

Lord....You are to become missionaries, truly apostolic men! God's church needs holy apostles. The Lord calls them. And the faithful make their donations so that they can have a place to stay, to live piously and to work in order to become holy apostles one day. Therefore be zealous, pious and virtuous and your wishes will be fulfilled. But then pray that the Lord will also call holy and enlightened priests in order to educate you piously and virtuously.

O precious holiness, how little people desire you and respect you. Almost everybody wants to be pious, but only a few want to be holy. Mediocrity rules among us. But in our days God's holy church needs truly holy men not mediocre ones. The flood which brings ruin is more than mediocre and how can the gigantic be overcome by mediocrity! Therefore, Lord, send your church holy men...!"

Originally a third deacon had joined John Janssen and Hermann Wegener, Peter Hüls. Together with John Janssen he was ordained in Regensburg, yet after ordination he did not return to Steyl. For John Janssen and Hermann Wegener too, it was not interest in the missions which had been their decisive reason for joining Arnold Janssen in Steyl, but first of all the impossibility of working as a priest in their home diocese of Muenster due to the *Kulturkampf*. John Janssen wanted to wait and see in Steyl "the development of the *Kulturkampf* against the church" (Hermann Fischer, *Vater Arnolds Getreuen* [Father Arnold Faithful Ones], Steyl 1925, p. 299). Regarding Wegener, Hermann Fischer writes: "Wegener did not bring to Steyl what today is called a missionary vocation. He only got it in his new environment... Until then he had heard only little about pagan missions ... In Steyl for the first time Hermann Wegener came in touch with true Catholic missionary spirit". And that missionary spirit changed him. "Yet not suddenly. With his low opinion of his own abilities and with the great conscientiousness with which he always deliberated important steps, quickly arising enthusiasm could not push him into making such a most serious decision as to join the founder of Steyl. He observed, studied, prayed and in response to the inspiration of grace he declared his readiness to fulfill God's will ..." (*ibid.*, pp. 185-186). When the two deacons went to Steyl on the day after the closure of the seminary in Muenster, the future was lying "before them totally blurred. For the two deacons Steyl was at first a welcome asylum, also a first place to work. How their priestly life would further unfold was for them as unclear as the young Steyl foundation itself was still full of question marks" (*ibid.*, p. 299). When they returned to Steyl after their ordination nobody could guess, therefore, that 25 years later Fr. Arnold would say full of gratitude: "Those two God had sent me as my helpers" (*ibid.*, p. 301).



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The Arnoldus Family Story

ONCE AGAIN: JUNE 1875

On June 10 Bishop Paredis of Roermond ordained seminarian John Baptist Anzer as a subdeacon. In his June 1876 mission magazine "Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote" (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) Fr. Arnold wrote about this ordination:

"The ordination took place upon the presentation of the Rector of the mission house and under the title of mission...". What does that mean?

Fr. Arnold continues: "A person who is ordained under this title has to commit himself for ever through an oath to the mission work of the Catholic Church and without permission of Propaganda he cannot join any other religious order or congregation."

On June 16, 1876 Fr. Arnold and John Baptist Anzer had consecrated themselves to "Christ for the apostolic work of the house" and they had vowed forever "obedience to God under the superior of the house and his deputy." "For Anzer the sacrifice of the vow of obedience cost him his life blood. It was his contribution to the foundation of the Steyl mission seminary" (Bornemann, *Johann Baptist Anzer bis zur Ankunft in Shantung 1880* [John Baptist Anzer until the arrival in Shantung 1880], *Analecta SVD* – 38, Rome 1977, p. 28). Since he made this consecration and vow together with the founder, Anzer is – as Fr. Arnold wrote, probably in 1878 in an unpublished Latin document, to be considered "as co-founder of our Society" (*ibid.*). This document was a draft and did not "establish a legal relationship, but it is a witness of Fr. Arnold's favorable view of Anzer in those early years (*ibid.*, p.29). Anzer was well aware of his position and "he attached a certain value to the title 'co-founder'-even 10 and 15 years later" (*ibid.*, p. 28).

JULY 1876

On July 1, 1876 Nicholas Blum entered Steyl; after the death of Arnold Janssen he became his first successor in the office of Superior General. Even before he became Superior General he was one of the leading personalities building up the Steyl mission organization. Concerning the day of his arrival in Steyl Nicholas Blum remembers:

