantly Protestant regions of Germany – in the “diaspora”. The St. Boniface Association, founded in 1849 “for the church’s mission in Germany, that means for poor Catholic communities in Protestant and mixed villages and towns”, had pledged its support to this kind of mission. The Association’s headquarters were in Paderborn (in Erwin Gatz, Geschichte des Kirchlichen Lebens in den deutschsprachigen Ländern, seit dem Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts [History of the Church’s life in German speaking countries, from the end of the 18th century], volume III, p. 25).

Besides articles about the missions, the magazine would also reserve some space for “devotional articles of a general nature”.

Fr. Arnold sent the manuscript for the first issue to the St. Boniface printing house at the end of December.

Since Fr. Arnold was not only editor, but also advertiser (as well as circulation manager) of his magazine, for advertising purposes he had 10,000 copies of the first issue printed. At the same time he instructed St. Boniface printing house, which was also the publisher, to place ads in all the Catholic dailies in Germany and even in Austria (Vienna and Tyrol).

He furthermore “composed three promotional letters which the printer [publisher] was to send to priests, religious houses and book dealers. Two thousand seven hundred and fifty copies of these letters were mailed out...” (ibid.). Sample copies with a promotional letter were also sent to people Fr. Arnold had got to know during his travels asking them “to pass the issue on to a reliable bookseller” (ibid.).

Fr. Arnold was still the Director of the Apostleship of Prayer for his home diocese of Muenster, and so it does not come as a surprise that the inspiration for the name of his magazine came from the name of the Apostleship’s magazine; its name was “Sendbote des göttlichen Herzens Jesu” – “Messenger of the Divine Heart of Jesus”. Fr. Arnold called his magazine “Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote” – “Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart” (cf. Alt, Journey in Faith, p. 31).

In January 1874 the first issue of the “Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote” – “Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart” was published (see its title page on the last page of this newsletter!). It consisted of eight pages. Looking at it one immediately notices the spirit of the Apostleship of prayer: for instance, the first item on p. 1 is a “prayer for the reader be-