

Episcopal Recommendations

On April 27, 1875 Fr. Arnold had begun a long journey to get the German speaking bishops' recommendations for the new mission house. On April 29, the bishop of Speyer, Daniel Boniface Haneberg, wrote among other things:

Reverend Fr. Arnold Janssen of Kempen in the diocese of Muenster presented to me his plan for the establishment of an institute for the training of German and Dutch missionaries. ... Far from us be the thought that the present persecution of the church [cultural battle] should stop the execution of such a plan; just the opposite must be the case: the present persecution must urge us to carry out the plan because it awakens in noble souls an unusual zeal and because the strength of the Catholic faith must show itself not just in negative remarks, but particularly in works of faith (*Mit dem Segen der Kirche, Briefe an Arnold Janssen* (With the blessing of the Church, Letters to Arnold Janssen), Steyler Mission St. Augustin, 1975, p. 54).

On May 3rd Fr. Arnold visited the bishop of Regensburg who expressed his approval with the words: "The idea of the establishment of a mission house for Germans who are to proclaim the gospel in China can only have been given by Jesus Christ himself" (ibid., p. 74). On the occasion of this visit Fr. Arnold also met Johann Baptist Anzer (Alt, Journey in Faith, p. 85).

In Vienna Fr. Arnold not only visited the archbishop who, besides his recommendation, also donated 100 guilders, but, so Fr. Arnold narrated many years later, in "Vienna I submitted a request to His Imperial and Royal Highness, Crown Prince Rudolph [May 14th, 1875 [ibid., p. 86]. He did not see me but the submission was successful, since it resulted in a donation of 1000 golden francs, decided upon by His Imperial and Royal Highness. However, at that time my address was not known; so the donation lay idle and came into my hands only 2 or 3 years later" (Fr. Arnold's memories narrated to Fr. Reinke, No. 3.344).

The Bishop of Regensburg and John Baptist Anzer's wish

On May 3, 1875 the bishop of Regensburg had described the thought of founding the mission house as being given by Jesus Christ himself. However, when his seminarian John Baptist Anzer asked for his permission to enter the mission house he seemed to have forgotten those words. On May 26, 1875 Anzer wrote to Arnold Janssen:

"After you left Regensburg, I held a nine day novena to the Holy Spirit. With greatest confidence I then went to our Ordinary to get his approval. But what a disappointment! – "Under no circumstances will I give you the papers to allow you to leave the diocese – we ourselves need mission in our own country." What shall we do now? Pray? Yes, certainly. And I ask you for it. On the other hand I consider this negative answer only as a test for my vocation.

Soon I will storm his Episcopal Grace again..." (*Johannes B. Anzer, Briefe aus dem Jahre 1875 an Arnold Janssen* [Letters from the year 1875 to Arnold Janssen], *Verbum* 3, 1961, p. 62).



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The Arnoldus Family Story

As in the previous issues of the newsletter, in this issue we accompany Arnold Janssen further on his way to founding the mission house in Steyl. The August /September issue of "The Arnoldus Family Story" ended with the first part of John Baptist Anzer's letter to Fr. Arnold of April 21, 1875. This issue of "The Arnoldus Family Story" will begin with the continuation of that letter.

John Baptist Anzer's letter to Arnold Janssen – April 21, 1875 (continued)

Let us recall: Anzer's father had managed to have his son accepted into the diocesan minor seminary in Metten, even though in the opinion of his Latin teacher he had received too little schooling at his home-village school to be a successful student in Metten. Furthermore, he had missed the entrance exam.

Anzer's father died shortly before his son completed high school, "for me a great blow in many ways."

Anzer continues his letter:

"After completion of my high school studies, I entered the diocesan major seminary in Regensburg where I am still right now. This is the outer story of my course of studies. ..." (*Johann Baptist Anzer, Briefe aus dem Jahre 1875 an Arnold Janssen* [Letters from the year 1875 to Arnold Janssen], *Verbum* 3, 1961, p. 59).

"More varied and complicated, however, is my inner story. My parents gave me a pretty strict education and I was taught to work and particularly to pray much. Once – at that time I was not yet ten years old – mother read to us the legends of the saints in the evening as usual ... Just on that day she read about a holy missionary whose name, however, I have forgotten. With undivided attention I listened to what he had done, and his zeal for souls set my young heart on fire and, without really knowing what a missionary was, the desire awoke in me to become a missionary as well. Since that time that desire has remained with me, initially sometimes more, sometimes less noticeable. Since my 1st gymclass (fifth year in high school) it reached such an intensity that I got into a kind of feverish heat every time I read about the beautiful successes or the dangers and sufferings of missionaries and I had only one regret – that I had not been there. I confess, oftentimes those were youthful dreams, castles which my imagination had built in the air; but those were only signs of the unwavering longing in my heart because it was uncontrolled, left to itself; for there was nobody, neither

a superior nor a fellow student to whom I revealed my heart's desire. Even when one of my superiors, because my grabbing of mission magazines attracted his attention so much, asked me four years ago if perhaps I wanted to become a missionary, I only gave an evasive answer.

