

man mission seminary and had already taken the first steps towards it; however, he was not sure what his bishop thought about it. “I ... hope my bishop will allow me to participate in the establishment of the necessary mission institution either inside or outside the diocese”, he wrote to an acquaintance on **November 18, 1874** (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 51).

On **November 21, 1874** he finally wrote to his bishop, Bishop Brinkmann of Muenster, “about his plans concerning the mission seminary and asked to be released from the diocese” (*ibid.*, p. 55).

Without having received his bishop’s answer, on **November 23, 1874** Fr. Arnold travelled once more to Tegelen to negotiate with the owner of the Oude Munt property regarding buying it. He was accompanied by his brother Peter Janssen, a farmer. The owner again demanded 45,000 marks. “Since a big meadow had been added to the land, Arnold Janssen was satisfied with the price and concluded the contract”, however with the condition that “the seller was committed but the buyer had six weeks to see if he could get the partners and money necessary for the deal” (*ibid.*, p. 51).

Fr. Arnold then went to see the parish priest of Tegelen. He declared in writing that he agreed with the proposed foundation of the mission house. Tegelen was located in the diocese of Roermond, so the next day, **November 24, 1874**, he went to the Bishop of Roermond, Paredis, to ask for his permission to start the mission house in his diocese (see *ibid.*).

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

On January 15, 1910, the first anniversary of the death of Arnold Janssen, the IV. General Chapter of the SVD ended in Steyl. In his final address Fr. Superior General Blum said among other things:

Today in the 72nd session, with God's help, we concluded the IV. General Chapter. Looking back over the past weeks we really have to say: “The Lord has been with us, thanks be to the Lord for that.” ...

But also you, Reverend confreres, I cordially wish to thank herewith on behalf of the Society for your faithful cooperation; in the same way I thank all the members of the Society for the many pious prayers. Particularly to this prayer the Chapter owes its happy ending. What stands out about our chapter, I think I can say, was the spirit of unity and fraternal love which filled us from beginning to end. We were one heart and soul and no bitter or unpleasant word was spoken. ... Everybody was able to speak his opinion freely and did so as well. ... That this was possible, is, I believe, not our own merit, but the work of the Holy Spirit; and I think I am entitled to say that our founder of blessed memory implored that grace for us. As a very special good fortune, I want to emphasize that we faithfully kept to the tradition left to us by the founder (Nuntius SVD, No. 16, February 1910, p.83).



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The Arnoldus Family Story

THE DECISION IS MADE

Timoleone Raimondi – Arnold Janssen – and the Steyl China Missionaries

In the November and December 2009 issues of “The Arnoldus Family Story” we read about the encounters between the Apostolic Prefect of Hong Kong, Timoleone Raimondi, and Arnold Janssen in the house of Msgr. Dr. von Essen in Neuwerk/Mönchengladbach and in Kempen, where Fr. Arnold had his residence. The major topic of their conversations had been the founding of a mission seminary for German missionaries. During his visits in Kempen Msgr. Raimondi sought to dispel the reservations Fr. Arnold had regarding a possible cooperation in founding the mission seminary. After much prayer and serious deliberation Fr. Arnold finally said to himself: “Accept God’s will and begin the work courageously!” Fr. Arnold was ready to take the founding of the mission seminary into his own hands.

How much Msgr. Raimondi’s words had influenced him in arriving at that decision, Fr. Arnold described in a letter of August 11, 1875, to the Director of the Milan Missionaries, of which Msgr. Raimondi was a member:

*Last year Monsignor Raimondi, a former student of your seminary, came on two occasions to see me and to encourage me to found a German seminary for the foreign missions. Without his encouragement I would not have undertaken this task. But being urged on by the Monsignor, I began doing my utmost, especially with my monthly bulletin for propagating the faith. With the help of God, who has provided money and personnel, and with the approval of the Most Eminent Bishops of Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, the time has now arrived to open the seminary this coming 8 September [1875] (Ralph M. Wiltgen, *The Founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Melanesia and Micronesia, 1850-1875*, Pickwick Publications, Eugene, Oregon, 2008, p. 519).*

At the time Msgr. Raimondi himself did not know of the success of his visits in Kempen (see Bornemann, *Der Pfarrer von Neuwerk, Dr. Ludwig von Essen und seine Missionspläne* [The parish priest of Neuwerk Dr. Ludwig von Essen and his mission plans], Steyler Verlag St. Augustin, 1967, p. 88, footnote 2). Leaving Fr. von Essen at the end of July, he had travelled via Luxembourg and France to Rome. In October 1874 he was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong and was ordained bishop on November 22, 1874 in the chapel of the Propaganda in

Rome. On December 11, 1874 he left Italy for Hong Kong (Ralph M. Wiltgen, *The Founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Melanesia....*, p. 518).

