

[to the mission house] which will cost far more yet. Therefore we fervently pray to the holy foster father Joseph that he may arouse hearts willing to help and we trust firmly in his help. Until now he has been a good father to us. There are many good young people applying. But they are poor. We accept them nevertheless. But should there not be someone who would gladly be their benefactor or mission sponsor and so participate in their future missionary merits? The one sponsored will offer one holy Communion for them every month and he will write to them at least once a year” (Karl Josef Rivinius, *Drei Briefe Arnold Janssens an Bischof Haneberg* [Three letters of Arnold Janssen to Bishop Haneberg], *Verbum SVD* 39, 1998, pp. 76-78; see also Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p.86).

### New residents in the Steyl Mission House

The next resident of the mission house was the above mentioned 24-year-old John Baptist Anzer. He was the first who had applied definitely for the new mission house. On October 11, 1875 Anzer finally got his bishop’s permission to enter Steyl; in the afternoon of October 29, he arrived in Steyl (Bornemann, *Johann Baptist Anzer bis zu seiner Ankunft in Süd-Shantung* [John Baptist Anzer until his arrival in South Shantung], *Analecta SVD*–38, Rome 1977, p. 18).

Also on October 29, 25-year-old Jacob Steger arrived from the village of Hinsbeck in Germany, not far from the Dutch border and from Steyl. He was followed on November 4 by his friend John Holthausen, also from the parish of Hinsbeck. Both wanted to become missionaries and priests. On November 5, 55-year-old bachelor Joseph Althoff came and offered his services to the mission house. He stayed until 1877 and was a jack-of-all-trades (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p.92).

The new mission house now numbered two seminarians (Reichart and Anzer), a carpenter and part-time student for the priesthood (Erlemann) and three secondary school students (Gipmanns, Steger and Holthausen) for whom two priest-teachers were responsible (Fr. Arnold and Fr. Bill). Two men took care of the daily needs of the mission house (Br. Juniperus and Mr. Althoff), supported by a number of benefactors. The training of future missionaries could begin!



Fr. Jac. Steger



Fr. Jon Holthausen



## The Arnoldus Family Story

In the March 2012 issue of “The Arnoldus Family Story” we read of Fr. Bill’s negative evaluation of Arnold Janssen’s leadership style. From the first moment of his arrival in Steyl he did not like the situation there. In this issue of “The Arnoldus Family Story” we will let Fr. Arnold himself speak to us through his letter of October 11, 1875 to Bishop Haneberg of Speyer—just one month after the opening of St. Michael’s mission house. Bishop Haneberg believed in Arnold Janssen. On April 29, 1875 he had supported Fr. Arnold’s planned foundation of the mission house with the words: “For the beginning the manner in which Fr. Janssen intends to set up the institution will be adequate, as long as suitable steps are taken to test the genuineness of the missionary vocation. ... Since Fr. Janssen himself has a knowledge of mathematics and physics, he can teach the mission candidates in a branch which is very important for the country of the thoroughly practical Chinese. Former missionary Fr. Smorenburg, at present parish priest in Bredevoort, diocese of Utrecht, will help with some preparation in the language of the country. And so I believe I may sincerely state that Fr. Janssen’s project deserves priority support, especially from the mission associations” (*Mit dem Segen der Kirche, Briefe an Arnold Janssen* [With the blessing of the church. Letters to Arnold Janssen], Steyler Mission, St. Augustin, 1975, pp. 57-58).

There was further correspondence between the Bishop and Arnold Janssen to which Fr. Arnold refers in his letter. From this letter of October 11 we get to know, this time from Fr. Arnold’s point of view, the latest events of the first month in the life of the new mission house. Fr. Arnold writes:

“Unfortunately, Fr. Smorenburg hasn’t shown any sign of willingness to spend a few months with us every year to teach Chinese. However, from next July on he will let us rent cheaply the old parish house in his parish of Bredevoort, once the building of the new parish house has been completed, and he will teach the mission candidates Chinese free of charge during the last months before their departure. At the next opportunity I will inform him of the suggestions of Your Grace, for which I most respectfully and sincerely

thank you, and at the same time I will ask his advice regarding the procurement of the books you wish, or I will do it right now. – It is already done.

