

occasional printing jobs, such as a few thousand First Mass cards for the classmates of John Janssen [the brother of Fr. Arnold], or when a family in Steyl ordered memorial cards for someone who had died. Though the members of the mission seminary were strictly forbidden to smoke, the press printed the labels for the Kreykamp Tobacco Factory in Steyl. Still there was not enough work to keep [the printer] Joseph Stute busy full time. But the slack periods ended when a new pictorial magazine, the *Stadt Gottes* [City of God] for which all the type was set up in Steyl, began publication at the end of the year 1877” (Fritz Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelsang, Rome, 1975, p. 78).

In the previous issues of “The Arnoldus Family Story” we saw how Fr. Bill [but others as well] was unhappy with Fr. Arnold. Bornemann writes: “Almost everything he [Fr. Arnold] did during the winter of 1875 -76, was criticized by his colleagues, but not a word was said against the press or the magazine. Everyone knew that these provided their daily bread” (*ibid.*).

A FAMOUS VISITOR

On January 29, 1876 Herbert Vaughan, the founder and superior of the English Mill Hill Missionary Society and Bishop of Salford (Manchester), visited Steyl. He told Fr. Arnold of the modest beginnings in Mill Hill: “For two whole years there were, as he put it, only three: himself, a student and – the bell” (in Joseph Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 95). More than a year later the Bishop talked about his visit to Steyl:

“Last year I passed through Holland on my way to Rome, and I heard that a little missionary college had just been established on the border of Holland, of which a German priest was the head. I went to see the humble establishment – humble indeed it was – and I spoke with him about its origin. I said, ‘Well, you are a man of spirit, for while you Germans are being persecuted at home, you are establishing a college for foreign missions.’ ‘Yes,’ he said to me, ‘the thought occurred to me that perhaps one of the reasons why we Catholics of Germany are now going through so terrible a persecution is that up to now we have done nothing for the pagans. We have ministered to our own wants and we have forgotten those abroad who have no one to minister to them.’ He added, ‘I think that one of the best ways of obtaining God’s grace for Germany, and of removing persecution and consolidating the Catholic Church in our midst, is to perform a great act of faith and to establish a German foreign missionary college where it is possible here on the Dutch border. Thus we shall show that even in the midst of sufferings and persecutions, we really love Our Lord and desire to propagate his name to the farthest bounds of the world’. ... I asked him, ‘Have you dared to expound this theory while going about Germany as you have done?’ ‘Yes’ he said, ‘I have spoken of it openly everywhere, and people seemed to think there was a great deal of truth in it’” (*ibid.*).



The Arnoldus Family Story

THE MISSION PRESS OF ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

In the previous issue of “The Arnoldus Family Story” we read about Fr. Arnold’s decision to start a printing press. In the January 1876 issue of his mission magazine, ‘The Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart’, in the article “Die neue Missionsdruckerei zum heil. Erzengel Michael in Steyl” (The new mission press of St. Michael the archangel in Steyl), he informed his readers of the reasons for doing so. First of all he expressed his joy “that with the support of various benefactors, three months after its opening our mission house already managed to gain its own printing press.” He then continued:

“In our days the press is a great power. How far, for instance, has this magazine (the *Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart*) paved the way for the erection of our mission house! Without it, the house could not have succeeded at all, or, at least, not in so short a time.

“Indeed, the press must be compared to a sword which is wielded in the spiritual battle, and a good press is intended to further the cause of the Good.

“The difference between one’s own printing-press and some one else’s is this, that the latter resembles more a borrowed sword that is given for a few days or a few combats, while the former provides a ready sword always at hand for good service.

“But is not the possession of a printing-plant foreign to the spirit of a mission house? We reply that we found it somewhat hard to make up our mind to establish our own press at this early date. How many difficulties must be met by every new enterprise! Besides, everybody has a natural fear of new burdens, worry and work. But a consideration of the real character of the house helped us to decide the matter. How is it in other mission houses, – for instance, in Turnhout in Belgium? we asked ourselves. Well, there one finds a carpenter’s shop, a blacksmith’s shop, and various other workshops. The young people have an opportunity to acquire skills in various trades. How helpful is this knowledge to the missionary! In many districts the natives expect advice from him in nearly all things. A good missionary will try to do his best, especially among the pagans, for he knows that this skill will open many homes and hearts to him.

