

regrettable that the house was poorly built and hardly was it completed when it needed repairs. Besides, it stands rather near to the priests' house; at least there is a wish and a plan to eventually move it. But it has stood for some years now; ... If one wants to prevent a view of the veranda of the Sisters' house, he would have to build a 4-5 meter wall or fence. But both are impossible..."

#### *Apostolic Vicariate*

According to church law, New Guinea was an Apostolic Prefecture. Fr. Limbrock, the Apostolic Prefect, now writes: Last year, in his annual report to the Propaganda he had asked if it would not be appropriate "to raise this mission to a Vicariate Apostolic and with due respect I requested it." And so Steyl should for its part take the necessary steps. "I would also like to attach the request that they look around for an appropriate person [to become bishop]." He himself was "out of question as a choice for bishop" (ibid., p. 86, footnote 4).

#### **The Spirit of a Missionary**

Fr. Limbrock writes: "It is difficult even in Europe nowadays to direct priests and foster in them the correct spirit [...] how much more difficult will it be to do that so far away from superiors and higher authorities, in wild and heathen areas, where everything exudes caprice, arbitrariness, and passion. How easy it is there for selfishness, pride, stubbornness and the like, hiding behind all kinds of excuses, to try to withdraw from obedience. [...] A prefect apostolic often seems like a big zero, whose directives merit hardly any consideration" (ibid., pp. 56-57, footnote 5).

#### **ARGENTINA**

January 19: Fr. Arnold writes to Fr. Provincial Colling in Argentina.  
(On behalf of Fr. Arnold, Fr. Colling was also responsible for the Holy Spirit Sisters)

1. Herewith I accept Srs. Andrea Superior [of the Holy Spirit Sisters in Argentina], Scholastica Beckert and Xaveria Kaup for their final vows. I thank the Sisters for their zealous work which they have done until now in the service of the congregation and wish them a long life and the richest blessings of the Holy Spirit for everything they do.

3. It is my intention to put very soon the promotion to investiture and first vows totally into your hand ... Since you have only very little experience in it, I must at first reserve for myself the supervision, that means: Half a year before the promotion you request the necessary papers and send them then to me with your decision. I take note of it and send the papers back to you and show if and where your decisions seem to need improvement ... (Jos. Alt, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach Südamerika* [Letters to South America], vol. II, pp. 326-328).

#### **PARAGUAY – ARGENTINA – January 19:**

*Bishop Juan Sinforiano Bogarin of Asuncion in Paraguay writes to Fr. Vogt in Argentina*

In his letter the bishop asks "if the Society could establish a mission station for the indigenous Indians between Villa-Encarnacion and Tacuro Puco and to whom he should turn" (ibid., p. 406, footnote 2 to letter 332).



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## **The Arnoldus Family Story**

### **150 YEARS AGO**

#### **AUGUST 1875**

##### **August 4: Payment of the Mission House**

On August 4, Arnold Janssen and Fr. Bill went to Venlo where they were joined by seminarian Reichart who had come from Louvain. "In the presence of the notary, Clerckx, in Blerick [today suburb of Venlo], the house was registered under Father Bill's name. ... The sale price was then paid out in 13,600 Marks plus 731 Gulden for legal costs. An additional 3,400 Marks were to be paid a year later when the storehouse was made available" (Bornemann, transl. John Vogelgesang, *Arnold Janssen*, Manila 1975, p. 65).

Why was the house registered in Fr. Bill's name? Fr. Arnold reasoned like this: Fr. Bill was from Luxemburg, therefore he could more easily acquire Dutch citizenship. He, Arnold Janssen, could not do that for: "I must keep one foot in Germany and cannot give up my German citizenship." His plan was this: "Father Bill pays, but I lend him the money taken from the donations received; he in turn gives me a promissory note. At the same time, he draws up a will bequeathing the house to me...." (ibid. p.66).

The mission house having been paid for, Reichart went on to Steyl. There Erlemann gave up his room in the village. "He and Reichart spent the night of 4 August on the new property, the first to sleep in the seminary. From that time on they also did their own cooking" (ibid.).

##### **August 5: First conference in the mission house**

On this day Arnold Janssen, Fr. Bill and seminarian Reichart held their first conference in the mission house. "The most urgent matter was the election of a superior," and Arnold Janssen was elected. Two days later Arnold Janssen informed the Bishop of Roermond of his election: "The obedient undersigned has been provisionally chosen superior and asks for episcopal confirmation of the election. A definite election will not be held until after the statutes have been formulated and the project is on a more permanent footing." On August 10 the Bishop wrote: "Read and approved by the Bishop of Roermond – J.A. Paredis" (ibid.).

From now on Fr. Arnold called himself "Rector".

After the election Fr. Arnold showed Bill and Reichart a draft for the objectives of the mission house. A distinction was made between "general purpose and special objectives; the latter are subdivided into principal objective and secondary objective."

