

needs of a missionary and we accept only those students in whom we think we see honest striving for virtue and a true missionary vocation and we keep them only as long as we think we see this in them. (Therefore everyone, even the poorest, when entering the mission house has to bring along the amount of money necessary for the return trip home. That money will be deposited for him in the house, furthermore the written declaration of the parents or their deputies that they pay the board and lodging fee quoted and, furthermore, that they later will not resist if the student wants to choose the missionary or religious life.) By the way, until the completion of their lower studies students remain free regarding the choice of their status in life, and mission candidates who are studying theology may also apply.

May nobody think that too much is demanded here for the application. We are well aware what precise details other mission institutes demand and it is also our duty to see to it, as far as possible, that the donations of the faithful will not benefit those who are not worthy. Furthermore, the situation here is not as in ordinary institutions where the applicants almost always live nearby and can easily be called for an examination.

### September 9, 1875

Fr. Arnold wrote to Fr. Bill in Luxemburg about the blessing of the mission house: "Yesterday we celebrated the feast of the blessing of our house with the greatest possible splendor." At the end of the letter he describes the workload for Fr Bill and him self:

"Would you please for the first years be willing to take over the main teaching for the boys who will be accepted, as well as the supervision of domestic matters? My jobs would then still be editing the *Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart), correspondence and the inner management of the house, study of the theological subjects and mission sciences, direction of the candidates of theology, preparation of the seminarian Reichart for receiving holy orders and common theological studies with him; as you see, I will have enough to do." Seminarian Reichart could have himself be trained as a professor of theology, "something he would like very much" (Peter Bill, *Korrespondenz*, unpublished manuscript, p. 14)

That very day, September 9, Fr. Arnold informed the members of his community about the financial situation of the new mission house: "The house is paid for, but we begin our life here with an empty purse" (Hermann Fischer, *Arnold Janssen*, English edition, transl. Federick M. Lynk SVD, Mission Press Techny, III, 1925, p. 147)

*The seed of the new missionary foundation was laid; the dew of the Church's blessing had been implored for it. Now the seed could begin to sprout and develop. But how much effort would it still cost the gardener to bring it from seclusion to the light and to develop it so that it was able to live* (Hermann Fischer, *Arnold Janssen*, German edition, p. 125).



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### The Arnoldus Family Story

#### SEPTEMBER 8, 1875 - AT THE END OF THE DAY

Let us recall: In the morning of September 8, 1875, at 10 am in the parish church of Steyl, the solemn High Mass for the opening of the new St. Michael's mission house began. In the afternoon the mission house was blessed by the Dean of Venlo, and in the evening shortly after six pm a telegram arrived from the Prefect of the Propaganda Fide in Rome, Cardinal Franchi, conveying the Holy Father's blessing for the new mission house.

The festive meal for the invited guests took place in the mission house "decked out for the occasion with borrowed furniture, and a banquet table set with borrowed cutlery and chinaware." After the feast all the borrowed items had to be returned to their owners, and then most of the rooms were empty.

Once all the guests had left, the four members of the community (Arnold Janssen, his brother, Br. Juniperus Janssen OFM Cap, the seminarian Reichart and the carpenter Erlemann) recited the evening prayer, "and then the Rector announced the order that was to be followed. It included the weekly days of fast and abstinence. Thus began the life of 'prayer, work and self-denial which was to be observed in the seminary'" (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelsang, Arnoldus Press Manila, 1975, p.72).

The community was not yet complete, for two more members were expected: Fr. Peter Bill from Luxemburg and seminarian John Baptist Anzer from Regensburg.

#### TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Since the mission house was to be an apostolic school in which future priests had first to do their high school studies, Arnold Janssen sought teachers and students. In his mission magazine "*Der Kleine Herz-Jesu-Bote*" (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) of September 1875, he therefore published the article "Aufnahme von Zöglingen in das Missionshaus zu Steyl" – "Acceptance of Students in the Mission House in Steyl".

