

The discussion about the introduction of the rule of the Third Order of St. Dominic continued in written communications; on **August 12**, Fr. Bill ended the discussion by finally agreeing “that the Third Order Rule be given a trial to determine whether ‘the experience of our mission seminary would prove it to be suitable and useful’ ” (*ibid.*, p. 68).

Also on **August 12**, Msgr. Dr. von Essen answered Fr. Arnold’s earlier letter. “Regarding file A [the petition to the bishops] I have no comment.” He did make a few remarks regarding smoking and taking snuff: “To forbid smoking and taking snuff might be too strict; at least taking snuff has become so common that the earlier ex-communication, which was connected with it, surprises us more than it pleases us. Smoking is already more worldly. A middle way might be the best” (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], St. Augustin, 1967, pp. 108-109).

Having received Msgr. von Essen’s letter, Fr. Arnold sent the draft of the letter to the bishops “together with the list of the names of twenty-five bishops and a diocesan administrator” to seminarian Reichart in Steyl with the request: “Write this out elegantly and completely twenty-six times with the exception of the blue part in brackets [the list of addressees] and send it to me on Sunday through Heinrich [Erlemann]. I will sign and forward it” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 77).

ARNOLD JANSSEN’S FURTHER ACTIVITIES IN PREPARATION FOR STEYL

Arnold Janssen had begun with preparations for his move from Kempen to Steyl. On **July 23, 1875** he had notified the Ursuline Sisters in Kempen, whose chaplain he was, that he would leave them at the end of August (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen, Engl. ed.*, p. 68).

On **August 9, 1875** he wrote to Miss Wolters in Venlo who was to become a great benefactress of the Mission House: “I hereby order four beds of the kind you already supplied:

length 185 cm inside

breadth 80 cm inside.

I request delivery of the first two soon, the other two for 1 September”

(Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 79).

On an undated memory slip, Fr. Arnold jotted down his thoughts about the beds: “The beds were to have straw mattresses, 180 cm long, 80 cm wide and 24 cm thick. The straw was to be as it comes out of a threshing machine. The specifications for the cotton covers were 160 cm wide, 235 cm long, with the result: ‘Thus on each side the cover hangs down 18 cm’ ” (*ibid.*).

Finally: From his election as provisional superior on, Arnold Janssen referred to himself as “RECTOR” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen, Engl. ed.*, Manila, 1975, p. 66).



The Arnoldus Family Story

THE PURCHASE OF THE MISSION HOUSE

August 4, 1875

Thanks to the two major donations which Arnold Janssen had received in March 1875 (see Arnoldus Family story June 2010) he had been able to buy the mission house on **August 4, 1875**. After the purchase Fr. Arnold said to his coworkers “that they now began with a house free of debt, but otherwise only with zero, that means in poverty, for the money he had received so far had by now been pretty much spent” (auf der Heide, *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl, ein Bild der ersten 25 Jahre ihres Bestehens* [The Mission Society of Steyl, a picture of the first 25 years of its existence], Steyl, 1900, p. 33).

FIRST CONFERENCE IN THE NEW MISSION HOUSE IN STEYL

August 5, 1875

On **August 5, 1875** Fr. Arnold Janssen, Fr. Peter Bill and the seminarian Reichart held a first conference in the new mission house. Years later Fr. Arnold said: “On August 5, the day after the purchase we held a first meeting in our house, in its most beautiful room, which was on the ground floor... and had two windows on each side. There were some magnificent trees in front of the windows and the cheerful glimmer of the river shone into the room through the branches” (Reinke, *Remembering Arnold Janssen*, 3349, see also Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 74).

The most important topics of the meetings were: “firstly, a draft of the future statutes; secondly, the draft of a letter to the bishops who had not yet been asked to give their approval for the mission house; thirdly, the election of a provisional rector” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, pp. 74-75).

The draft of the statutes had been prepared by Arnold Janssen in Latin and it began with the words: “*Mens nostra in erectione domus missionum in Steyl, dioeceseos Ruremondensis, regni Hollandiae*” [Our intention regarding the foundation of the mission house in Steyl, diocese of Roermond, kingdom of Holland] (Arnold Janssen, Generalate Archives, 3641- from now on indicated by “AG”). At first Fr. Arnold had also written the name “St. Gabriel” as the proposed name of the mission house in this heading; but then he had crossed it out. However, we find the name St. Gabriel towards the end of the proposed statutes; there the last paragraph begins with the words: “*Haec mens nostra in*

erectione domus ad sanctum Gabrielem in Steyl] [This is our intention regarding the foundation of St. Gabriel's mission house in Steyl"] (*ibid.* 3644).