Particularly striking in the description of the general goal is the strong emphasis on the Blessed Trinity and on the Divine Word which “as light enlightening every person who comes into the world” is the uncreated wisdom “that lives in the Heart of Jesus and wishes to dwell in the hearts of all people.” This is the motivation for the main goal, namely “the propagation of the faith in pagan lands.”... The secondary goal is the cultivation of true scholarship in theology, the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas and of those saints who were filled with divine light. ... In order to have missionaries for the propagation of the faith, “we need schools in which the aspirants are educated, not only in the spirit of piety and magnanimity but also in the humanities and foreign languages, as well as in theology and philosophy. Consequently we need suitable teachers who can fulfill this task with the help of that Word who is the Eternal Wisdom” (Jos. Alt, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, *Journey in Faith*, Steyler Verlag, 2002. p. 75).

Another point on the agenda of this first conference was the introduction of the Rule of the Third Order of St. Dominic. This Rule involved four days of abstinence and one day of fasting. Fr. Bill and Reichart opposed this as being impossible to be practiced. In the end they agreed on a compromise: the introduction of the rule was recommended (ibid., p. 76).

#### **First orders for the mission house**

The house Fr. Arnold had bought was completely empty – so the necessary things had to be bought. On August 9 Fr. Arnold sent the following order to Miss Helene Wolters, a businesswoman in Venlo:

“I hereby order four beds of the kind you already supplied: length 185cm inside, breadth 80cm inside.

“I request delivery of the first two soon, the other two for 1 September.” Fr. Arnold’s memo slip read: “The beds were to have straw mattresses, 180 cm long, 80cm wide, and 24 cm thick. The straw was to be as it comes out of the threshing machine. The specifications for the cotton covers were 160 cm wide, 235 cm long, with the result: ‘Thus on each side the cover hangs down 18 cm’ (ibid., p. 79).

#### **Br. Juniperus, Wilhelm Janssen OFM Cap**

Because of the Cultural War in Germany the Capuchins had to leave their monastery in Muenster. The Provincial Superior sent Br. Juniperus to his brother Arnold Janssen to help him in the establishment of the new mission house.

#### **August 27: Arnold Janssen moves from Kempen to Steyl**

Br. Juniperus arrived in Kempen just in time to help with the packing. Fr. Arnold himself was a bit in a sad mood. On August 24 he wrote: “I will pack on Thursday and on Friday leave for Steyl. What the future holds in store for me I do not know, but I put my trust in God. Still, I cannot deny that the whole thing weighs on my soul like a rock. But I must get on with it” (Bornemann, transl. John Vogelgesang, *Arnold Janssen*, Manila 1975, p. 70).

Two farmers from nearby Kempen each provided a wagon for the transfer. From early Thursday morning on, the two wagons were in front of the Ursuline convent. Henry Erlemann had come from Steyl to help with the packing. In the evening the

packing was completed and Erlemann went back to Steyl.

On the following morning, Friday 27 August, Arnold Janssen rose at 4 am and offered “Mass for the last time in the chapel where a year earlier he had made the decision regarding his life’s great adventure.” Around 5:30 a man came from each of the two farms with a team of horses which they hitched on the loaded wagons and then went on their way to Steyl. Br. Juniperus followed along on foot. Arnold Janssen went by train to Kaldenkirchen. At the railway station he waited for the two wagons.

From Kaldenkirchen to Steyl, Fr. Arnold walked alongside the wagons. “By 1:30 Steyl was in sight. People came out of their houses to greet them. At the last bend in the road, Professor Moubis welcomed them to Dutch territory: “Welcome, Mijnheer Rector Janssen, to Dutch soil, welcome, welcome!” Erlemann and Reichart were waiting in front of the seminary. “Thanks be to God we are here!” Father Janssen said. “By five o’clock the wagons had been unloaded. The drivers were each given a tip of 2.50 Marks and then returned home” (ibid., pp. 70-71).

## **27 YEARS LATER**

### **JANUARY 1902 – St. Gabriel**

#### **January 5: Introduction of the new Rector**

After the death of Fr. Rector Eikenbrock, Fr. Arnold appointed the 43 year old Fr. Breidenbach as the new rector of St. Gabriel. On January 5 he introduced him into his office. During the ceremony he said: “The trust of your superiors has called you to become the successor of the two just mentioned worthy men [John Janssen and Bernhard Eikenbrock]. Herewith I place a holy shepherd’s crook into your hands. You know that this house is the central house of our society. From here shall still hundreds of newly ordained priests go out [into the world]. The house has already many residents, many teachers and priests, students and Brothers. The day before yesterday, January 3, on the first Friday of this year, I have appointed you for three years rector of this great and important house. Be a good father and shepherd for it and step firmly and decisively into the footsteps of your saintly predecessors.” The residents of the house were admonished, “to look at the things of this world with the eyes of faith. [...] Far away may therefore be the spirit of criticism and faultfinding, which is very much to the disadvantage of the individual as well as of the whole society” (Jos. Alt, *Die Geschichte des Missionshauses St. Gabriel* [History of St. Gabriel’s Mission House], Verlag St. Gabriel 1990, p. 103).

### **NEW GUINEA**

#### **January 7: Fr. Limbrock writes to Fr. Arnold**

#### *The Sisters’ Convent*

First Fr. Limbrock talks about the Sisters’ convent:

“From the outset I would like you to know that the house was built in my absence mostly by a priest who had been in contact with your Reverence about it. ... It is