

breitung im 19. Jahrhundert” [Upswing of the work of the propagation of faith in the 19th century] in which he introduced mission institutes to his readers, almost all of which had been founded in the 19th century. At the end of the article he told his readers how he saw the place of the Steyl mission house amongst the other mission institutes:

“Finally, concerning our own house, it is a small plant, still too weak for us to be so bold as to mention it among all the others. However, with the grace of God it can grow. The little child can become a brave young man and finally a strong adult. In any case, with zeal and love of God it will do all it can not to lag behind the others. May God grant this through the intercession of the most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and the holy Archangel Michael.”

LETTERS TO POPE PIUS IX AND THE PREFECT OF THE PROPAGANDA

On February 10, 1876 Fr. Arnold wrote a letter to Pope Pius IX and the Prefect of the Propaganda in Rome. He asked for powers “which seemed to be necessary for the happy further development of the [mission] house.”

The letter to Pope Pius IX reads:

“Holy Father!

The humble signatory, Rector of the seminary for foreign missions in Steyl, diocese of Roermond, Kingdom of Holland, prostrate at the feet of your Holiness, takes the liberty of presenting to you the following.”

“On September 8 of last year a seminary for the foreign missions was founded here for Germany, Austria and Holland, strengthened by your apostolic blessing on the day of its solemn opening, and approved by very many bishops of those regions, particularly by those who seem to surpass others in dignity.

“With the assistance of the most benign God our small beginning is now growing more and more from day to day, and already there are students who, having progressed further in their studies, are preparing themselves to receive holy orders.”

“Therefore we dare address to your paternal kindness the following most humble request, imploring you:

1. That you grant the superiors of our house the authority to present to our Bishop of Roermond three to five students for promotion to the major orders.

2. That you grant us also for the good of our souls the authority to celebrate Holy Masses in the oratory of our house and to reserve the Blessed Sacrament of the altar there.

Furthermore, we are so disposed as to wish to know whatever you may want us to do, so that we can fulfill your wishes as far as possible.

Humbly requesting your apostolic blessing,

Your obedient son Arnold Janssen, priest, rector of the seminary for foreign missions in Steyl.”

“Both requests were graciously granted by the Holy Father,” Fr. Arnold added.



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The Arnoldus Family Story

THE FLOURISHING OF THE MISSION HOUSE

In December 1875 Arnold Janssen wrote in his mission magazine “Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote” (“Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart”):

“Obviously our dear Lord has already blessed this little magazine very much. For the foundation of that German mission house which is now flourishing more and more and that happened in such a short time was only possible with its help.”

At the time the mission house was just three months old. Two priests, two students of theology, four Latin (high school) students, the cook Bro. Juniper Janssen OFM Cap and the volunteer worker Josef Althoff were its residents.

When on January 29, 1876, the founder of the Mill Hill Missionaries, Bishop Vaughan, visited Steyl [see ‘The Arnoldus Family Story’, No. 7, September 2012] Fr. Arnold saw this visit as helpful for the further “flourishing” of the mission house; in his memoirs he recalled that “from him, I obtained several valuable ideas and suggestions. He had applied for a mission territory in China but never gained entry. He also told me how to go about obtaining the authority to ordain candidates. At first I should request the authority only for a few candidates; when the authority expired I would repeat the request (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, Nettetal, 2002, p. 96). “The Bishop also advised him how to obtain permission to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the house chapel” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelsang, Rome 1975, p. 79).

TENSIONS

In his memoirs, Fr. Peter Bill, the second priest in the mission house, paints a different picture of Bishop Vaughan’s visit.

Fr. Bill and the theology students Reichart and Anzer, who were clerics ready for ordination, disagreed with Fr. Arnold on many issues. “Since January 1876 the clash of the opposing views among the four clerics was out in the open and had a disturbing effect on the small community”. The Latin students were not affected by it, though. “The cassocks of the clerics and their private rooms insulated them from the Latin students” (ibid., p. 82).

“Bill and Reichart had elected Father Janssen as rector on a temporary basis. The final election was to take place as soon as the statutes had been agreed upon. The rector had given the other two, as well as Anzer who came

later and sided with them, the freedom to express their views. But whether their opinions were to be decisive or merely consultative, had not been determined. Neither was there a consensus whether a definite date could be set when the statutes would have to be ready." Father Janssen was of the opinion "that the time was not ripe for the formulation of statutes. First a good beginning had to be made. But his three associates thought the statutes should be drafted at once.