The draft distinguishes between a general goal (*finis generalis*) and special objectives (*fines speciales*); the latter are subdivided into principal objective (*finis specialis primarius*) and secondary objective (*finis specialis secundarius*) (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 75). The general goal is "service of God and neighbor through the propagation of the knowledge and love of the most Blessed Trinity, of the most sacred humanity of Jesus and of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, by surrendering ourselves totally to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in such works for which each one [...] seems to be most capable for the implementation of His [the Sacred Heart's] sacred wishes. Of the three divine persons we will particularly venerate the Divine Word" (translation from H. Fischer, *Arnold Janssen, Steyl 1919*, p. 141). The Divine Word "lives amongst us in the tabernacle of the sweetest Heart of Jesus and it graciously wants to give itself also to us, for the purpose of dwelling in our hearts and the happy delight of our souls. This Word is the Light which enlightens everyone who comes into the world and the uncreated wisdom. With these attributes of the Word we also wish to combine our special objectives..." (AG 3641).

The principal special objective (*finis specialis primarius*) is "the propagation of the faith in pagan lands. It has the following connection with our general goal (*finis generalis*): the propagation of faith truly promotes the salvation of souls which is the greatest desire of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus" (transl. from H. Fischer, *Arnold Janssen, Steyl 1919*, p. 141). "However, the words of those who proclaim the gospel will only bear fruit through the help of precisely that Word which illumines everyone who comes into this world" (AG 3641f).

"Our secondary objective [*finis specialis secundarius*] shall be "the cultivation of true scholarship in theology, the humanities and natural sciences. This is to be accomplished in the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 75) "and particularly in the spirit of those saints who were most abundantly filled with divine light" (AG 3642).

The connection with the general goal is the following:

In order "to have missionaries for the propagation of the faith, we need schools in which the aspirants are educated, not only in the spirit of piety and magnanimity but also in the humanities and foreign languages, as well as in theology and philosophy" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 75). "For these schools teachers will be needed who, if the good Lord will graciously give us suitable ones, will strive to attain this goal according to their capability, with the help of precisely that Word who is also the Eternal Wisdom" (AG 3642). So the new mission house is to be open for those who will work as missionaries in foreign countries and for the teachers who will educate them. In so far as the attainment of the special objectives is not hindered, altogether "nothing which the members do by written or spoken word for the honor of God and for the cultivation of missionary zeal among Christian peoples should be regarded as inappropriate" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 75).

"Because of the unfavorable contemporary situation [cultural war], for the near

future our house will not have vows. It is left up to the individual how, according to their piety and strength – with the agreement of their confessor – they wish to consecrate themselves to the Most Sacred Heart, in order to offer themselves more and more to God. But we would be glad if all agree to join the third order of St. Dominic as novices. Because of the lack of vows, however, we cannot be called an order or a religious congregation" (AG 3643). There is no vow of poverty and, so Alt summarizes the draft in regard to this point, there is neither "any radical renunciation of property or use of worldly goods" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 75).

When recalling this meeting Fr. Arnold said that during the conference there were "already coming to the fore the premonitions of various unpleasant disagreements" which later would show themselves even more. One such disagreement was the introduction of the Rule of the Third Order of St. Dominic. According to this Rule, there should be four days of abstinence and one day of fasting every week. Fr. Bill and seminarian Reichart opposed the introduction of this Rule: "1. Because this Rule has not been introduced into any other mission house. 2. Who could observe this fast and abstinence? Not the young people of twelve to twenty years who are dispensed from church fasting laws. The teachers? In the ordinary seminaries many teachers are dispensed from fasting because of the exhausting study and tiring teaching load. But neither can the missionaries who return from the missions to the motherhouse because of sickness. 3. In the missions the missionaries eat what they have and what they can get. 4. Then there are some who, though otherwise healthy, are not well able or are completely unable to abstain from meat so frequently. 5. It should also be taken into account that a meatless diet is harder to obtain and prepare. We must anticipate that some houses will not find a good, experienced cook who knows how to prepare meatless meals correctly. Many dispensations or exceptions would have to be made, thus weakening the Rule, creating disorder, dissatisfaction, etc." (*ibid.*, p. 76).

While the introduction of this particular rule caused problems, "at the meeting there was no problem about the cultivation of academic studies as a secondary goal. That only came later" (*ibid.*).

A further topic was the discussion of a petition drafted by Arnold Janssen regarding the establishment of a mission house for the German and Dutch speaking countries. It was intended for those bishops of Germany and Austria "who had not yet given a recommendation" or whom Arnold Janssen "had not reached on his travels" (*ibid.*). In this letter, September 8 was given as the date of the inauguration of the mission house.

The election of a rector of the mission house was also an important topic of the conference. "Bill and Reichart agreed that neither of them should be considered for the office and so they voted for Janssen" (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, Engl. ed., Arnoldus Press, Manila, 1975, p. 66). Once the conference had ended Arnold Janssen informed Msgr. Dr. von Essen in Neuwerk of the meeting and sent him some materials for examination.

On August 7, Fr. Arnold wrote to Bishop Paredis of Roermond that the "obedient undersigned has been provisionally chosen superior and asks for Episcopal confirmation of his election. A definitive election will not be held until after the statutes have been formulated and the project is on a more permanent footing" (*ibid.*).