

## Fr. Anzer in Vienna

On May 7, 1885 Fr. Anzer was also in Vienna. Here he got to know Miss Leitner. To Fr. Freinademetz in China Fr. Arnold wrote a month later: "In Vienna I again received great graces: Fr. Anzer was there as well and spoke with the graced person [Miss Leitner] and asked her about many things, He is full of enthusiasm about her, even though initially he had doubted a lot. Enriched with many graces he will return to China and praise his stay in Europe as a happy event for him (Bornemann, *Ferdinand Meidts und [and] Magdalena Leitner In der Geschichte des Steyler Missionswerkes* [in the history of the Steyl mission organization], *Verbum Supplementum* 4, Rome 1968, p. 58).

## Audience with the Austrian Emperor and return to Steyl

Before May 19, Fr. Arnold was received by the Austrian Emperor and he reported about that: "The Austrian Emperor has openly espoused the cause of the foundation and, in response to my request, has ordered the head of the Chancery, Baron von Braun, to speak a good word in its behalf with the governor of Vienna" (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila, p. 205). On May 19, Fr. Arnold left Vienna for Steyl (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 215).

## IN STEYL

### ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD – FIRST DUTCH SVD PRIEST



Th. Vilstermann

The next big event in Steyl was the priestly ordination of 7 Steyl deacons. Prior to it, from May 23-30, Fr. Arnold preached the retreat to the deacons who were ordained on May 30 by Bishop Paredis of Roermond. Before their first Mass Fr. Arnold preached another short retreat for them from June 1-3. One of the newly ordained was Fr. Theodor Vilstermann, the first Dutch SVD to be ordained, who went as missionary to China. Together with him were ordained Frs. Augustinus Henninghaus, who later became his bishop in China, Henry Erlemann, carpenter and builder in Steyl and then in China and Rudolf Pieper who was also appointed for China. About the first Mass we read in the *Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) of July 1885: "A sevenfold first Holy Mass celebration! The high and august feast of Corpus Christi could not have been celebrated in a more worthy and exalted way! How can we repay the Lord for all that he has done for us! We want to add that for the first time, with Rev. Th. Vilstermann, a Dutch student of our house celebrated his first holy Mass."

*May the risen Savior fill you all with new courage,  
new strength and a new spirit of sacrifice in His holy service"*

*Arnold Janssen*

*A happy and blessed Easter!*



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## The Arnoldus Family Story

### WORDS OF RECOGNITION OF THE STEYL MISSION HOUSE

In the "Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote" (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) of March 1885 we read: During the general assembly of German Catholics in Amberg (southern Germany) in 1884, the leader of the Catholic Centre Party in Germany, Ludwig Windthorst tabled the following motion: "The General Assembly gladly approves of the work of the Mission House in Steyl to train as many zealous missionaries as possible for the pagan countries and recommends its support." The motion was carried unanimously.

### NEWS FROM THE GENERAL CHAPTER 1884-1886

After the clerics had taken their vows on the February rule on February 23, 1885, work continued mainly on that part of the rule which concerned the Brothers and which had not yet been completed.

### The election of the Superior General - March 12, 1885

Fr. Arnold was Rector of St. Michael's mission house but not superior general. On March 12 he first relinquished his office as rector in order to make way for the election of a superior general, according to the February rule.

In the morning of the same day all the priests celebrated Holy Mass with the intention of a good election. At 11 a.m. the residents of the house gathered in the Upper Church, "sang the Veni Creator, and then, singing psalms, marched in procession to the former chapel [today Apostelsaal – apostles' hall] where the election was to take place. While the others went to the lower church to pray", the capitulars remained in the room (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila 1975, p. 172). First they once more invoked the Holy Spirit, then "the Prologue of St. John's gospel was read. Then, after the Founder and former superior of the Society, the Most Reverend Arnold Janssen, had earnestly asked the electors not to consider his person at all in the election but to be guided only by their conscience, the election began" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, 2002, p. 215). "Each of the four electors knelt before the crucifix and took an oath to vote for the one he considered most worthy. Then each cast his ballot into the urn. The four ballots were opened by Anzer and read aloud by John Janssen. Three bore the name of Arnold Janssen, the fourth was blank." Therefore, so Anzer announced, "the Reverend Arnold Janssen, founder and present superior of the Society, is now elected Superior General of the Society of the Divine Word for the duration of his life" (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl.

