

their mutual relationship regarding the foundation of the mission house. Fr. von Essen's idea was: He and Fr. Arnold were equal partners. "None should be able do anything without the advice of the other. Dr. von Essen would stay in his parish and help financially. A. Janssen would do the actual work" (Bornemann, *Der Pfarrer von Neuwerk Dr. Ludwig von Essen und seine Missionspläne*, p. 92).

They did not reach an agreement. "However, Fr. Arnold asked the parish priest, to draft statutes for the mission house. In the meantime he himself wanted to visit his own bishop in Muenster and then also the archbishop of Cologne who was the parish priest's bishop" (ibid.).

Back in his parish in Neuwerk, in a letter to Arnold Janssen on January 8, Fr. von Essen "expressed the thoughts that had come to him during his return journey:

"1. Clarity in all things is not only desirable but necessary. For weeks I have been waiting for you to say clearly whether we should work together or not. If you cannot clearly tell me your decision after your trip [to Muenster and Cologne] then we should part in peace. Then each of us can see how to proceed.

*"2. Examples of others who are doing the same thing must be our model. I am not referring to an apostolic school but the beginning in general. In this respect it seems to me that the purchase of a house is a bit risky. The other congregations, for instance the Belgians, first rented a house for three years (ni fallor [if I am not mistaken]). I also feel it would be best to begin on the smallest scale possible and only rent a place if it is at all possible. To begin with a large burden of debt could be troublesome for years. To start with, it would be easy to rent a suitable place on Dutch territory and then slowly consider acquiring a property and the necessary money. ... Concerning the statutes, I will try to sketch an outline (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 48).*

"With all respect yours sincerely Dr. von Essen" (Bornemann, *Der Pfarrer von Neuwerk...*, p. 93).

Together with this letter Fr. von Essen sent also a manuscript in which he offered a plan for the mission house and his ideas about the cooperation between him and Fr. Arnold. He hoped that Fr. Arnold could use the manuscript during his meetings with the bishops of Muenster and Cologne; perhaps it could also be published in the 'Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote' (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) (ibid., p. 92).

REQUEST

Being the motherhouse of the Arnoldus family, Steyl is interested in having a collection of photos of different places where our Saints Arnold and Joseph are venerated (monuments, chapels, statues, paintings, artwork, etc.). With these photos we would like to make a presentation that expresses the worldwide importance of our two Saints. We are happy with each and every photo. Please, send your photo(s) to Roland Scheid in Steyl: scheid@steyl.eu.



The Arnoldus Family Story

THE DECISION IS MADE - TOWARDS ITS REALISATION

In September 1874 it had become clear to Arnold Janssen that God had called him to become the founder of the first German mission house for German missionaries. Because of the cultural war against the Catholic church the house could not be established in Germany, and so Fr. Arnold looked for a property in the Netherlands, but near to the German border. On November 23, 1874 he concluded a contract about the Oude Munt property in Tegelen, but 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".

On the same day the parish priest of Tegelen agreed in writing with the proposed foundation of the mission house in his parish.

On **November 24, 1874** Fr. Arnold went from Tegelen to Roermond to ask the Bishop of Roermond, Msgr. Paredis, for permission to start the mission house in his diocese.

"After I had presented my business to him, he was prepared to give permission for the planned foundation right away. He accompanied me to the front door and remarked, 'Now I am really interested to know what will become of this project'" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 51).

In the evening of that same day the Bishop remarked to his secretary: "Today a priest visited me, he is a holy man. He has plans which, if carried out, will become a great blessing for the church" (Hermann Fischer, *Arnold Janssen*, Steyl 1919, p. 97). A few days later the Bishop said to the dean of Roermond: "I had the visit of Fr. Janssen, rector of the Ursuline Sisters in Kempen. Mind you, he wants to build a mission house - and has nothing. *He is either a fool or a saint* (ibid., pp. 97-98).

On this very same **November 24**, Fr. Arnold's own diocesan bishop, Bishop Brinkmann, gave his answer to Fr. Arnold's letter from November 21. He wrote:

This is certainly a very redemptive and meritorious work. But we should not be blind to the fact that the realization of this goal will involve great obstacles, starting with the cost alone. However, God is powerful enough to remove these obstacles. If, therefore, this is in the plan of Divine Providence, he will make it

possible. If he gives you a sign that he wants to use you for this work, I will certainly place no obstacles in the way. But the matter must be considered carefully and tested according to the rules of Christian wisdom to see whether God has really called you for this purpose. Not everything which is good in itself is necessarily the will of God for us (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 56).

