

One looks for the spirit which is to rule in our house. Yet what kind of spirit is it! The spirit of obedience? I believe, there is no lack of obedience, but a lack of punctuality and joy in obeying. The spirit of humility and self-denial? There can be some improvements here. But the real spirit which is to rule here, which includes obedience, humility, self-denial *per se*, is the spirit of brotherly love, the spirit of working together as a community and not just as family, the spirit of love for holy church, the burning desire to shed one's sweat and blood for the salvation of souls. This is the spirit, this is the fire of love of which the hearts in this house should be burning.

From all of this you see, Fr. Rector that I am speaking frankly. You ordered me to do so, therefore I did it. Openness and truth I love, a hidden agenda and lies I hate. Brotherly love I desire, for only in love can great things happen. Fr. Rector, you can create this brotherly love in our midst. Oh, do it! If it does not go with kindness, then use force. And if I should be an obstacle for this brotherly love, throw me out of the house; I shall gladly fall as a sacrificial victim so that the work may prosper" (J.B. Anzer, *Zwei Briefe an Arnold Janssen März-April 1876* [Two letters to Arnold Janssen March-April 1876], pp. 13-14.16).

Good News

On February 10, 1876 Fr. Arnold had asked Pope Pius IX, to give the superiors of the mission house the authority to present to the bishop of Roermond three or five students for promotion to the higher orders and for permission to celebrate Holy Mass and reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel of the house. On March 21, 1876 Fr. Arnold received the answer (dated Febr. 27, 1876). Full of joy he told the readers of the March edition of his mission magazine "Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote" (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart): "Both requests were graciously granted by the Holy Father. The latter one through a letter to the Bishop of Roermond, the former through a letter to the petitioner himself." To his brother John Janssen, who was a major seminarian in Muenster, he wrote on the same day: "With these permissions our institution has been officially recognised still more than has happened so far."

In this letter to his brother Fr. Arnold reflected also on the tense situation in the house and wrote: "During the past month our house has gone through a kind of internal crisis, emerging from it newly strengthened. That will probably occur more often. For we know that if the grape juice is not fermented, it cannot turn into wine; when a sapling is not blown by the wind, it cannot put down deep roots. Besides, all in all, our crisis really took a peaceful course" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 113).



The Arnoldus Family Story

A further clarification

Msgr. Dr. von Essen and Arnold Janssen

In the previous issues of the "Arnoldus Family Story" we read about the dispute between Fr. Bill and the seminarians Reichart and Anzer on the one side and Arnold Janssen on the other. The crisis reached a first climax with Fr. Bill transferring the legal ownership of the mission house to Fr. Arnold on March 24, 1876. However, already a few days earlier the relationship between Fr. Arnold and Msgr. Dr. von Essen, which right from the beginning had suffered "from mutual personal dislike" (Bornemann), fell apart. Let us remember: Msgr. Dr. von Essen was the priest in charge of the parish in Neuwerk near Mönchengladbach. It was in his house that Fr. Arnold met Msgr. Raimondi, the then Prefect Apostolic of Hong Kong, and it was then that Fr. Arnold was greatly surprised to hear that Msgr. von Essen thought of establishing a German mission house for German missionaries and had already received the Pope's blessing for it. Msgr. Raimondi suggested that Fr. Arnold and Msgr. von Essen team up and found the mission house together. However, neither of them really liked that idea. Nevertheless, they were able to establish a certain kind of cooperation: Msgr. von Essen allowed Fr. Arnold to use the papal blessing for making known the idea of the foundation of a mission house. Both of them signed a letter to Archbishop Melchers of Cologne, asking for his recommendation for founding the mission house and for his blessing. The letter contained also the purpose of the mission house and its spiritual foundation. In the end, Fr. Arnold and Msgr. von Essen agreed on the following manner of cooperation: Msgr. von Essen pledged to contribute financially to the mission house; Fr. Arnold, upon whose shoulders the whole foundation would rest, said that he would seek Msgr. von Essen's advice in "important external affairs of the house," which, however, did not mean that he would make his decision dependent on it (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelsang, Manila, 1975, p. 59.60).

On September 8, 1875 Msgr. von Essen celebrated the solemn High Mass for the opening of the mission house in Steyl. However, a few months later the relationship between Msgr. von Essen and Steyl came to an end.

