

visionary Miss Leitner. The two groups of students were 26 philosophy students and 17 theology students who had just completed their first year of novitiate. One year after the opening of St. Gabriel's, the house numbered 30 Brothers, more than 80 students in philosophy and theology, and eight priests. The daily order and class schedule were the same as in Steyl: "silence, study time, written exercises, class work, discipline, management of community property, reception of the sacraments and general rules for students, all were the same" (*ibid.*, p. 211).

### September 27, 1890 – Move to the Notre Dame Sisters' convent

On September 27, 10 sister postulants moved from the former Capuchin monastery into their new home, the Notre Dame convent. It was a Saturday evening between 5 and 6 o'clock. Fr. Steger "carried Our Savior in the Blessed Sacrament from the Capuchin Monastery to our present convent", where we "10 sisters waited at the big entrance with lighted candles," Mother Maria remembers. A benediction with sacramental blessing followed. Between 8 and 8.30 pm a Brother brought the supper from the mission house kitchen (see "In their own words..." 4, Jacqueline Mulberge, transl., *Notre Dame Convent, First Motherhouse of the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 7-8).



St. Raphael's College, Rome,  
Via Sistina 118

### ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST SVD BISHOP IN ROME

On September 14, 1890 Bishop Anzer left Shanghai on his way to Rome. In the evening of September 27 he suddenly arrived at the home of the Roman SVD community. He had walked from the railway station to the St. Raphael's college, Via Sistina 118. He was wearing a short jacket, a blue, torn pair of trousers and a light blue necktie. He borrowed the episcopal vestments from a pawn shop (Wilhelm Bungert, *Licht und Schatten im Lebensbild Anzers* [Light and Shadow in the Biography of Anzer], *Nova et Vetera*, 1971, p. 316). For the next three weeks the little college turned into a very busy place: Since Anzer was to make a choice between keeping the French protectorate and the German one, the French ambassador visited him seventeen times, the Prussian 20 times. Another visitor was Cardinal Lavigerie, the founder of the White Fathers and Sisters. They all were received in a small dim, windowless corner which received its light only through the glass window in the door (in Bornemann, P. *Wilhelm Gier, Analecta SVD* – 50, p. 40).



## The Arnoldus Family Story

### NEWS OF THE MISSION SISTERS' CONGREGATION

#### Advertisement of the new foundation in St. Michael's Almanac of 1891

In August 1890 the St. Michael's Almanac for 1891 was sold. The Almanac was the third publication of St. Michael's mission house and was published once a year. It combined a calendar with short stories and some interesting information. Towards the end of the calendar we read the following advertisement for the new foundation:

"A short while ago a house has been founded also for missionary sisters. These are sisters who will be working in the house in Steyl and later on they will also be active in the foreign missions, in particular for women. This new house for the sisters will be under the direction of St. Michael's mission house.

Besides the sisters already mentioned, some sisters will be accepted into the house who see it as their vocation to take up women's activities in greater seclusion and to pray with special zeal for the missions and the overall task of the Society to God the Holy Spirit whose adoration and veneration we particularly promote." The new foundation, therefore, was to be a congregation of Missionary Sisters consisting of two branches - one active and one contemplative.

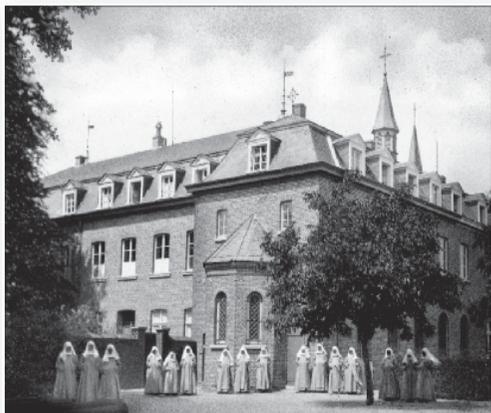
#### Result of the advertisement

The Almanac carried the advertisement "to 120,000 families." At the end of the year there were so many applications that Fr. Arnold was able to make a careful selection of postulants. "By the end of the year he had accepted eight; all but one eventually made their religious profession" (Bornemann, transl. John Vogelgesang, *Arnold Janssen*, Arnoldus Press Manila, 1975, p. 230).

#### August 17, 1890

On June 12, 1890 an application had been sent to Rome for an oratory with tabernacle in the convent of the future sisters. On July 6, 1890 Pope Leo XIII granted the permission and on August 17, 1890 Fr. Arnold celebrated the first holy Mass in the chapel and placed the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. "On the same day twenty nine years ago," Fr. Arnold wrote to Bishop Boermans in Roermond, "I had the joy of celebrating my first Mass" (*ibid.*, p. 229).

"The sanctuary lamp" in the chapel "was a symbol of the independence of the new community", SVD historian Fr. Bornemann writes (*ibid.*). Having daily Mass in their



Notre Dame convent,  
today part of St. Gregory.

own chapel and having from now on a priest coming to them to hear their confessions, Mother Maria wrote: ‘we did not have to leave the convent anymore’.