"I entered Steyl on July 1, 1876. ... It was Saturday evening. Sister Urbana who opened the door for me, ushered me into the Rector's anteroom. It was not an anteroom really; the room had simply been divided by a big cupboard into two parts. Through one of the doors of the cupboard one entered the proper living room in which there was hardly space enough to stand up. Sister Urbana said: 'Father Rector is in the chapel; he will come soon.' ... I was rather disconcerted when this haggard man stood before me and greeted me. His cassock was somewhat dirty and worn; his biretta was green with age and torn on one side. And his beard was untidy. Although he was very friendly, I was nevertheless dreadfully disappointed. I then had to drink coffee. The fact that, as I was accustomed, I took the coffee without saying grace, probably did not recommend me particularly right from the start because I was so impious- at least so I thought at the time. Then the Rector took me on a guided tour of the House. In this way I got to meet my fellow students. ... We went next to the printing press. ... Meanwhile it was time for supper. We went to the refectory. ... The meal consisted of tea and a slice of bread on which one could put some cheese. That was ok with me. For I had come to Steyl with the thought and the expectation to be content with water and bread" (see Bornemann, *Remembering Arnold Janssen, Analecta SVD* – 42. Rome 1978, p.81, transl. John Vogelsang, amended by JO).

Since Nicholas Blum is such an important man in the history of the Arnold Janssen family, here are some important dates of his life: Born in 1857 at Lammersdorf, Trier diocese; priestly ordination 1883. Before he entered Steyl he was a clerk in a railway office. After ordination he held the following offices: procurator, treasurer general, consultor general, assistant general (from 1906 on), rector of Steyl (1902-1908), administrator general (1909), Superior General (1909- 1919). He died on October 29, 1919 (see *ibid.*, p. 422).

On **July 16, 1876** the two deacons of the diocese of Muenster, John Janssen (Fr. Arnold's youngest brother) and Hermann Wegener were ordained priests. Because of the *Kulturkampf* (cultural battle) they and their 29 fellow deacons could not be ordained in Muenster. The rector of their seminary, therefore, asked the bishops of Regensburg and Eichstätt in Bavaria to ordain them. The 31 deacons were divided into two groups and John Janssen was ordained by the Bishop of Regensburg and Hermann Wegener by the Bishop of Eichstätt. The deacons had to travel to Bavaria "in civilian clothes and individually, in order to keep the purpose of the journey secret". Even in Steyl it became known only after their departure why the two deacons had disappeared so quietly (Hermann Fischer, *Vater Arnold's Getreuen* [Fr. Arnold's Faithful Ones], Steyl 1925, p. 300). "For Arnold Janssen the ordination of his brother John must have been a grand event since he had made his way to the priesthood possible" (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, Arnoldus Press Manila, 1975, p. 100). The Steyl community felt itself in solidarity with the two deacons and showed their solidarity with a little sacrifice: "During these three days [before ordination]

we are having only water and bread instead of coffee in the afternoon. That is for you", Fr. Arnold wrote to his brother John on July 13 (*ibid.*).

On **July 19, 1876** the two newly ordained priests celebrated their first holy Mass in the new chapel of the Steyl mission house.

"Even though serious efforts had been made, everything in the house, also on this day, expressed the greatest poverty. The small, provisional chapel was decorated with flowers and greenery as well as possible. However, the vestment for the two was rather poor, made only partly of silk; likewise all church vessels were very simple. Monstrance and even ciborium were lacking; a chalice was used as a ciborium. The poorer it was outwardly, the richer all the participants were in inner joy. It was the first time for the young Steyl foundation that newly ordained priests celebrated their first Holy Mass; later hundreds of those first holy Masses followed. However, no celebration caused so much thanksgiving and joy as this one which took place under such poor circumstances – which however gave to the young mission house two of their very best men (Hermann Fischer, *Vater Arnolds Getreuen* [Father Arnolds faithful ones], Steyl 1925, p. 300).

Having celebrated their first Mass, John Janssen and Hermann Wegener began "their year of probation immediately" as was provided for by the statutes of 1876 (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, Manila 1975, p. 100).

Fr. Arnold wrote about the celebration of the first holy Mass in the August 1876 issue of his mission magazine "Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote" (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart):

"On the feast of St. Vincent de Paul (July 19) we were fortunate to see two priests of our house go for the first time up to the altar of the Lord, in order to offer to the Lord of Hosts the great, bloodless sacrifice of the new covenant. ... The task which leads them into the house and for whose successful achievement they wish to cooperate is certainly a great one which needs holy men for its realization. They are to form missionaries, that is men who are willing to sacrifice body and life in order to spread God's kingdom on earth! Indeed, a great, noble and blessed task! Thanks be to God who made them want to cooperate in such a holy task! Will they find more helpers? May God grant it! Or has our time become too petty to be able to understand and grasp something truly great? ...

We implore, however, the Lord God to raise up young and talented priests and to put the desire into their heart, to participate in this great and blessed task....

There will be no lack of laborers in the vineyard. Our house is still little known, and already from the most diverse sides applications of students are coming in and are increasing day by day. And how happy the young people feel when they reach their goal and can enter an institution which will open for them the road to the doors of priestly missionary life. How they like to study and work, how they like to dedicate themselves to the pious exercises. Therefore, continue studying, you young people, sanctify yourselves in the quietness before the face of the