

ultimate source of all knowledge and, finally, since the Church will not achieve nor maintain dominion over the spirits on earth if she does not also increasingly have a command of the sciences, together with true piety and apostolic zeal: for these reasons, therefore, our seminary also wishes to work for the aforementioned purpose side by side with other much more learned and more eminent men, as I had intended from the beginning and had already expressed in writing before the foundation, and therefore our seminary will openly state this as its second task for those who are capable of it.

Therefore we also wish, particularly through the teachers in our colleges, where possible to further the progress of the sciences in the true knowledge of human and divine things, and to do so in such a way that in everything we act in a true Catholic spirit, in the footsteps of those who received most light from the Divine Word: the authors of Holy Scripture, the teachers of the Church, in particular St. Thomas Aquinas; keeping to the infallible teaching of the Catholic Church and the Roman Pontiff and expounding everything in their spirit.

Since, however, our possibilities by no means appear sufficient, would you, Most Holy Father, if you approve of our intention and endeavour to combine science with the apostolic spirit, be pleased to give us your special apostolic blessing so that, if it pleases God, we may attain what we strive for.” (auf der Heide, *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl* (The Missionary Society of Steyl), pp. 75-76).

Pope Leo read this report “from the first to the last word aloud, frequently interrupting his reading with *bene, bene* (good, good!) and once with the word *optime* (very good!). At the end he said:

‘Et etiam ad hoc dabo tibi benedictionem particularem ac singularem, ut mereatis fieri boni athlethae in vinea Domini. In nomine + Patris et + Filii et + Spiritus Sancti. Amen.’

This means: ‘And also to this I give you a special and particular blessing, so that you may deserve to become good spiritual athletes in the vineyard of the Lord. In the name of the + Father and of the + Son and of the +Holy Spirit. Amen’” (*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], September 1878, p. 71).

After that the Pope extended his hand to Fr. Arnold so that he could kiss it “and I knelt down to kiss his feet also. Then I stood up and left the room...” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 174). After the audience Fr. Arnold made some more visits, prayed in St. Peter’s at the tombs of all the saints buried there and in the evening of this memorable July 12, 1878 he left Rome for the Holy House in Loretto where he arrived the next morning, July 13. By “9.45 [am] I was standing at the altar in the house where the Eternal Word was made Flesh”, Fr. Arnold wrote (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila 1975, p. 124).



The Arnoldus Family Story

FR. ARNOLD JANSSEN IN ROME

Fr. Arnold arrived in Rome around June 16, 1878. At first he stayed at the Campo Teutonico near St. Peter’s, a college for German-speaking priest students; later he moved to another German speaking college, the Anima near Piazza Navona (see Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, Steyler Verlag Nettetal 2002, p. 172).

Meeting with Cardinal Simeoni

Soon after his arrival in Rome Fr. Arnold was able to meet the new Prefect of the Propaganda, Cardinal Simeoni. He gave him the report about the mission house which he had written in May [see Arnoldus Family Story, December 2014]. Furthermore he told him that the mission house wanted to send its priest John Baptist Anzer to China.

In Steyl everybody was waiting for some news about a possible first mission territory. In a PS of a letter to Frs. Anzer and Wegener Fr. Arnold wrote: “Concerning the missions, all pagan lands with the exception of Sumatra, Borneo and New Guinea have been given away. Consequently, even if it wanted to, Propaganda could not give us any territory there without asking the respective Vicars Apostolic. So it would be presumptuous and unwise to press the issue ... So do not say there is already a question of getting our own mission. If you have said that, then try to correct it by all means” (see Alt, *Journey in Faith*, pp. 172-173).

Cardinal Simeoni made a good impression on Fr. Arnold: He “and his secretary Agnozzi ... are well-disposed towards us. That is a positive development with which we must be satisfied for the time being, since our contact is now official. Now that they know us, later negotiations will be easier” (*ibid.*, p. 173).

A priest who in those days worked at the Propaganda, Agliardi, later told one of Fr. Arnold’s secretaries, Fr. Hilger, about this first visit of Fr. Arnold with Cardinal Simeoni:

“I recall with pleasure... the first time Fr. Arnold Janssen came to Rome in 1878 to ask for the blessing of the Prefect of the Propaganda (Cardinal Simeoni) for his project. He (Agliardi) was then only a minutante and was assigned to work on Fr. General’s report. Simeoni asked, What can this penniless priest have in mind? It was simply impossible to establish a mission seminary in Germany then. But he told the

Cardinal he believed Janssen's comportment showed that he was a man of God and the right man to realize such a project. Anyway he would lose nothing by giving the blessing, there was no risk in that. So Simeoni gave his blessing to the plan" (*ibid.*).