Msgr. Raimondi remained a life-long friend of Fr. Arnold and his Divine Word Missionaries. He accepted the first two SVD missionaries to China, Frs. John Baptist Anzer and Joseph Freinademetz, into his vicariate and introduced them to mission life until they had found their own mission in South Shantung. In later years he and his missionaries welcomed new SVD missionaries on their arrival in Hong Kong. Thus it happened that three newly arrived SVD missionaries were present at the death of Bishop Raimondi on September 27, 1894. The previous day they had arrived in Hong Kong; in the Bishop's residence they were given a room next to the Bishop's room. When the Superior of the Milan missionaries informed them of the serious sickness of the Bishop, the Bishop himself suddenly appeared and invited them into his room. He was hardly able to speak, only a broken word once in a while. One of the new SVD missionaries, Fr. Horstmann, wrote to Fr. Arnold in Steyl:

We passed on to him the greetings of Your Reverence, which made him visibly happy. One of us told him that he was also our "grandfather"; upon hearing that he looked at us and laughed heartily. ... Probably we were with him for more than half an hour. Finally we asked him for his episcopal blessing; the Most Reverend Bishop gave it to us, but at the same time he expressed his hope that we would not yet leave for good but would come back to him tomorrow." However, the next day, September 27, the condition of the Bishop deteriorated, and during the lunch hour his final agony began. Fr. Horstmann writes: "Rev. Fr. Superior led the prayers for the dying. There were 11 priests present: 5 Italian Fathers, 3 Chinese priests and the three of us; furthermore, the seminarians with two deacons among them were present as well. The whole body of the Most Rev. Bishop was trembling, he was breathing deeply and fast; his eyes were closed. Several times he kissed the crucifix which was held to his mouth... Soon the trembling stopped, breathing stopped for a few moments, we thought that he was already dead, but then there was still one more deep breath, the last one. Very calmly he had passed away. May he rest in peace (Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], 22, No. 3, December 1894, p. 24).

Toward the founding of the Mission House in Steyl

Convinced that it was his God-given vocation to found a mission seminary for German missionaries, Fr. Arnold began to pursue that vocation in September 1874. The anti-Catholic laws of the cultural war in Germany meant that the mission seminary could not be founded there. The mission house was to be a high school for future missionary priests; furthermore, students of theology were to do their studies in the mission house as well. Such a house for the training of missionary priests needed its own syllabus; however, in the German State of Prussia, priests' training was determined by the State. Consequently the mission seminary could only be founded in a country where the training of priests was not laid down by the government. The Netherlands was such a country and, moreover, the cultural war had caused many German religious to take refuge there.

Since the intention of the new mission seminary was the training of German missionaries, Fr. Arnold wanted to found it near the German border. So on **September 21, 1874** he went by train from Kempen to the Dutch border town of Venlo to look for a suitable property (see Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, Engl. ed., p. 48). At Venlo station he happened to meet Prof. Ferdinand Moubis, a native of the village of Steyl, who worked as a priest and teacher in the minor seminary in Rolduc, Diocese of Roermond.

*Fr. Janssen told him of his plan and asked for his advice; and since there was not much time, he travelled with him back in the direction of Breyell [Germany] where Fr. Moubis wanted to leave the train. At his instigation eight days later, 28 September, Mr. Canoy from Tegelen came to him and offered to sell the Oude Munt property in Tegelen which belonged to his father-in-law...Consequently the following day, the feast of the Archangel Michael, Fr. Janssen went to Tegelen.... During holy Mass in the morning of that day, he felt urged, to pray in a special way to St. Michael and to promise him he would place the house under his protection if anything came out of the whole business. At his request, Mr. Ludwig Boenniger, an estate owner in the parish of Kempen, accompanied him as an expert adviser. They had a look at the property... The owner demanded 75 000 marks. Mr. Boenniger advised him against even responding to such a demand, and then he left. Mr. Canoy still took Fr. Arnold to the sand hills of Steyl and from there showed him the beautiful view of this area, the river Maas and the property of the very old Mr. Niklaas Ronck next to the river. It was this property where, after the purchase of June 1875, the mission house was eventually to be built (auf der Heide, *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl* [The missionary society of Steyl], Steyl 1900, p. 10 [transl. from Alt, *Journey in faith*, p. 50 and 10]).*

Fr. Arnold, however, was still interested in the Oude Munt property in Tegelen and so he visited its owner in **October 1874** for a second time. This time the owner lowered the price and demanded only 45,000 marks (Hermann Fischer, *Arnold Janssen*, Steyl 1919, p.96). Fr. Arnold, who did not have any funds, did not make a decision yet. However in **November 1874** he published an article in the *Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) the title of which read: "A short message to pious devotees of Jesus"; the subtitle was: "Regarding the establishment of a German mission house." In this article he wrote among other things:

"At the moment [because of the cultural war] many priests are being driven, so to speak, into distant lands. Therefore the establishment of a mission seminary in a safe, well-situated locality is now an indispensable necessity. ... This holy task would be relatively easy to carry out if only it is tackled courageously. The first and greatest difficulty is the matter of money. There is an offer of a well-located house with a garden. But how to buy it and set it up?"(Alt, *Journey in faith*, p. 47). "Thousands of thalers [German currency at that time] are necessary." This amount of money had to come from "pious benefactors". Fr. Arnold hoped to find them among his readers and he motivated them with the words: "Whoever gives soon to this, gives double and threefold. Together with others he becomes founder of a most beneficial work, spiritual father or spiritual mother of all those thousands who one day will gain salvation through this work (see *Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart), No. 11, November 1874, p.83 - 84).

For himself Fr. Arnold had made the decision to work for the foundation of the Ger-