

On his way to Rome he made many stops. First he went to Bishop Paredis in Roermond and asked him to write under his report to Pope Leo a confirmation and recommendation. The Bishop wrote that with good conscience he could say that the report was true and the writer, the Rev. Arnold Janssen in the conduct of his life was “blameless, exemplary and commendable in every way.” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila, p. 121).

On May 28, 1878 Fr. Arnold travelled from Roermond to Paris. He visited the Paris seminary for the foreign missions and the Dominican house of studies. “In both places he learned all he could about the order of studies in philosophy and theology, the textbooks used, and the assignment of classes to the various professors. He also jotted down the titles of books on the great mission fields of the Paris Missionaries” (*ibid.*, pp. 121-122).

In Strasbourg he met with the Vicar General of the archdiocese and then went on to Bellemagny to the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration who from the beginning had shown a great interest in the mission house (see *ibid.*, p. 122). Fr. Alt writes in a footnote that this visit with the Sisters had been “worthy of note in view of the later foundation of the Steyl Adoration Sisters. Here he became acquainted with a custom that for decades afterwards was practiced in the SVD houses. For after the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament the Sisters sang the antiphon “*Adoremus*” and Ps. 116” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 172, footnote 8). The journey went on to Freiburg in Switzerland where Fr. Arnold informed himself about the press apostolate there. Then he went to Lyons and visited the President of the Society of the Propagation of Faith, in order to “recommend his great undertaking to the magnanimity of the esteemed council”; he also visited the Marist Missionaries (Society of Mary – SM) (*ibid.*). In Turin (Italy) Fr. Arnold got to know Don Bosco and the big house which he had founded (H. auf der Heide, *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl* [The Mission Society of Steyl], Steyl 1900, p. 73). In Milan he went to see the seminary for the foreign missions and its superior. Bishop Raimondi of Hong Kong was a member of that mission house. Of special importance was Fr. Arnold’s visit to the grave of St. Dominic in Bologna on June 13 and 14, 1878. Here he began to draft a rule in which he wrote: “*The confreres should go where they are sent and preach the gospel to non-believers, especially pagan peoples; they should be sent where the greatest advantage for souls can be expected*” (Alt, *Journey in faith*, p. 172). From Bologna Fr. Arnold went to Rome via Assisi. He “probably arrived in Rome on June 16” (*ibid.*).

*To All Sisters and Brothers
In the Arnoldus Family
A blessed and Joyous Christmas Season!*



The Arnoldus Family Story

FR. ARNOLD JANSSEN’S FIRST JOURNEY TO ROME (1878)

A look at the life of the mission house in Steyl

A quick look at the overall development of the mission house until the year 1878 lets us say with Fr. Josef Alt: “*Steyl had proven its viability. The number of students grew from semester to semester. The teaching staff was assured thanks to diocesan priests from Germany. Buildings were put up and the necessary money came in*” (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, Steyler Verlag, Nettetal, 2002, p. 170).

Now Fr. Arnold felt that it was time to introduce the new mission house personally to the new Pope Leo XIII, to ask for his blessing for the seminary and its friends and to seek from Rome a mission territory, preferably in China.

PREPARING THE JOURNEY TO ROME

Fr. Arnold asked the Internuncio in The Hague for a letter of recommendation. In his reply the Internuncio wrote: Even though he did not know the seminary in Steyl and that for that reason he was unable to evaluate what was being done there, he was “*well acquainted with Father Janssen and I can give him an unqualified recommendation with respect to his spirituality, his faithful adherence to the mind of the Church and his dedication to its interests*” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Arnoldus Press Manila, 1975, p. 1975, p. 121).

Fr. Arnold also wrote a report about the mission house in Steyl for Pope Leo XIII (May 28, 1878). This report was written in Latin and follows now – almost in its totality – in an English translation which is based on a German translation from Latin by Fr. Rudolf Kalesse SVD:

“Holy Father!

Arnold Janssen, Rector of the house for foreign missions in Steyl, Diocese of Roermond, [kneeling] at the feet of your Holiness makes the following presentation:

The goal of our house is the propagation of faith amongst the pagans. We accept only those students who want to reach this goal. But we accept them already at the age of taking classical studies [in high school], like the apostolic schools in France and in that way we clearly see the richest fruits regarding the number and the good spirit of the students.

We do not require any money from poor students if they show a true vocation and can present good references.

“We do not have a regular *income* nor have we ever had one, but on the feast of the birth of Mary in the year 1875 we began in total poverty, since our money had been used up for the purchase of the mission house. From the Lyons based society of the propagation of faith we did not ask for money. From the Bavarian “Ludwig Mission Society” we did not receive anything. We did not have any other collections, neither in churches nor in the houses of the faithful, even though our mission house was erected with the blessing of Pope Pius IX of blessed memory and of almost all the bishops of Germany, Austria and the Netherlands.