Waiting for the audience with Pope Leo XIII

On June 23, 1878, Fr. Arnold sought Cardinal Simeoni's help for an audience with Pope Leo XIII. During the time of waiting for the audience, Fr. Arnold prepared a further report about the mission house in writing for the pope.

On July 1, he walked together with the Rector of the Collegio Teutonico, Msgr. de Waal, who had been ordained a priest in Muenster a year after Fr. Arnold, to the catacomb of St. Sebastian and collected a few stones as relics.

First and Second audience with Pope Leo XIII

Since at first it was not possible to get a private audience, Fr. Arnold was admitted to a public audience, "at the end of which all present were introduced to the Pope individually" (Hermann auf der Heide, *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl. Die ersten 25 Jahre ihres Bestehens* (The Mission Society of Steyl. The first 25 years of its existence), Steyl 1900, pp. 73-74), and Fr. Arnold was able to report shortly about the foundation and progress of the house (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Arnoldus Press Manila, 1975, p. 122).

On July 12, 1878, at 1 pm, Fr. Arnold was finally admitted to a private audience with Pope Leo XIII. To Rev. Leopold Ochs, priest and teacher in the Steyl Mission House, he wrote later: "How many great and splendid anterooms, the walls and the floor decorated with beautiful marble! When I was finally called to enter the Holy Father's living room I found it extraordinarily modest and rather small in relation to the anterooms" (Arnold Janssen, Letter to Leopold Ochs, 16.7.1878, Generalate SVD archive nos. 11520-522, in "*Letters of Arnold Janssen*", transcription Franz Bosold SVD, CD arrangement: Sebastian Mattapallil, SVD).

For the readers of the mission magazine "Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote" (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) Fr. Arnold wrote the following report in the September 1878 issue:

"During this summer the Rector of the Mission House travelled to the capital city of Catholic Christianity to pray there at the tomb of the holy apostles and to personally give a report about our house. The rector was most cordially welcomed by his Eminence, Cardinal Simeoni, Prefect of the Propaganda who on behalf of the Holy Father presides over the foreign missions. Most cordial also was the welcome of Archbishop i.p. Agnozzi, secretary of the Propaganda, as well as, finally, of the Holy Father himself who was so kind as to receive me in a public and a private audience.

With great pleasure the Holy Father received the information which I could give

him about the foundation and the progress of our house. He remarked that there were certainly great difficulties ahead of us (which, by the way, the dear Lord gave us already in great measure right at the beginning); however, we should always stand firm in our confidence in God, and then we would certainly receive help. To this purpose he wanted to give us a Benedictio specialissima, that is a very special blessing, so that we would become worthy and true spiritual athletes in the vineyard of the Lord. Thus the hallowed spiritual head of our Church.

If only these words, coming from such an exalted mouth, may be fulfilled in us! Would that they become for us strength in our weakness, support in all tribulation and animating confidence in a happy conclusion!

In the private audience, which I received through the recommendation of His Eminence, Cardinal Simeoni, I was fortunate to be able to present to the Holy Father a further oral report about the foundation of the house and its progress up to now and at the same time to give to him the magazines published by our house ".

The audience went like this:

*"The Holy Father stood opposite the entrance and gave me a very warm welcome. I knelt down before him and he offered me his ring to kiss, after which he bade me stand up. First I gave a short report in Latin about the foundation, goal, and establishment of our house. He listened with great interest. Then, on a big silver dish given to me in the anteroom, I presented him with the magazines of our house. These had been bound in white silk in the bookbindery of the Propaganda and marked with the papal coat-of-arms. On top was the Sacred Heart Messenger, all the issues published so far. He looked at a few pictures and asked about the title and contents of the magazine. I explained both and told him that this magazine made the foundation of our house possible and still helps to support it. Then he took the Stadt Gottes and looked at the pictures of the first four issues and admired their beauty. When he came to the page with his own picture, I told him that it had been printed before his election and it was suggested then that he would be raised to the throne of Peter. He asked in surprise, Et hoc erat ante electionem? [And that was before the election?] Then I handed him some other items of information about our house that I had formulated more precisely in writing" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 174).*

This information, written in Latin, reads in English:

"... Our seminary will work mainly for the spread of the gospel among the pagans and for this purpose it has several times already received the blessing of the Holy See and of very many bishops of Germany, Austria and the Netherlands.

But since our seminary must also have houses of studies and will perhaps have to compete in the missions with the schools of other believers, particularly, however, since at its foundation it was dedicated to the Divine Word who became a human being for us and who is not only the light and help of the missionaries but also the