The Bishop's answer was a cautious one: he had made neither a negative nor a positive decision; he allowed Fr. Arnold to continue with his plans for the time being (cf. 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).

On **December 3, 1874**, Bishop Paredis of Roermond gave his written permission for the foundation of the mission house in the diocese of Roermond:

Herewith I declare that I approve of the plan of Rev. Fr. Arnold Janssen, to establish a German-Dutch house for the foreign missions in connection with an apostolic or preparatory school for the training of missionaries, and I hope that this project will be crowned with the best success (Hermann Fischer, *Arnold Janssen*, p. 97).

Fr. Arnold's next job was to find personnel and money for the planned mission house. Therefore, soon after having concluded the contract for the purchase of the property in Tegelen he started traveling:

I made contact with several priests in Luxembourg, visited Bishop Adames there and then traveled to Louvain where I got in touch with two German members of the Picpus Missionary Society to get information about mission houses [...] At the university and the Collegium Americanum I inquired about students who were suitable and inclined to join, without, however, achieving any commitment for the time being. I returned via Aachen. When I returned home, I was feeling sick and miserable and I had to fight against the temptation to give up the whole business (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 52).

Still in 1906 he remembered:

I felt I was treading a very thorny pathway and if I had not said to myself, 'God wants you to do it. You are a coward if you do not do it,' I would have abandoned everything, especially since at that time I felt weak and sickly and was afraid of having to work later in such a state of health (*ibid.*).

But there were also some bright spots during that time. Passing through Aachen Fr. Arnold met the foundress of the Poor Sisters of St. Francis, Mother Franziska Schervier. She referred to his article about the planned mission house in the November 1874 issue of the "Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart" [Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote] and told Fr. Arnold that "the article had drawn attention in a certain place" and that perhaps he "would receive something for the project" (*ibid.*, p. 53). This was a promise, but there were already also some donations for the mission

house about which he wrote in the January 1875 issue of the "Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart":

For the German-Austrian mission house we have received: 300 Mark from [a person in the town of] Lobberich with the condition of the donor getting the interest until his death, 30 guilders from Miss J. Erlinger of Linz in Austria, 25 ½ Marks from two female workers in Krefeld..., 9 Mark from [a person in the town of] Xanten, 4,30 Mark from a priest in Kevelaer, 6 ½ Marks transferred for this best purpose, promise of an annual gift of 19 Taler by the estate owner Braem of the Gamerslag estate near Xanten. – Other bigger donations have been promised." Fr. Arnold concluded this short financial report with the words: "Who wants to help still more so that the whole thing cannot be reversed any more? Whoever gives first, gives tenfold" (Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote) [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], 2, No. 1, January 1875, p. 8).

Even though Fr. Arnold was now very busy working for the new mission house, he did not forget prayer: Whenever he presided at public devotions in the Ursuline chapel in Kempen, "he would add this intention to the prayers: 'Let us also pray for all religious and for the German mission seminary still to be established'" (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, English ed., p. 51).

It is interesting to see which names were used for the new mission house: In the November 1874 issue of the *Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) as well as in the prayer in Kempen just mentioned Fr. Arnold spoke of the "German" mission house / seminary. In December 1874 Bishop Paredis of Roermond spoke of the "German-Dutch" mission house and in January 1875 Fr. Arnold used the name "German-Austrian" mission house.

The relationship between Msgr. von Essen and Fr. Arnold Janssen

Independently of each other Dr. von Essen and Fr. Arnold had arrived at the conviction that the establishment of a German mission house for German missionaries was a necessity. Fr. von Essen had also already received the blessing of the Pope for this project. Therefore he was to play the leading role in establishing the mission house and he was waiting for Fr. Arnold to agree to working with him. However, he did not do anything for the mission house, but concentrated on his parish work. Fr. Arnold, on the other hand, already acted as founder. At the beginning of January 1875 Fr. von Essen read in the 'Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote' (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) about Fr. Arnold's first successes.

On November 16, 1874, Fr. von Essen had rejected Fr. Arnold's invitation to join him in Kempen in a discussion about the foundation of the mission house, since Fr. Arnold had not yet agreed to working with him ("I cannot discuss with you a matter which you have not yet declared your intention to join"). On January 7, 1875, however, Fr. von Essen traveled to Fr. Arnold in Kempen in order to clarify