Over and over again I searched for the true reason of this longing and the result was always the same and a twofold one:

1) The love for souls. Yes! What heart would not be touched when one looks at the millions of pagans, when one considers that for them redemption is as good as non-existent? But still more: isn't it often *our* fault that there are still so many pagans? What a responsibility a young man has when he hears the calling within him and does not follow it!

2) The longing – I almost don't dare to write down the boldness of my wishes; but I know that it remains confidential between us, and I ask you also to destroy these lines as soon as you have received them and therefore I dare it; - the longing for martyrdom. How often did I not pray for this grace? And therefore I wanted and still want to go there where the danger is greatest. And where is it greater, where is missionary service more difficult than in China, Japan or anywhere in East and Central Asia?

Concerning moral decency, an issue which does not go well with today's young students, I cannot thank God enough that I grew up in the shadow of the sanctuary. If I had grown up in the town, what a sad case I would perhaps be in that regard because of my fiery character! Perhaps I would have lost my vocation, my faith and everything.

Among my devotions the first place is given to the devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Virgin Mother.

With regard to my temperament, I consider it to be sanguine-choleric. However, I do not want and cannot make an authoritative judgment there.

Finally I want to add something about the family background of my relatives. ... My mother is suffering rather great need at present; ... Her suffering is even more understandable when one takes into consideration that mother is always sickly. Naturally I was, and still am, the hope for her future support. And I myself know well that I am legally obliged to give her this support, unless mother voluntarily foregoes it and that would leave only a moral obligation. You can easily imagine how difficult it was for me to tell my mother my heart's desire. For a long time I hesitated and did not think that I would be successful. But how surprised I was when I heard my mother's answer, truly worthy of a Christian mother:

"My child! Don't worry about me. When I know that you can achieve much, I will be satisfied with just potatoes to eat. My life will not last all that much longer anyway."

Another question, however, is who will take care of my young sisters if my mother should die soon? –

Regarding my own wishes and plans for the distant future, they are already contained in what I said before, that is, I would like to work as missionary in Central or East Asia. Regarding the immediate future, however, I am not clear. If you had not appeared with your work, I would have turned to the apostolic nunciature in Munich and asked to be assigned to a mission bishop who would take care of my further training."

(Johannes B. Anzer, *Briefe aus dem Jahre 1875 an Arnold Janssen* [Letters from the year 1875 to Arnold Janssen], *Verbum* 3, 1961, pp. 59-62).

Since as a missionary he needed to learn foreign languages and many things which would not be taught in Regensburg, a further stay in Regensburg would just be a waste of time. He continues:

"Reverend Father, please tell me what I should do concerning the immediate future. Insofar as it is now possible, please tell me very clearly when I can join you, if you consider me suitable, HOW AND WHEN I should do the exam., you mentioned, and HOW LONG at the most it will be before I can leave for the missions"(*ibid.* p. 62 and cf. Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 63; underlining by Anzer, *ibid.*).

On this letter of Anzer Fr. Arnold had noted: "First definite application" (*ibid.*).

Prayer for the projected mission house

Anzer hoped for a clear date for his joining the new mission house. However, at the time when he wrote his letter, such a house had not yet been purchased. "... we do not see it yet with our own eyes", Fr. Arnold wrote in a prayer to our Lady for the new mission house. This prayer was published on the title page of the "*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote*" (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) of May 1875. There we read:

Prayer for the German Mission House

(At the feet of Mary, as a prayer of consecration offered to her for her month of May 1875 by the future occupants.)

*Beloved Mother, dear and kind,
Celestial, beautiful, exalted Lady!
Often we hear said of you
That we may rightly trust in you.*

*Yes, you faithfully protect the body,
You help in every physical need;
Yet how much you love the souls
Which were bought through Jesus' death.*

*Souls which by God's hands
Are created in His image,
Souls which God's miracles
Protected with love's shield.*

*Souls which live eternally
Even if the body decays to dust,
Souls which as God's children*

*Will one day rule in God's tent.
Now, since it is to save souls
We consecrate ourselves to your son,
Help us, exalted, noble mother,
Be our protector.*

*Help us train servants of Jesus
To spread God's kingdom!
Yours we are, O Mother of God;
Protect and guard our house.*

*It is true, we do not yet see it with our
own eyes,
But it is already known to you.
Therefore we dedicate it to you already,
O Mother;
Take it as your love's pledge.*