Our house is beautifully and conveniently located right between the River Maas and the parish church of Steyl, immediately adjacent to both, and in addition so near to the railway, the junction Venlo, and to the Prussian post office of Kaldenkirchen, from where we receive all our mail, daily when there is an opportunity; we could not have found anything better within a radius of several hours. It also seems to be a matter of providence that just before our arrival [in Steyl] the parish priest Fr. Backhuis contracted a serious and long drawn out leg ailment, so that we have now at the same time become the spiritual fathers of the small but pious parish, which has already shown us so many signs of affection.

Otherwise our beginning is very, very small and modest, great only in its need. However, the small seed develops now more and more into a small plant with the help of God and under the protection of our good patrons, whom we invoke several times a day (St. Michael principal patron, with St. Joseph, Saint Anne as ancestress [sic!] of many apostolic men and the Holy Tres Reges [Three Kings] as the first converted pagans as secondary patrons; furthermore the Divine Word, dwelling in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the immaculate heart of Mary, under whose invocation the house was blessed, are greatly venerated). And almost to the same extent that the house develops exteriorly in its rooms and domestic appliances: (... In the beginning we had only six chairs for eleven rooms; now we have thirteen; the beds are mostly still on the floor, and after the most necessary items for the kitchen were acquired, we first took care of the chapel and then the library; at the moment we are constructing 14 cells in the attic; yesterday we got a good clock for the house which strikes loudly every quarter of an hour and has the task of keeping us in order), gradually the house is also developing interiorly. May the dear Lord grant that we lay a good foundation here. We have received the exact statutes and organization of various houses and we want to learn from all as much as we can. We have already seen several things for ourselves and at my request the great Paris seminary des *missions étrangères* [for the foreign missions] declared itself willing to accept two of us for several months. As soon as I can get away, I myself will go there.

At present we are two priests, beside me there is a parish priest from Luxembourg, who has a very good reference from his bishop... His name is Bill. He will mainly look after our young mission candidates; of those a 15-year-old third grade high school student is already here and more will arrive shortly. I myself will at first have to care for our theologians until our

dear Lord sends better and more suitable staff members. We have two theologians: 1. A cleric from the diocese of Brixen who is about to receive holy orders and who studied in Innsbruck and Louvain, 2. A student from the Regensburg seminary by the name of John Anzer (5 semesters of theology), who had already applied in Paris but who was given the answer that they would accept only Frenchmen. He is a true, strong Bavarian and seems to have a very single-minded missionary vocation. For that reason we also made the decision to give his mother, who is in need of support, ... an annual stipend of 50 Guilders (1-2 weekly Mass intentions). She has four more children at home, aged 5, 8, 11 and 18 years and is almost always sickly. In spite of that, when her son John, her only hope for the future, revealed to her his great desire to become a missionary, she gave him the absolutely beautiful answer: 'My child! Don't worry about me! If I know that you can do much, I will be satisfied just with potatoes. I will not live much longer anyhow.'

How much can be expected of the son of such a mother! Initially the bishop of Regensburg did not like to let him go. Now he finally gave him permission and Mr. Anzer will arrive here during the week. It would be a matter of honor for the members of the Bavarian [royal] court to support such a mother of the first Bavarian missionary of our house, and I ask Your Grace, to put in a good word in that matter if the opportunity arises. Since the bishop of Regensburg has almost 200 vacant positions in his diocese, he certainly would not have let him go if he hadn't been fully convinced of his missionary vocation.

Regarding furniture for our house, it is extremely useful that right at the beginning our dear Lord sent us a student who is also a good carpenter and who was prepared to work first as a carpenter. His name is Heinrich Erlemann.

Must I apologize to Your Grace also for the long letter? At other times I am always so brief and tardy in writing, since I am almost overwhelmed by the amount of work and worries and I often don't know what to take care of first. But because Your Grace was so kind as to show such great interest in our poor beginning, I felt obliged [to write a long letter] and I ask our dear Lord to make us more and more worthy of Your Grace's interest [in our work]. ...“

„I read the letter once more. Since it says nothing about the need for money, one could draw the wrong conclusion that we had more than enough; therefore I must guard against such an error. We have to do some construction work in the house itself already and to build costs money; furthermore, immediately next spring we have to begin to build an extension