Students were the main topic of the article, but in a footnote he also made a few remarks about teachers and those remarks tell us also something interesting about the structure of the mission house:

*“With regard to the teachers, the missionary and teaching professions are totally different. Therefore our house recognizes two different categories of persons, there are those who want to dedicate themselves to the missionary vocation and those who want to dedicate themselves to the education of missionaries, as well as simultaneously to the cultivation of Christian Science in the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas. Both are bound by the same house regulations. Anyone who is inclined to see in our house a comfortable institution for his own benefit would, therefore, do better to stay at home. Our house must be founded on striving for apostolic dedication to the Divine Savior and therefore it cannot do without a certain degree of mortification, which persons who feel less called might perhaps not like.”*

Regarding prospective students Fr. Arnold wrote:

*“For the time being, our available personnel and space, as well as the limitations of our own training, allow us to take in only very few candidates. We have to bear in mind that one who tries to do everything at once actually achieves nothing, and one who wants to build a good house must first see that he has a good foundation. In particular we are obliged to see that the candidates coming in are more or less on the same educational level so that we can put them all in one single class”* (in Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 133).

Fr. Arnold then continues:

*“Which class that is we cannot say yet; it can only be decided when the applications have arrived or the entrance exams have taken place. The following contains some instructions for those who intend to apply as students in order to be first prepared for missionary life through high school studies.*

*Application is to be made by letter from the candidate to the head of the mission house in Steyl. Since a candidate may possibly live far from here, to save needless travelling costs, the letter must be composed in such a way that it enables some decision to be made; for that reason an enclosed photo would be appreciated. The letter, however, has also to contain the following:*

- 1. Name, status, place of residence of parents or guardians.*
- 2. The candidate’s date of birth, of first holy communion (and confirmation).*
- 3. Exact details about the length and type of his schooling, furthermore how far he got in each subject and in the text books on which the classes were based.*
- 4. Proof of his knowledge and achievement by enclosing: a) available report cards; b) exercise books for composition and other subjects with the remarks of the teachers. If that is not possible, the candidate is to indicate how far he came in his German-Latin and German-French translation textbook; he then chooses to translate 1. The first ten lines of the following German-Latin and German-French texts, which he will not have worked through either orally or in writing with any-*

*one else. 2. About ten lines of a section from a few previous pages, that he has neither done as homework nor worked through with anyone, or, if it was already taken through in school, then only once, or at the most twice. The German text must also be included. 3. He is to add any mathematical exercises done in past 3-5 months, the solution to which he found himself. – All this must be conscientiously observed and the candidate must declare that he has observed it and has not passed the work to anyone for correction.*

*5. The house accepts only candidates both for classes and full board and lodging. Following the example of other missionary institutions, it will also most probably seldom or not at all allow the candidates to go for holidays, but it will provide the necessary recreation in the house itself. In any case, judging from other examples, a yearly fee for board and lodging of 500 Marks would not be too high. Thus, parents or well-meaning, well-situated people who, as missionary sponsors, are disposed to provide for the living expenses of a student, will therefore, if they are able, gladly pay this amount in order to make it possible all the sooner for the institution to have the means for necessary further buildings and to accept free of charge poor but good students. Every candidate therefore has to indicate if and how much of the board and lodging fee his parents, guardians or patrons are willing to pay annually.*

*6. A statement of which writings about the work of missionaries amongst the pagans he has read, since when it has been his wish to become a missionary, how often and how long he has been sick, and if he thinks he will be able to put up with heat, cold and other sufferings and deprivations for God’s sake, and if he is willing to submit to all the rules of the house and to practice the spirit of obedience and patience, in order to become, with the grace of God, a good missionary.*

*All of this is to be sent in a post-paid letter (which can weigh up to ½ a pound) or otherwise in a post-paid parcel, the sooner the better, to the director of the mission house in Steyl, P.O. Kaldenkirchen in Rhineland- Prussia. We will then invite those whose admission seems possible to us to the mission house for an oral exam or in case of a very great distance, they will be conditionally accepted. (Letters from the Netherlands are to be sent to Steyl near Tegelen.)*

*Candidates who request full board and lodging free or mainly free, naturally do not present the same guarantee with regard to their vocation as those students who, by offering to pay the full board and lodging, show that they could also choose another higher profession, but that they nevertheless out of love for Jesus want to renounce all worldly hopes. But for poorer students also other less pure intentions could be decisive and therefore one has to be doubly careful. Their application for admission will, therefore, not be successful unless supported by credible persons. ...*

*Classes in the mission house will as far as possible be geared towards the*