

Rector Janssen quickly stood the beer keg upright and said: 'There, that takes care of the table.' Then he ran to a shed where a man with a red beard, whom he called 'our first Brother', was doing some carpentry work. He was told to bring a board which was placed across the two damaged chairs to form an improvised bench. Next the rector took the cup and two small glasses from the mantelpiece and set them on the beer-keg table. We sat down on the flimsy bench, Rector Janssen in the middle. 'Brother, is there any beer in the house?' 'Yes, Father Rector, two bottles in the cellar.' 'Please, fetch them both. Do you have any bread?' 'No, Father Rector.' 'Then run over to the baker's and get six small buns.' The bread was quickly brought from van Dijk's. The banquet could now begin. The dry bread tasted good as we washed it down with the beer which we drank from the little glasses – after we had carefully wiped them with our handkerchiefs to remove the dust" (Bornemann, *Remembering Arnold Janssen*, p. 61).

THE MOTTO OF THE NEW MISSION HOUSE

In the August 1875 issue of his mission magazine "*Der Kleine Herz-Jesu-Bote*" (*Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart*) Arnold Janssen published the article "*Das heilige Jubeljahr, der 16. Juni 1875 und das neugegründete Missionshaus*" (The holy jubilee year, June 16, 1875 and the newly founded mission house). June 16, 1875 was the bicentenary jubilee year of the apparition of Jesus to Margaret Mary Alacoque during which he expressed the wish that the feast of the Sacred Heart be instituted for the whole church. On this very same day, the first members of the new mission house had dedicated themselves to the Sacred Heart and to the mission task of the new mission house, and "that one can and must consider the spiritual foundation of the mission house", wrote Fr. Arnold in the article. Then he continued:

"May our dear Lord grant that the young foundation, which is so much in need of grace, receive a little of that stream of grace which on that so memorable June 16th was surely more generously given to our poor earth from the divine Heart of Jesus. The mission house will never forget its origin. And since, according to its sole purpose, it is destined to work for the fulfillment of the graced intentions of the divine Heart of Jesus, its origin obliges it all the more to express this still more clearly through the explicit naming of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and as a proof of this to make the following beautiful words its motto:

***'Vivat Cor Jesu in cordibus hominum!'
'May the heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all peoples.'
So be it! Amen'***



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The Arnoldus Family Story

LAST DAYS IN KEMPEN

Bro. Juniperus William Janssen OFM Cap had gotten permission from his superiors to help his brother Arnold in Steyl with the foundation of the new mission house (see "The Arnoldus Family Story", May and July 2011). On August 18, 1875 he left his monastery in Muenster and travelled to Kempen.

Let us hear from Bro. Juniperus how he and his brother Arnold spent the last days before moving to Steyl.

Br. Juniperus remembers:

Arrival in Kempen

"It was about six o'clock in the evening when I arrived in Kempen and was given a warm welcome [by Arnold Janssen]. 'Look Brother, here's a glass of beer for you which I kept for you since last night.' – 'Stale beer? Pure water is better than stale beer!' I said. Arnold, however, thought differently: he often set a glass of beer aside for the following day; to him it still tasted good.

There was no bed for me; Arnold simply spread a straw mattress on the floor ...

The following day, August 19, was a Thursday. Arnold sent me to Neuss to withdraw several hundred Taler from his bank account."

Visit to Steyl

"Then on Friday he sent me to Steyl. There I met the carpenter, Heinrich Erlemann, and a seminarian whose name was Reichart. Erlemann wanted to study for the priesthood but first had to make the furniture for the seminary. Whatever beds, tables and chairs were already in the seminary had been borrowed. The fact is, however, there was really very little furniture in the house; it was practically empty. This amazed me and I asked myself how a religious institute could be set up under such conditions. But Erlemann was very optimistic. The worst was over. Already there were reserves in the drawer: a bag of rice, a bag of barley, a pound of coffee beans and probably still 3 pounds of flour, and a whole pound of butter. And in the basement a basket of potatoes and few yellow turnips. A meal was quickly prepared: barley soup and potatoes and since it was Friday also a herring! The guest was given a pancake. Despite their great poverty Erlemann had much faith in God's help.

Since the rector asked me to, I went to a tailor in the village and ordered some work clothes.”

*Via Goch back to Kempen –
Farewell celebration for Fr. Arnold in Kempen*

“Then I went to Goch; it was years since I had last seen my mother. By Sunday, the 22nd, I was back in Kempen. In the afternoon a farewell celebration was held in the residence of Dean Boes. All the priests came together, including Fr. Ostertag, the director of the Teachers Training School. He was a special friend of Arnold’s. Naturally the topic of conversation was Arnold and his mission seminary. ‘Arnold, how will things develop? How will you do this, that and the other thing?’ ‘Arnold, have another glass of beer; on the Maas there will be only water.’ One of the main speakers was chaplain Fugmann. Towards the end of the gathering, Dean Boes emptied his wallet on the table. ‘There, Arnold, that is for your mission seminary. Begin in God’s name.’ The rest of the priests also added their mite. Chaplain Fugmann afterwards gave many other gifts to the seminary.”

