

ter. The most Reverend Bishops of Muenster and Cologne did not even bother to look at them. I also felt and still feel now that it would be impossible for there to be two people with equal rights so that neither could do anything without taking counsel from the other, although only one of them can take on the actual work.” Nevertheless, through the publication of an article in the *Essener Volkszeitung* [The Essen people’s newspaper], he began to think otherwise. “You can see that in the public mind we are regarded as partners in the project. I regard this as a hint from Divine Providence and I think it would be a minor scandal if we had to deny it. So I am making the following offer:

“1. The house must be bought...

“2. You will transfer the house to a foundation, by which you become our benefactor and we will undertake to offer certain Masses for you in vita et post mortem [during your life and after your death]. In return you will be regarded as founder and your signature will be first on the purchase document. You will leave the management of the enterprise to us. God has called you for other things and has enriched you for them with more than usual talent. However, you will remain our friend and benefactor. We will regard you as founder, treat you correspondingly when you visit us and gladly listen to your advice, etc.”... (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, pp. 48-49).

In this letter, which Msgr. von Essen did not answer, Fr. Arnold speaks with a kind of certainty which went far beyond what Fr. Arnold was holding in his hands at this point in time (January 1875), “since he was still lacking his bishop’s important positive permission for this project. Furthermore, he had not yet received a major donation even though there was good hope for it” (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.95).

The statement of Bishop Brinkmann

What Fr. Arnold was lacking on January 25, 1875 he would soon “have in his hands”, at least partly. On February 9, 1875 Bishop Brinkmann signed the following statement:

On request, we herewith testify that the chaplain, Father Arnold Janssen, plans to establish a German foreign mission seminary, together with a preparatory school, for the training of missionaries. We wish him success in his efforts and declare our readiness to release him from his obligations to this diocese for the sake of the promotion of the said purpose, if he so wishes. Muenster, 9 February 1875 (Bornemann, A. Janssen, Germ. Ed., p. 55, cf. Engl. ed., pp. 52-53).

After the approval obtained from the Bishop of Roermond on December 3, 1874, this statement of Bishop Brinkmann was “the second decisive canonical document for the project of founding the mission house” (cf. *ibid.*, Engl. Ed., p. 53).



The Arnoldus Family Story

The laborious road to Steyl – January / February 1875

In telling our Arnoldus family story we are accompanying Arnold Janssen on the laborious road to Steyl. We have arrived in the year 1875 and have heard of the letter which Msgr. von Essen, parish priest of Neuwerk, had written to Fr. Arnold on January 8, 1875, after they had met the previous day in Fr. Arnold’s residence in Kempen (cf. *The Arnoldus Family Story*, February 2010). In his letter Msgr. von Essen proposed that they both be equal partners. He also expressed his opinion that it was too early to buy a house; rather, it should be leased. Furthermore, he added a manuscript in which he offered a plan for the mission house and his ideas about the cooperation between himself and Fr. Arnold.

Visit to Aachen

Passing through Aachen in December 1874, Fr. Arnold heard from Mother Franziska Schervier, the foundress of the Poor Sisters of St. Francis, about a possible donation for the mission house. In January 1875 Fr. Metzemacher of Aachen, who had been asked by Mother Franziska to negotiate in that matter, asked Fr. Arnold to come to Aachen and give a report of the mission house project. As a result Fr. Metzemacher told the Poor Sisters of St. Francis:

I do not say yes; because I fear nothing may come of the matter. Then one will be careful not to begin such an undertaking a second time. I do not say no; because maybe God himself has a finger in the matter. Pray, Sisters, hold a novena to implore the necessary light from above, and if even then you are not sure, a second and a third. (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 54, footnote 41).

Visit to Muenster

Having given the required information to Fr. Metzemacher, Fr. Arnold returned to Kempen. His next journey was to Muenster to meet his bishop, Bishop Bernard Brinkmann. “He looked worried when I said that the purchase price was 15,000 thalers [then 45,000 Mark]” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 56). He “thought that it would be very difficult to collect that amount of money.

Furthermore, it seemed to him rather uncertain whether the whole enterprise would succeed” (Auf der Heide, Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl [The Missionary Society of Steyl], Steyl 1919, p. 19).

