

done so far and on your writings. And I have found you as – however, modesty commands me to remain silent. May scoffers say what they will, Nobody will be able to separate me from you, if only **You** do not reject me; and if you should do so, well, that I accept also, even though with a bleeding heart, **as done by God.**

And now, with the help of God, I begin my autobiography.

My parents were fairly well-off farmers at Weinrieth, District office Vohenstrauss in Upper Pfalz. They gave life to ten children, seven of whom are still alive. I was the third, the only son. Shortly before my birth they suffered great misfortune. There was a fire and the house burned down, my mother suffered injury and my father, being afraid for the life of the embryo, made a vow to consecrate the child forever to the service of the Lord if it was born healthy. And see, the child was healthy and strong; but as a sign to remind me of the accident I still have a big mark on my body. My father never spoke of this vow; only on his deathbed he revealed it to his weeping family.

For six years I attended the school at Doellnitz, ... the worst, perhaps, in all Germany. Even though I was always among the best, it was only in the third year that I was able to read with difficulty and for the most part I had learned that at home. Until my thirteenth year I stayed at that school and how much I learned there, you can well imagine. In my twelfth year, a priest taught me Latin. When I was thirteen, my father wanted me to join the diocesan minor seminary in Metten... My teacher did not approve of this plan, since Metten was generally considered the best high school and too much was demanded there and only the most talented would be accepted, but I had received too little schooling. However, my father was unshakable... To make matters worse we had overlooked the date for the entrance exam. for the diocesan seminary. Of the one hundred and ten candidates only forty could be accepted. However, my father, as if he was guided by a higher hand, did not lose courage. On October 1st, a few days before the beginning of the school year, he went with me to Metten, handed in my certificates which did not really recommend me, told the director of his wish, and – I don't know how it happened, I was accepted without the exam., in spite of the greatest lack of space (John B. Anzer, *Briefe aus dem Jahre 1875 an Arnold Janssen* [Letters from the year 1875 to Arnold Janssen, *Verbum* 3, 1961, pp. 57-57] (to be continued).



young
Arnold Janssen



young
John B. Anzer



The Arnoldus Family Story

For the foundation of the German-Dutch-Austrian mission house, Arnold Janssen needed the support of the Catholic people and the bishops of Germany, the Netherlands and Austria. He aimed to win the people's support through his mission magazine, the "*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote*" (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) and the bishops' support through his visits to them.

Support by the Catholic People

Fr. Arnold's first task at hand was to convince the readers of the "*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote*" of the necessity of a mission house. This he did, for instance, in the November 1874 issue of the magazine in the article: "A short word to pious lovers of Jesus" (concerning the establishment of a German mission house). The article begins with the words: "The establishment of a German house for the foreign missions proves more and more to be an unavoidable necessity."

Once he had decided that the mission house was to be an "Apostolic School", modeled on the "Apostolic School" founded by the Jesuit Fr. Foresta in France, in February 1875 he first of all explained to his readers the necessity of such a school (cf. 'The Arnoldus Family Story', volume 4, No. 4, April 2010). In March 1875 he reported to his readers the opinions of "a few excellent men" who "had gotten to know with their own eyes the work of the Apostolic Schools".

He highlighted the words of the primate of the bishops of the US: "***I expect from the spread of such schools the greatest success for the benefit of religion and the spread of the faith.***" Another bishop said: "*It would be greatly desirable to see those valuable apostolic schools multiply in and outside of France.*" The Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda, Barnabo, "told Fr. Foresta around 1870 that the work of the apostolic schools had his full approval and that he would gladly make use of every opportunity to show it his satisfaction tangibly." These words were particularly important for Fr. Arnold since they showed how people at "the centre of the church" thought about the apostolic schools (*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], vol. 2, No. 4, April 1875, p. 26). In the April 1875 issue of the "*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote*" (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) Fr. Arnold published another set of positive opinions about the apostolic schools from missionaries who "through experience" knew "what mattered in missionary life".

With these articles about apostolic schools in the February, March and April issues of the *Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) Fr. Arnold had first of all informed his readers what kind of missionary training place he was about to establish. Secondly he had shown them that their support of the mission seminary would help an institution which had been praised by church authorities – and with the words of Bishop Dübuiss of Galveston/Texas to Fr. Foresta, he also showed them the benefit they themselves would gain by supporting the apostolic school: “Only an angel would be able to enumerate all those blessings which are destined for the benefactors of your work” – to which Fr. Arnold could only add: “Hopefully there will also be such people in Germany who want to share in the blessings of this holy work!” (ibid., p. 27).