Particularly through Fr. Bill, Msgr. von Essen had let himself be drawn into the internal controversies in Steyl and had supported the opposition. “The ultimate cause of the break was Janssen’s less than diplomatic letter of 12 March” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 116). Already for some time a new building had been planned. Msgr. von Essen had been invited to meetings about the plans, but had not attended them. On March 12, in the midst of the controversies, Fr. Arnold informed von Essen about a forthcoming meeting about the new building, for which 100.000 bricks had already been bought: “Owing to the present situation in the house and the position you have taken with regard to the administration, I cannot invite you to come here this time. I have to ask you to send your opinion in writing – by return mail or certainly as soon as possible” (*ibid.*, p. 116f).

On March 15, Msgr. von Essen replied: He was against the new building and Fr. Bill could tell him the reasons for it. He had discussed them with him. Then he continued: “The reason I did not come over is due mainly to the bad weather. Needless to say, having received your letter of the 12th of this month, I will not come this time either. With that you now cut my connection with you; ... When you say, ‘Owing to the present situation in the house and the position you have taken with regard to the administration,’ you know full well that I have taken no new position regarding you. I have the same position I have held since the summer of 1874, and I have the same opinion of you that I formed then. I do not want to repeat this since it is not particularly flattering, especially since the majority of the priests in Muenster shares it” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 117). “Furthermore, you say that I should not contact the members of the house directly. I have not yet done that; I was not the first to establish contact with a confrater [confrere]. However, when the men who live with you write to me, then there is no question of my not answering them.

Moreover, I will not abide by your request; for the mission house is not a house of a religious order, even though you want to make it one; the mission house is a seminary in which each member has the right to correspond freely; that is the case in any major seminary and also in the Scheut mission houses.

I cannot understand at all how you can point out to me ‘the obedience and the observance of the authority of the superior’. How did you become superior?” (Bornemann, *Der Pfarrer von Neuwerk Dr. Ludwig von Essen und seine Missionspläne* [The parish priest of Neuwerk Dr. Ludwig von Essen and his mission plans“, transl. J.O., Studia Instituti Missiologici Societatis Verbi Divini, Steyler Verlag, St. Augustin, 1967, p.120). “However, I do not want to embarrass you. I feel there is a lack of leadership and authority. There is still confusion and disorder; but how can the situation improve? The retreat alone will not bring this about. Pray earnestly that the Lord God may send a priest to assume responsibility for the house so that what was begun with such extraordinary effort may not continue to harbour the germ of infirmity which it had a priori – since it was begun without humility” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 117).

In a letter to Mgr. von Essen from May 7 Fr. Arnold accepted “the termination of our relationship” (*ibid.*, p.116).

J. B. Anzer’s view of the situation in the Missionhouse - from a letter to A. Janssen

(The letter has no date; at the head of the letter Fr. Arnold wrote: Anzer, as it seems, written around 20.3.)

Fr. Rector! You said that we should communicate to you our wishes and views in writing. For my part, I am doing so now. The disagreements among us, which now have come into the open, have been there already for a long time. As to whose fault it is, I do not want to look into that now. Perhaps everybody would have to accept quite a portion [of the guilt]. I only would like to draw attention to this: we should not be satisfied with the general, superficial way of speaking, like: “a great work has to meet with great difficulties”, but we should make a serious examination of conscience as to whether one did not cause the difficulties through one’s own fault.... I myself have not remained totally free of these disagreements and the principal cause of this is the attitude with which I joined you and your work. My thoughts and expectations were too idealistic. I also found here again that even when undertaking the holiest works human beings remain human, sometimes very human. So I believed amongst other things to find brothers here or if you prefer it, fathers, but I hardly found friends who mean well with me and are honest with me. In case I am wrong or was wrong in this with regard to your person I humbly ask your forgiveness and even penance. But to be honest, your way of acting had to make me suspicious, and only with regard to this point and in none other did I let myself perhaps be somewhat influenced also from another side. For I simply drew this conclusion: If you really meant honestly well with me, you would have had to give me an answer to my frequently made requests. Please, don’t say you had acted like that for ascetical reasons; for my questions were of the kind that even in the strictest monastery one immediately receives the information upon entering, and then here I am not in a monastery, but I am here, as you yourself have often said, to co-found a German mission house. ...Therefore I once again take the liberty, this time asked by yourself, to present to you a few requests.

1. How long do I still have to study theology *here as if I were still in school?* I will have soon completed what is prescribed in universities and what is more than enough for a missionary ... I furthermore say **here**; for the way the theological disciplines are treated here make one lose all desire and taste for study; there is no incentive here, but only an oppression of the spirit. Well, for the time being that cannot be changed.

2. When will I be ordained a priest? About these two questions I would like to hear your opinion before the retreat....