

knowledge. In cases of conscience, follow the advice of your confessor. In this case, celebrate your Mass after that of the Rector. That is allowed by the relevant paragraph of the provincial council.

“Do your best to see that the fine project does not come to grief due to such pettiness and human unpleasantness. That would be a crime before God and the world. So obey the Rector in all humility. You freely joined him as your superior and leader. The only thing I did was to allow you to leave your parish and join Fr. Janssen. Your mutual relationship has nothing whatsoever to do with me.

“I repeat the advice I gave to you already: with wisdom and humility persuade Fr. Janssen and Mgr. von Essen to place the Mission House under the higher authority of the Propaganda in Rome and get its statutes from there.

“For the rest I wish to stay completely out of the matter because, as I said I have no authority. Do not mention my name and do not write any more to me about it. From your letter I notice with regret that you are too sensitive. To build up a better climate, my advice to you is to humbly ask Fr. Janssen to forgive what has been and promise him to do better in the future. He is the de facto superior, not you” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 109f).

Fr. Bill was very unhappy about this letter of his Bishop; he was particularly unhappy that the Bishop did not share his idea about the celebration of Sunday Mass and that he sided with Arnold Janssen. Fr. Bill writes: “What surprised me most and made me feel miserable, was that he left me on my own in the question of Sunday Mass; there I saw that I did not find any support from him and yet I wrote once more to him in order to remain correct and try everything” (Peter Bill, *Erinnerungen [Memoirs]*, p. 62).



## The Arnoldus Family Story

### March 8 and 9, 1876

On March 8, 1876 a conference about the statutes of St. Michael's mission house had taken place. Fr. Arnold had presented his proposal which was rejected by Fr. Bill and the seminarians Reichart and Anzer. The latter then tabled their own proposal which Fr. Arnold could not accept. They also refused to sign the minutes of the conference. Fr. Arnold then invited Fr. Bill to accompany him to Roermond for a meeting with Bishop Paredis. In the evening before the visit Fr. Arnold told his brother, Capuchin Br. Juniperus (Wilhelm) Janssen: “Now it will become clear whether the work is from God; if not, let it break up now; I am satisfied. If that is the will of God, then it were better for it to come to a head today than tomorrow. I have only had God in mind” (Hermann Fischer SVD, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. Frederick M. Lynk, SVD, Mission Press, Techny, ILL., 1925, p. 181).

On March 9 the Bishop first spoke with Fr. Bill. He recalls:

“The Bishop gave me a friendly reception and amongst other things he said that one should not attach so much importance to such trifles. – He probably meant the accusation that I refused to acknowledge Fr. Janssen as superior and that I did not want to obey him. – Statutes had to be written, but he did not seem to approve of the special cultivation of the sciences as Fr. Janssen had in mind. But a certain rule (yet not the third rule of St. Dominic) for the religious life had to be introduced. Then he dismissed me without me having been able to explain myself clearly and he said that tomorrow he would send his decision in writing (Peter Bill, *Erinnerungen [Memoirs]*, p.72). Fr. Arnold then had his meeting with the Bishop and after that he said to Fr. Bill: “Now let us return home and await the answer of the Bishop” (ibid.).

### March 10, 1876 - Fr. Arnold writes to Jacques Bund C.SS.CC

March 10, 1876 was a day of letter writing: Bishop Paredis of Roermond wrote his letter which he had promised the day before and Bishop Adames of Luxembourg replied to a letter of Fr. Bill which he had received a couple of days earlier. Fr. Arnold was also in the mood for writing; he wrote to his

### WITH ST. ARNOLD JANSSEN INTO THE NEW YEAR

*When a new year begins,  
it is our foremost duty and obligation  
to give thanks to God for all the good  
He has done for us during the past year.*

*I wish you all a blessed new year,  
all the happiness and health, joy and good humor, cheerfulness and everything  
which is truly good for you.*

good friend Jacques Bund C.S.S.C., a Picpus missionary, who lived in Belgium. This letter reveals well what was going on in Fr. Arnold at the time:

“I cordially thank you for your friendly interest in and prayers for our house and the article you sent. Today our meditation was about the words ‘*Satanas expetivit vos ut cribraret sicut triticum*’ [‘Satan got his wish to sift you all like wheat’, Lk 22,31]; that fits our house at the moment. Pray for us, pray especially for Mr. Reichart, for he is in great danger. Rev. Father Bill does not fit in our house; he also seems to have allowed himself to be incited by Dr. von Essen. As time goes on, the latter is becoming inwardly more and more estranged from me. Fr. Bill followed him. Mr. Reichart is well on his way to do the same. Mr. Anzer is also infected. They have begun to deny the principles laid down in an official letter to the Archbishop of Cologne of 17 March ’75, and have opposed my draft of statutes concerning purpose, goal, and means with another. So matters are coming to a head. But I trust the Archangel Michael, and I think I already see the clear wine that may emerge from the present fermentation. A cleansing will take place and those who remain, even if it be only one, will be all the more yoked in the bonds of holy obedience that I have unfortunately not been able to achieve up till now. Today I am expecting a letter about this from the Bishop of Roermond.

“Mr. Reichart is the main opponent of the idea that a congregation which venerates the Divine Word can require the cultivation of science as a secondary aim for its teachers. In addition, the Rule of St. Dominic is a cause of animosity. I thank God for these tempests and I am full of confidence. I rejoice in all the work and sufferings I have had during the past six months. I doubt if you would *hoc momento temporis* [at this time] achieve much by writing to R [Reichart]. Pray all the more for him. But maybe a short letter would indeed be of use” (Arnold Janssen Archive Rome, 2844 and Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 109).

### **Bishop Paredis of Roermond writes in French to Arnold Janssen, Peter Bill, Franz Xaver Reichart and John Baptist Anzer**

“A few remarks about the mission seminary at Steyl.

1. Concerning the curriculum, it goes without question that it must be based on Christian doctrine, etc. Nevertheless, natural sciences may also be taught because they could be useful to the missionaries, especially in China.

2. In public worship, the prescriptions of the ecclesiastical province and diocese have to be observed.

3. There must be a hierarchy in the house; a superior is absolutely necessary; to claim that all members were equal and had the same right, the same authority, would be tantamount to socialism.

4. It is only right that Fr. Arnold Janssen, who has done so much for the house, be recognized as superior with the usual rights in such cases. Therefore:

5. Rules or statutes have to be established so that everybody knows where he stands. These statutes are to be presented to the Diocesan Bishop for approval and then to the Pope; any change of the statutes has to be approved by the same authority.

6. The right of ownership of the house, so I am told, belongs to Fr. Bill, whereas Fr. Janssen collected the money to buy it. That is nonsense, especially since more buildings have to be put up. So in my opinion, the right of ownership should be transferred to Fr. Janssen himself; or to a trustworthy lay person; but such a person will not be found easily.

These are in a few words my views. If the inhabitants of the house carry them out with a willing heart, it will soon be possible to say: ‘How good it is, how pleasant when the people dwell as one’”. (This translation of the French original is based on Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 108f; Fischer, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. Frederick M. Lynk, p. 182f and others.)

In his memoirs Fr. Bill commented on the letter of the Bishop. Very interesting is his comment on the first point, the cultivation of sciences. He, Reichart and Anzer had not mentioned natural sciences in their draft of the statutes, but they had not excluded them either. “Proof: We liked listening to Fr. Janssen’s natural science lectures, at least I did. Furthermore, this clause could have been added. In any case, this particular cultivation of the natural sciences would have been promoted for the best of the missions and for application there, but not in Germany. But Fr. Janssen was very careful not to openly admit to the Bishop of Roermond (and also to others) that he wanted to reform or regenerate the German sciences and that he wanted to establish high schools in Germany, etc! It was always this ambiguous game: Cultivation of the sciences for the missions – cultivation of the sciences for Europe (Peter Bill, *Erinnerungen* [Memoirs], p. 73).

If Fr. Bill interpreted Fr. Arnold correctly, we can conclude that Arnold Janssen had a far broader understanding of mission than Fr. Bill and the two seminarians: Europe is also mission country – as we would say today.

### **Bishop Adames of Luxembourg replies to Fr. Bill**

Between March 6 and 8, 1876 Fr. Bill had written a letter to his Bishop Adames and explained his difficulties to him. On March 10 the Bishop wrote his reply:

“I may not and cannot interfere in the affairs of the Mission House because I have no authority to do so and also lack the necessary specific