Packing

Together with Br. Juniperus, Fr. Arnold looked for a possibility to move his furniture and books from Kempen to Steyl. The farmer William Haafs “granted our request at once and even placed his wagon at our disposal. Besides he gave the rector 75 Marks. A second wagon was provided by the Weyer brothers in Dingshof. They also continued to make other contributions afterwards.

“The following days we were busy packing. The rector bought an old cooking stove and paid 50 Taler for it although it was not worth that much. Very little could be cooked on it at one time. Later when I mentioned this to the man who had sold it, he just shrugged his shoulders and said ‘Well, that’s business.’ (for all of this see: Fritz Bornemann, ed., John Vogelsang, transl., *Remembering Arnold Janssen, A book of Reminiscences, Analecta SVD* – 42, Rome 1978, pp.58-59).

In the morning of August 26, carpenter Heinrich Erlemann came from Steyl to Kempen to help pack the two wagons which were standing next to the Ursuline convent where Fr. Arnold lived. By evening everything was stored in the wagons and Erlemann returned to Steyl.

FINALLY IN STEYL

Friday, August 27, Fr. Arnold “rose at four and offered Mass for the last time in the chapel where a year earlier he had made the decision regarding his life’s great adventure. Around 5:30 a man came from each of the two farms with a team of horses which they hitched to the loaded wagons and set out by way of Mülhausen for Kaldenkirchen” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, Engl. ed., Arnoldus Press Manila, 1975, p. 70). Br. Juniperus went along with the wagons “to pay the bills whenever we stopped to rest and feed the horses” (Bornemann, *Remembering Arnold Janssen*, p. 60). Fr. Arnold himself travelled by train to Kaldenkirchen which is situated at the border with the Netherlands, just a short distance away from Steyl.

“It was about eleven o’ clock,” so Br. Juniperus continued his story, “when we arrived in Kaldenkirchen where the rector was waiting for us. When everything [several parcels from the post office] had been loaded we resumed our journey. Around 12:30 Steyl, our new home, came into view. Father Rector and I walked together alongside the wagons. People stopped in the street, others came out of their houses. All wanted to see the Rector who was going to open a mission seminary for ‘China’ in Steyl. At the corner of the road a priest in cassock came out of the house where later the Missionary Sisters [Holy Spirit Sisters] would live. He hurried towards us and called out cheerfully: ‘Welkom, mijnheer rector Janssen, op de hollandse boden, welkom, welkom!’ (*Welcome, Father Rector Janssen, welcome to Dutch soil, welcome, welcome!*) He then shook hands with the rector and me and accompanied us to the seminary. He was Professor Moubis from the seminary in Rolduc [diocese of Roermond] and was on a visit to his mother. He helped us unload the goods and always remained a loyal friend of the mission seminary.

“‘Thanks be to God, we are here at last!’ the rector said. Then he turned to me and said: ‘It would be good if you would put your culinary talents to use and cook us a dinner’.

“The first meal consisted of rice soup, potatoes, and yellow turnips which first had to be gathered from the garden; furthermore a herring that Heinrich Erlemann brought from the store” (*ibid.*).

At about 5 pm the wagons had been unloaded, the drivers “were each given a tip of 2.50 Mark and then returned home” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, Engl. Ed., p. 71).

Still on the same day the new mission house had two surprise visitors. 50 years after that visit, on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the mission house in Steyl, the Dutch priest Rev. Fr. W. Teunissen told this story:

“It is now 50 years since that memorable day during the summer holidays of 1875 when, towards the end of August, an American student of theology in Louvain [Belgium], who was my friend, and I travelled from Reuver to Blerick [two places near Steyl] to visit another friend who lived in the latter place. We went by way of Steyl where we planned to cross the Maas. We were just passing the Ronck house when my American friend said: ‘By the way, I would like very much to see the mission seminary. Where is it?’ ‘Right there in front of you,’ I said; ‘the house painted green.’ As we stopped to look at it, someone behind us called out: ‘Wait please! I’m coming.’ We turned around and saw a German priest hurrying towards us. He said: ‘You want to see the mission seminary, don’t you? You are in luck. I’m Rector Janssen and have just come from the railway station. But from now on I am going to live here. Beginning today the mission seminary is as good as open. You will be the first to have a meal in it with the rector!’ He hastened to open the door. The floor of the entrance hall was covered with straw and hay. There was no furniture in the room except an empty beer keg, a chair without a cane bottom, and a second chair with a cane bottom but no backrest. On the mantelpiece were a coffee cup lacking an ear and two small beer glasses, one of them cracked.