The new mission house was to have a powerful patron, the archangel St. Michael; and he also introduced him to his readers gradually, that is in two articles in the *Kleiner-Herz-Jesu-Bote* (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart). In April 1875 he published the article “*Zu Ehren des glorreichen Himmelsfürsten Sankt Michael*” – “*In honour of the glorious heavenly prince St. Michael*”. Following the teaching of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, he speaks of the 9 choirs of angels and he shows that both St. Michael and St. Gabriel are heavenly princes who are above the choirs of angels. The continuation of this article is found in June 1875. Here Fr. Arnold shows his readers that St. Michael is “without exception the first and highest of all angels”, or that he is the “most eminent of all”. At the end of that article Fr. Arnold first of all expresses his wish that the great St. Michael will graciously accept these lines written in his honor, then he informs his readers that the German-Austrian mission house still to be established will be placed under the special protection of St. Michael, and he adds: “This decision is the result of an inspiration on the feast of St. Michael on 29 September 1874.” On that day he made a promise during Holy Mass to the holy archangel Michael that he would place the first German mission house under his protection (see Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 50, footnote 25).

Support of the Bishops

Apart from the support of the Catholic people, Arnold Janssen needed the support of the bishops of the Netherlands where the mission house was to be established, as well as of the bishops of Germany and Austria from where he expected the majority of the future missionaries and donations for the mission house. In March 1875 Fr. Arnold had received the approval of the Dutch bishops of Utrecht, Harlem and Breda and on April 10th of the Bishop of 's Hertogenbosch.

On **April 2nd** Fr. Arnold visited Bishop Konrad Martin of Paderborn who, because of his opposition to the cultural war laws, had been interned in Wesel Castle. “I consider such a project to be truly in tune with the times,” he wrote in his recommendation of the mission house. “From the bottom of my heart I wish this project every success and God’s blessing” (*Mit dem Segen der Kirche, Briefe an Arnold Janssen* [With the blessing of the Church. Letters to Arnold Janssen], p. 42).

At the beginning of April, Fr. Arnold had written a special petition to the Archbishop of Vienna/Austria which he had first sent to Msgr. Dr. von Essen in Neuwerk for his signature. On **April 7** the latter answered:

Dear Fr. Rector,

Attached I return to you the petition to the Rev. Archbishop of Vienna with my signature; I do not really like the style and composition; however, I signed it so that the matter will not suffer a disruption.

Regarding the acquisition [of the house] let us pray zealously; several times every day I call upon the holy prince of heaven, St. Michael. Let us become daily more humble and unselfish, so that our evil Ego with its desires will not be an impedimentum gratiae [obstacle to grace].

May God’s holy will be done; who knows if the prospective house is truly destined by Providence to become a place for the gospel? Perhaps there will be still another, more suitable. A few weeks more do not matter; Fabius Cunctator [the hesitant] has had many a successor who did not regret their hesitating.

In a hurry. Cordially in Christ yours, Dr. von Essen (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. 100-101).

April 27, 1875, Fr. Arnold began a long journey to seek the support of the German speaking bishops. On his return to Kempen four weeks later, he had received the approvals of the bishops of Trier, Speyer, Augsburg, Munich, Wuerzburg, Eichstaett, Regensburg, Brixen, Salzburg, Linz, St. Poelten, Vienna, Olmuetz and Prague (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen* [Engl. Ed.], p. 61).

The letter of John Baptist Anzer to Arnold Janssen (April 21, 1875)

Before Fr. Arnold began his long journey, he still received the third and very long letter of the Regensburg seminarian John Baptist Anzer in which he wrote the résumé of his life. In this letter we read:

Reverend, Revered Fr. Janssen!

Noble sir!

*Even though it is not particularly easy and pleasant for me, nevertheless I willingly give you a short sketch of my life, since I find nothing too difficult in order to reach my goal. I know all too well what is at stake, that is my own and others’ temporal and eternal salvation; and the earnestness of this thought requires of me an openness towards you, and most of all towards you, which only the confessional can demand. And, therefore, I wish to **talk to you alone**. If there are, perhaps, some things which seem to speak in my favour, I ask your Reverence not to attribute much value to them, for that is not from myself; and there will be dark sides which by far outweigh the light sides. And if I have shown limitless trust in you in my previous letters and also again in this one, may your Reverence not believe – I will openly admit it, and hopefully you will not be angry with me because of this open admission, for the seriousness of a step like mine demands great caution and prudence – that I had given myself over to you in youthful enthusiasm, on the contrary, I have inquired in writing and orally about your character from various men who have the honour to know you; a hundred times over I have reflected on those things which I heard about you, over what you have*