“And yet there was hardly anybody who expected us to survive for long; even the journal “*Die Katholischen Missionen*” [The Catholic Missions] which was edited in Germany by certain religious men did not support us – I do not know why! Only the Franciscans and some other friends helped us.

“In addition, during the first six months we had many difficulties so that it looked as if the house would perish completely. But after we had tasted of the Lord’s chalice, we also received a share in His goodness. We then experienced such blessings that a bishop from the missions, Vicar Apostolic Comboni, during a recent visit exclaimed: “You have received a great blessing, he said to me, not a small one, not a mediocre one – believe me, you received a huge blessing, I know those things.

“The *number of students* at the present time is forty; the number of teachers is seven. Five of them are priests who have joined the house through a vow or who want to do that later on.

“The house is already sufficiently big ..., so that it is suitable for 80 students. ... We usually start new buildings when they seem to us to be necessary, even though we may have almost no money. In doing so we hope to receive the necessary funds from St. Joseph, and until now we have never been disappointed. The house is not burdened by debts even though we have already paid large sums of money.

“Our main patrons are: the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the immaculate Heart of Mary, and blessed Archangel Michael and all the angels.

We wish to be connected with one another through the bonds of a religious congregation and we wish to be called “Society of the Divine Word in the service of the King and Queen of angels.”

“With regard to the missions we want to follow particularly the example of the old missionaries. In order to be better able to do that the members of our society have joined the third order of St. Dominic, and also the students observe four days of abstinence every week. However, that concerns the individual persons only; until now the house is not a house of the third order and will certainly not be one in the near future.

“Besides the angels we venerate, and that in the first place, the Word which has become flesh for us. Since it is the light which illumines every human being who comes into this world, we trust in its help in the missions. Since it is also the eternal wisdom to which each created light has to subject itself,” it is the task of the teachers in the schools, to dedicate themselves “with great zeal to the sciences” and to

cooperate, “that the false worldly gods will be destroyed and all created wisdom will subject itself to the eternal wisdom.”

“The love of the Divine Word which is shining in a pure and strong spirit, in a simple way of life and in the gifts of the intellect, but which becomes fruitful in apostolic efforts, is our ideal goal. We are striving for it and by looking at it we distrust our own strength and we never expect anything extraordinary from ourselves. However, we strive for the greater in order to reach at least that which is smaller. ...

Our house was not erected in Germany or Austria, but in those parts of the Netherlands which are adjacent to Germany, because the kingdom of the Netherlands grants such liberties for the foundation which we cannot have in other countries. But as soon as possible we intend to found a second house either in the German-speaking part of Switzerland or in Liechtenstein or in a part of Bavaria or Austria in so far as the necessary permission will be granted.

We have a printing press and publish two journals: the one, “*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote*” (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) is published monthly, the other, the “*Heilige Stadt Gottes*” (Holy City of God) is published weekly. Through them we seek to awaken and to encourage the missionary zeal of the faithful, and in that way we also seek to win personnel and the necessary financial means for our house. Both journals are illustrated with pictures. 12 000 copies are printed of the first one, 3 000 of the second one which was only published five months ago.

From the Holy Father we have received the following encouragements: On the occasion of the celebration of the inauguration on September 8, 1875 Pope Pius IX of blessed memory sent us his apostolic blessing through His Eminence, Cardinal Franchi; ...”

Concerning the matter of the founding of the mission house, so Fr. Arnold continues, in January 1874 he had begun with the publication of the journal “Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart” and by writing for the missions. “In the summer of 1874 the Most Rev. Raimondi, Prefect Apostolic of Hong Kong, who visited me twice, encouraged me not only to write about the foundation of a seminary, but to begin this work myself. Initially I resisted. But after he had left I believed more and more to recognize God’s will. I made a beginning and approached my own bishop, the Most Rev. Bishop John B. Brinkmann, Bishop of Muenster; furthermore the Most Rev. local Bishop, Bishop Paredis of Roermond; later I turned to other bishops and even to the Holy See. Before that I had for twelve years been a teacher of natural sciences and mathematics in a public school in Westphalia. In that way I was prepared to lead such an institution.

“Having given you this report I ask urgently that your Holiness may embrace our modest beginning with paternal love and that you may lead it in the direction that it can do a little for the honor of God and the salvation of the poor pagans” (Latin original in *Verbum* 2, 1960, pp. 214-216).

The Journey to Rome

Before he started his journey to Rome, Fr. Arnold entrusted the running of the mission house for the time of his absence to Rev. John Baptist Anzer.