#### **A new convent**

August 22, 1890 the “notary contract” regarding the purchase of the Notre Dame convent “was concluded” with the Notre Dame Sisters who had returned to their original convent in Essen in Germany. So the Sister candidates would soon get another home (see Josef Alt, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, *Journey in Faith*, Nettetal 2002, p.340).

### **NEWS FROM ST. MICHAEL’S MISSION HOUSE IN STEYL**

#### **Residents**

The St. Michael’s Almanac of 1891 which was published in August 1890 reports: There were 33 priests, 160 Brothers, 260 students. The Brothers worked, for instance, as printers, bookbinders, tailors, shoemakers, bakers; others worked in the mill, butchery, brewery, carpenter shop, metalworking shop, smithy, plumber’s and painter’s workshops. Brothers worked as photographers, as well as in the garden and on the farm.

#### **Retreat – August 1890**

August 14-17: Retreat for Dutch laymen with 70 participants.

August 18-22: Retreat for German speaking laymen with 44 participants.

August 24-29: Retreat for German speaking teachers with 43 participants

### **ARGENTINA – BASIC DIRECTIONS FOR MISSION WORK**

#### **Letter of Fr. Arnold to Superior Becher (August 1, 1890)**

Fr. Arnold wrote: “I am happy that our dear Lord is blessing your efforts in Esperanza, that people come in increasing numbers to church and receive the sacraments. When I read your report about the children’s first holy communion, some quiet tears ran down my cheeks. I congratulate you also on the hostility towards you in the newspapers. However, be careful and try to avoid everything that could make others angry, insofar as you can avoid it. From your letters I gradually get an ever deeper understanding of the situation over there. It seems to me that I must not forbid you to accept parishes; perhaps in some places this is the only way that we can work. In future, do not reject parishes out of hand but give a thorough report about them...” Superior Becher thought of building a church. Fr. Arnold commented: “Concerning the

church, it will be best for you, to dedicate it to God the Holy Spirit. To him belong the first fruits. He is the hope of the present and the future. The Sacred Heart already has many devotees, but God the Holy Spirit has hardly any. He would bless Argentina and your mission. However, if you cannot do it, this is not meant to be an order for you” (Jos. Alt, ed., *Briefe nach Südamerika* [Letters to South America], Vol I, 1890-1899, *Analecta SVD* 65/I, Rome 1989, pp. 19,20,21).

#### **Correspondence Becher / Janssen, June 27, 1890 and August 13, 1890**

On June 27, 1890 Superior Becher had written to Fr. Arnold that his confrere, Rev. Löcken, was greatly worried, “that we do not get sufficient funds from Steyl in order to complete our building, and those funds, which we receive, are sent so late that we will be forced to stop with the building just begun, and that would cause our enemies to ridicule us terribly.” To this letter Fr. Arnold answered on August 13, 1890: “I am glad that you started courageously with the building. But I am not happy that you have sleepless nights. If I had had so little trust in God I would have worn myself out and I would not have achieved so much. Regarding help from our side, don’t be surprised that I am hesitant. For the sake of our own survival I must establish the principle that each mission has to do its best to keep going. Only then can [the mission] be dispensed from it when the necessity is thoroughly obvious... Trust in God and try to seek to procure the lacking funds. On the other hand, you still have a father’s house to which you can turn. But do what you can to help yourself (*ibid.*, p. 24).

### **EVENTS IN SEPTEMBER 1890**

#### **Constitutions for the future sister’s congregation**

Already in May and August 1890 Fr. Arnold had begun to work on the constitutions. Once it was clear that the next General Chapter would still be held in 1890, he decided to work in all seriousness on the constitutions, for the establishment of the sisters’ congregation was one of the matters the Chapter was to deal with. On September 1, 1890 he therefore withdrew for about three weeks to the Ursuline Sisters’ convent in Venlo. On September 5, 1890 he wrote to his brother John in St. Gabriel’s: “Since 1 September, I am here at the Ursuline convent working on the rule for the Sisters. It is exhausting work. Fortunately I have been able to borrow a few rules which were not available at first. I feel sure the grace of the Holy Spirit is helping me, thanks to many prayers. Otherwise it would not have been possible to make such relatively good headway. I am also taking notes. I must follow the revealed will of the Holy Spirit. I think that once everything is down on paper and properly organized, the rest will be much easier. The rule of Sempelveld (Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus) is a great help because it has many detailed regulations” (Bornemann, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila, p. 231-232).

#### **New students for St. Gabriel’s – September 22, 1890**

On September 22, Fr. Arnold and the novice director Fr. Eikenbrock travelled with two groups of students from Steyl via Leipzig to St. Gabriel’s. In Leipzig Fr. Arnold left the train in order to travel to Marienbad (today in the Czech republic) to visit the