“This is true of all trades. Regarding the press, it can easily be seen that every mission society must provide catechisms, prayer books, and similar publica-

tions for the people of the country in which it labors. How can this be done, if none of the members knows anything about printing? What they are to practice there must be learned here.

“From all this we see the close connection existing between the establishment of a printing-press and the purposes of our house.

“Since the holy archangel Michael is the patron of our house, we place the new mission press under his protection. Through his humility he conquered the devil in heaven and is now the bearer of the glorious and yet humble banner of the cross of Christ. May this new printing-press battle under his protection against the pride of Christ’s enemies, through the humility of Christ’s cross. May it be guided by the principles of the saints who followed Christ on the road of grace, humility, and patience. These principles are far from being recognized everywhere; and to uphold them will bring war, but also victory” (Hermann Fischer S.V.D., *Arnold Janssen*, transl. Frederick M. Lynk. S.V.D., Mission Press S.V.D., Techny, Ill., 1925, pp. 236-238). The devil will see to it that there will be war; may St. Michael lead us graciously to victory.

“Since, incidentally, the whole matter was brought to conclusion rather quickly ‘partly on the feast of the great bishop and missionary St. Nicholas, partly during the octave of the Immaculate Conception’ [transl. from Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 152] the printing press is particularly recommended to these two saints, and therefore the press and printing plant are placed under the special protection of this chosen virgin who, as the glorious seat of divine wisdom and the mighty victor over that old serpent, deserves the veneration of the whole world. – At the same time our mission press is herewith heartily recommended to our friends for kind printing orders of any kind and we point out that printed matter between Germany and Holland are exempted from import duty.

“In conclusion we wish to say that our divine Savior, enjoining upon the apostles the conversion of the world, referred them to the word, saying, ‘Preach the Gospel to every creature.’ In His time the printed word was unknown, but now it is known and used by the devil to do much harm. Therefore, the servant of Christ must use it to do good. For how powerful is the printed word which through the press, in one hour, is multiplied a thousandfold! But it is not the quantity of what is printed that matters. It is necessary that the printed word shall be read and taken to heart. May God and the holy patrons help our press!” (Hermann Fischer SVD, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. Frederick Lynk, SVD, Mission Press S.V.D, Techny Ill, 1925, p. 238).

OPENING OF THE MISSION PRESS

On January 27, 1876 the mission press was opened. It was the feast of St. John Chrysostom, and therefore Fr. Arnold said in his speech:

“We celebrate today the feast of St. Chrysostom. His name means ‘Golden Tongued.’ From his mouth words flowed like golden grains for the souls of men. May the printing-press of the mission house also become such a ‘golden tongue’ for the salvation of souls. May its products be an antidote

against the bad press, against the doctrines it spreads, and furnish golden grains for the life everlasting of men who will read the publications which shall come from this press. May all who shall work here perform golden deeds for heaven! For that we shall pray first” (*ibid.*, p. 235).

He then prayed “for all publications that would henceforth be issued from this press, for all its readers, all workers, and for all the benefactors that had contributed to the establishment. At last came the blessing” (*ibid.*).

After the blessing “all present proceeded to try out the little press.” Fr. Arnold “was the first to turn the fly-wheel, and the first copy of the *Little Messenger* came out. Then Father Bill, then John Anzer, Francis Reichart, the students, Brother Juniper, and at last the numerous onlookers – for half Steyl had gathered to witness the great event – turned the wheel, and each took the sheet which he had printed along home with him, as a souvenir of the occasion” (*ibid.*).

This was not the only time that Fr. Arnold had to turn the fly-wheel: “In later days the founder was often seen at the fly-wheel, working in the sweat of his brow, especially on days when no workers were available, while Joseph Stute [the printer] laid in the sheets” (*ibid.*).

For the next four years the little mission press “printed little else than the *Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart*” (*ibid.*). Fr. Arnold was, therefore, looking for more printing jobs. It “was something of an event when the press received