John Vogelgesang, Manila 1975, p. 172). Fr. Arnold was then led to the “seat prepared for him, where he accepted the reverence of the electors. Then Anzer announced the results of the election to the rest of the community in the lower church” (*ibid.*, p. 173). All then went to the chapter room, the professed members “made their reverence to the Superior General and the others greeted him.” After a short talk by Fr. Arnold all went to the Upper Church to conclude the election by singing the Te Deum” (*ibid.*). In spite of now being Superior General Fr. Arnold kept the title “Rector” for several years.

### **Vows of the Brothers - March 19, 1885**

On March 19 the rules for the Brothers in the February rule had been completed. So on this day, the feast of St. Joseph, the great patron of the Brothers, the Brothers made vows on the new rule (Hermann auf der Heide, *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl, Ein Bild der ersten 25 Jahre ihres Bestehens* [the mission society of Steyl, A picture of the first 25 years of its existence], Steyl 1900, p. 112).

### **The Steyl China Mission**

Fr. Arnold wrote a 50 page report about the South Shantung mission for the Propaganda and requested the elevation of the mission to an Apostolic Vicariate. He sent the first part of this report to Rome on March 27, 1885.

### **A break in the chapter**

On March 28, 1885 the fourth part of the new Rule had been completed and work on the German February 1885 rule had come to an end.

### **Some individual rules**

“When the General sends a confrere, either to the missions or somewhere else, that confrere must obey the call” (*Fontes Historici*, vol. I, p. 48).

When a confrere is sent to the missions, he must go there expecting to live and die there. To confirm the confrere better in this resolution and for a better overcoming of contrary temptations, it is required of those who are ordained *titulo missionis* [on the title of mission] that they make the vow of perseverance before their departure to the missions. The others are advised to do the same and it is most urgently recommended (*ibid.*).

## **FR. ARNOLD IN VIENNA (AUSTRIA)**

On March 29, 1885 Fr. Arnold travelled to Vienna where he arrived the next day. Since he had to acquire Austrian citizenship in order to found an Austrian mission house, he looked for a municipality which would accept him into its midst.

### **Goggendorf - Fr. Arnolds new home**

On April 12, 1885 the office of the Mayor of Goggendorf (district Oberholla-brunn) assured him of acceptance into the municipal community of Goggendorf in case he acquired Austrian citizenship. “So now he was able to submit his formal request for Austrian citizenship” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, p. 204).

## **April 16, 1885**

On this day Fr. Arnold sent the second part of his report about the South Shantung Mission to the Propaganda in Rome with the conclusion and the request to divide the Apostolic Vicariate of Shantung and erect the new Apostolic Vicariate of South Shantung (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, pp. 186-187, footnote 47).

## **IMPORTANT TASK IN VIENNA**

### **New memorandum to the Emperor**

In Vienna Fr. Arnold was mainly concerned with the foundation of the new mission house. He turned once more directly to the Austrian Emperor. In a memorandum he emphasized that the new mission house was at the same time an enterprise of faith, as well as of the country in which it would be founded. He asked for the Emperor’s patronage and for his direct intervention with the Secretary of the Home Office, the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, and the administration of Lower Austria. “Here is a priest,” he wrote, “who feels called by God to make this foundation.” It was true, he was a German and not Austrian. Yet he was prepared to withdraw immediately, “if there is an Austrian priest who will take the matter in hand and guarantee its success. A work of this kind cannot be organized either by the State or the hierarchy. At least I regard it as so difficult, that I doubt whether anything ordered by authority can possibly succeed, unless the promoter himself has received a special call from God.” In view of the success of the young mission house in Steyl and in South Shantung he wrote: “I have been assured by more than one person, that, ‘Everyone, even those who are less favorably disposed to you’, must and do acknowledge that the blessing of God is with you” (Bornemann *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila, p. 204).

### **Audiences**

Fr. Arnold hoped to be received in audience by the Emperor himself. Yet first he met Prince Karl Ludwig, the Emperor’s brother, and Prince and Field Marshall Albrecht. To both men he emphasized that he was not looking for money, but for moral support “in his efforts to secure the necessary permission to proceed with his foundation” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila, p. 205).

### **Work on the latin rule**

Even in Vienna Fr. Arnold worked on the final Latin edition of the rule. Fr. Medits informed him “about the canonical character of the vows taken by the Vincentians. Their vows were private, not public; therefore, in spite of the vows, they remained secular priests” (*ibid.*, p. 173).

## **SOUTH SHANTUNG MISSION**

On May 4, 1885 Fr. Arnold sent the postscript to his report about South Shantung to the Propaganda in Rome. It contained three names of candidates for bishop: John Baptist Anzer, Josef Freinademetz and Anton Wewel. Fr. Arnold’s preferred candidate was Fr. Anzer.