After these words of his bishop Fr. Arnold felt depressed. However, this feeling was to change the next day already. He wanted to celebrate Holy Mass in the church of St. Martin in Muenster; “however, when I got there, it was not possible,” he remembered later. So he went to the church of the Franciscans where he was able to celebrate Holy Mass, and that was God’s providence (ibid.). For there he was introduced to the Provincial Superior of the Franciscans, Fr. Gregorius Janknecht, who was a “man of great courage, trust in God and entrepreneurial spirit, and at the same time of great unselfishness” (ibid.).

It was divine providence, so Fr. Arnold recalled later, which led me to this man. When he heard what a worried face the most Reverend Bishop had made because of the 45.000 Marks he said: “Not more than that bagatelle? That can be done.” He then advised me to contact personally the most Reverend Bishop Haneberg of Speyer. “He,” so he said, “has a great interest in the missions. He will give you a friendly welcome, and if you ask for it he may give you a long letter of recommendation to the Ludwig Mission Association in Muenchen; that Association then has to help you with their money.” To the superior of the Muenster monastery he said: “Don’t you know anybody who is interested in the missions and to whom you could recommend Fr. Janssen? Let the two of us do something for this important matter; then we both will be able to die more peacefully” (ibid., p. 20).

This was not money, “but nevertheless encouragement and good advice” (ibid.), and of both Fr. Arnold was in dire need then.

His visit to Muenster had yet another good effect:

“Joseph Galland, the classmate of [Fr. Arnold’s brother] John Janssen in the Borromaeum [seminary] and the future historical researcher for the Muenster diocese, used his able pen to write an article about the mission seminary. It was published in the Berlin *Germania* on 21 January and in a shortened version in the *Essener Volkszeitung* [Essen People’s newspaper] on January 23. ... - A number of other papers copied the article” (Bornemann, Arnold Janssen, Germ.edition, pp. 54-55, cf. Engl. edition p. 52).

Visit to Cologne

The next person Fr. Arnold visited was the Archbishop of Cologne, Paulus Melchers. “He was the president of the Fulda Bishops’ Conference and his diocese bordered on the diocese of Roermond on the German side. Besides, he was Fr. von Essen’s bishop” (Alt, Journey in Faith, p. 57). Because of the cultural

war he had already had to suffer much; since he actively opposed the anti-Catholic cultural war laws he had been imprisoned from March 31, 1874 until October 9, 1874. He “was in a very depressed mood when Fr. Janssen came to him and told him of his plans for a mission seminary. He looked at him with big eyes and said” (Auf der Heide, Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl, p.21):

“We live in a time when everything seems to be shaking and sinking. Now you are coming and want to start something new?” “We live in a time when much is collapsing and new things must be established in their place,” replied Fr. Janssen (Alt, Journey in Faith, p. 57).

“The Most Rev. Archbishop let him go, obliging him to present his proposal in writing and show how far it had developed and what prospects for success there were” (Auf der Heide, Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl, p. 22).

In the evening of that very same day the Archbishop is supposed to have said to others: “Fr. Janssen was here today and wants to start a house for missionaries. He wants to convert pagans. Here in Cologne there are pagans enough. They should be converted first” (Alt, Journey in Faith, p. 57). With Bishop Brinkmann of Muenster, Archbishop Melchers was of the opinion that there was only small hope for the success of Fr. Arnold’s plans (cf. Auf der Heide, Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl, p. 22).

Advertising

Fr. Arnold needed material for advertising the new mission house. So on January 24, in order to have a supply of advertising material available, “Arnold Janssen asked the Boniface Press [which printed his mission magazine “Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart”] to reprint 4,500 copies of the April 1874 issue [of the “Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart”]... “ In an article about China he had made this appeal: *“May the time come when Catholic Germany, in noble competition with France, takes up the cause of the pagan missions. [...] Let us not say we have enough to evangelize in Germany. The Lord says, Go to all peoples. [...] All of us who are members of the one church should be universal at least in our prayers and wishes; for catholic means universal.”* Furthermore, so he told the Boniface Press, from February 1875 until further notice the number of copies printed of the “Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart” was to be increased to 10,000 (Alt, Journey in Faith, pp. 54-55).

Letter to Msgr. von Essen

On January 8, 1875 Msgr. von Essen had written his above-mentioned letter to Fr. Arnold. On January 25, 1875 Fr. Arnold answered this letter of which the major part follows here:

“My intention was to send the copies [of your manuscript] back with this let-