"From the very beginning, Father Janssen had introduced four days of abstinence per week. The cook was his own brother, Juniper." He had only to be given orders accordingly. "There was also one day of fasting. But in this matter each one was more or less on his own. Fasting could hardly be enforced merely by giving orders to the kitchen. The rector wanted to incorporate these days of fast and abstinence, taken from the Rule of the Dominican Tertiaries, into the statutes of the seminary. But Father Bill declared from the outset that he would agree only if the Rule was first tried on an experimental basis. He believed the trial period had ended in January. It had been shown that the requirements regarding fast and abstinence were by far too rigorous. Reichart and Anzer agreed with Father Bill." The rector was alone in his view. The kitchen arrangement, however, "remained unchanged and four times a week disturbed the peace of the community." More subtle but no less real was another source of friction. In the September 1875 issue of the *Sacred Heart Messenger* [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], Father Janssen had stated that the vocations of missionaries and teachers were essentially different. 'Therefore our community recognizes two different categories of members, those who wish to dedicate themselves to the cause of the missions, and those who give themselves to the education of missionaries and the cultivation of Christian science in the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas.' Both groups follow the same rule, foster the same apostolic gift of self to Christ and practice self-denial. ...

"Anzer, Bill and Reichart, all wanted to go to the missions. They were not in favor of a special group of teachers. Everyone should be willing to go to the missions" (ibid., pp. 82-83). Since Fr. Arnold did not feel called to do missionary work in the foreign missions, but "to work for the mission cause at home, the rejection of the idea" of the special group of missionaries" would affect him personally. He said, 'If this comes about, then I have no vocation for the work'" (ibid., p. 83).

When Bishop Vaughan visited Steyl, Fr. Bill was absent; at the time he was visiting priests in the diocese of Muenster who knew Fr. Arnold, in order to discuss with them his difficulties concerning Fr. Arnold. Reichart and Anzer, however, used the Bishop's visit to discuss their problems with him regarding the situation in Steyl. Upon Fr. Bill's return they informed him of the result of their meeting with the Bishop: The Bishop "gave the two clerics Reichart and Anzer a decisive (not just consultative) vote in the drawing up of the statutes, rejected the introduction of the Third Order Rule of St. Dominic and required that the Society have the character of a society of diocesan priests. He said

the Holy See was not in favor of founding new religious societies or new orders but wished the Church to be led and reformed by the secular clergy" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 96, footnote 21).

With Fr. Arnold, the Bishop had not spoken about these issues (Hermann Fischer, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. Frederick M. Lynk, Techny, 1925, p. 173).

THE FIRST NEW BUILDING

The tensions within his community could not convince Fr. Arnold to give up his plans for the "flourishing of the mission house". Already at the time of the foundation of the mission house a new building had been envisaged.

In his mission magazine "Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart" Fr. Arnold wrote in January 1876 about a "large extension to the mission house" "next spring."

Fr. Arnold "discussed building plans with his first associates during the winter months. He got little encouragement but much criticism and even outright disapproval. Despite the opposition, he continued to work on the plans, even during the internal crisis. Mr. Frederick Vogt, a master carpenter and contractor from Wesel, was engaged to draw up the blue-prints. He came regularly to Steyl to discuss them. Since the two men were often at odds in their ideas, it took time to reach an agreement on all points. Vogt asked to be reimbursed only for his travelling expenses. He took no payment for his work. The rector calculated that the plans alone would have cost 850 Marks. He promised to offer one Holy Mass each year for the deceased members of the Vogt family" (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, Techny 1925, p. 102).

In his memoirs Fr. Bill also talks about the new building but in a way that shows the tensions within the mission house:

"On February 13 [1876] I made a pilgrimage to Kevelaer in order implore Mary, the Consoler of the Afflicted to intercede for us in our sad situation and difficulties. When I asked Rev. Janssen for permission he told me that our mutual relationship was not of the kind that he could forbid me the journey. ... However, it would be more perfect if I did not make the journey, since he did not like me making it. Furthermore, most probably on that day architect Vogt would come to discuss the new buildings. I was not interested to participate in those consultations since he would not have accepted my advice anyway. ... and I did not want to agree to a new building until the internal building was on a strong foundation, that means until we had made our statutes.

The architect came; between Rev. Janssen and the two clerics it was decided to go ahead with a new building, but the plan which the architect had brought along was not accepted, it was hardly talked about" (Peter Bill, "Erinnerungen" [memoirs], [unpublished manuscript], p. 56).

THE MISSION HOUSE IN STEYL AMONG THE CHURCH'S MISSION INSTITUTES

In the February 1876 issue of the "Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart" Fr. Arnold published the article "Aufschwung des Werkes der Glaubensver-