

For your reflection

Memorable words of St. Arnold Janssen

(from: Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], February 1974)

It is an essential part of God's guidance that He reveal His intentions to us only gradually. How else would we learn to walk before Him in the light of faith and absolute trust!

A German poet once said: Man grows with his goals. May that become true also for us.

The work of the propagation of faith is the first and highest goal of God's church on earth.

Congratulations on the one hundredth birthday!

In August of this year our confreres in the Philippines celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the first two SVD missionaries in the Philippines: Fr. Ludwig Beckert, a China missionary, and the newly ordained priest Fr. Johannes Scheiermann. On August 15, 1909, they arrived in Manila. Fr. Scheiermann writes about the arrival: "Under the obliging guidance of Fr. Moral, a Scheutveld Missionary, who lovingly cared for us during our four days stay... we entered the City, the "Pearl of the Orient". The Most Reverend Ambrosius Agius O.S.B., the Apostolic Delegate, wished to be our host for these days.... The Most Reverend Bishop... expressed his confidence that the success of our Society in this mission would be good."

From Manila the two missionaries went by ship to Vigan where they arrived on Saturday, August 21. On Sunday, August 22, the Bishop of Vigan, James Carrol, accompanied the two on the Abra River to Bangued where they arrived in the evening at 7 pm. The next morning, August 23, the three continued their journey on small horses. "After a four hours' ride on miserably bad, but sometimes also on well built roads we descended into a magnificently situated valley, which was surrounded by moderately high mountains. In front of us were several clusters of bamboo-straw huts; near one of them we were stopped. Coming from an old wooden frame we heard the sound of bells. Could it be the church? Yes, indeed, it was the parish church of our Lady of Pilar. We were home. Gradually the people,

dressed in their Sunday best, came together from the various widely dispersed parts of the village to greet their Bishop and to see the new "parish priest" and his "assistant". At 3 pm the Bishop said goodbye in order to go back to Bangued. He did not depart without once again, in his very own cordial way, encouraging us for the difficulties of the beginning.

Church and living quarters were quickly inspected. A bamboo building, 18 m long and 5.6 m wide, without windows, since light and air have entry into the church from all sides anyway, that is our church. ... Our living quarters consist of one room in a private home and a small adjacent room which has no windows...

At this time we mostly still sit quietly at our desk and study Ilocano and also English and Spanish. The latter is necessary for understanding the books which are to help us study the native language and particularly also in order, for the time being, to have a few interpreters among the people.... With God's help may we succeed in fulfilling faithfully and totally our task in the rebuilding of the Philippine Church." (Johann Scheiermann, Der erste Bericht aus unserer neuen Mission auf den Philippinen [the first report from our new mission in the Philippines], Steyler Missionsbote [Steyl Mission Messenger], March 1910).

When this story was published its author, Fr. Scheiermann, had already been dead for two months. He died suddenly and unexpectedly on January 4, 1910.

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The Arnoldus Family Story

An outstanding role in the foundation of St. Michael's Mission House in Steyl was played by Arnold Janssen's mission magazine *Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote*, or *Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*: "Without it this foundation would either not have succeeded at all, or at least not in such a short time," Fr. Arnold once said. Because of the magazine's importance we will look at it also in this issue of "The Arnoldus Family Story"; more precisely, we will focus on the issue of February 1874.

The Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart at the Service of World Mission

A new emphasis

In January 1874 Arnold Janssen had this goal for his mission magazine: he wanted to inform people about "Catholic missions at home and abroad", that means, he wanted to report about the pastoral care of those Catholics who lived in predominantly Protestant areas of Germany and who were supported by the St. Boniface Association, and he wanted to write about the "pagan" missions. However, already in the second issue of the *Little Messenger* in February 1874, Fr. Arnold changed the magazine's orientation. In the article "A Word in Favor of the missions and the *Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart*" he wrote: "The intention of the *Little Messenger* is mainly to arouse interest in the church's mission abroad among the pagans." Fr. Arnold did not want to forget the mission within Germany, however from now on the emphasis was to be on the mission of the Church abroad among pagans.

Why this change of emphasis?

Fr. Arnold endeavored to recognize the "signs of the time" and interpret them in the light of God's will, as his following words show:

While we give our attention to the mission of the church within Germany, no less, and perhaps to a higher degree, we turn to the mission in pagan countries, particularly at these times. It is now that God is allowing so many priests to be driven out of Germany. On the other hand they cannot get peaceful employment in the main area served by the St. Boniface Association. In all this God is giving us Germans a hint. For with regard to preaching the faith, compared to France we have done so little up to now to carry out the Lord's command 'go into all the world'.

It was the time of the "Kulturkampf", the cultural struggle. Many priests were unable to do their priestly work, since they refused to obey the cultural struggle's anti-

