

institutions. There is therefore no reason to support the founding of the afore-mentioned institution and to forego the strongest and most natural assurance which has until now always and everywhere been sought that the institution would in every regard be directed in the Austrian spirit.”

*Fr. Arnold's reaction*

Fr. Arnold felt that the reason for the rejection was that liberal and anti-Catholic officials were at work. But according to Fr. Bornemann he was not aware “at the time that Vicar General [and auxiliary bishop] Angerer of Vienna, though he approved the project in principle, had, in his recommendation to the governor’s office, expressly questioned its timeliness. The officials were quick to mention this in defense of their position” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila, p. 204).

**JOHN BAPTIST ANZER BACK IN EUROPE**

In order to take part in the First General Chapter, the superior of the Steyl Missionaries in South Shantung, John Baptist Anzer, had left China on October 21 and travelled via Rome to Steyl. He arrived there in the evening of December 7, 1884.

“The whole community gathered in the church to sing the De Deum. The seminarians honored him with a festive program as a brave confessor” (*ibid.*, p. 149).



**DECEMBER 10, 1884: THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST GENERAL CHAPTER**

On December 10 the First General Chapter of the Society began. Its members were those priests who had committed themselves to the mission house for life: Arnold and John Janssen, Hermann Josef Wegener and John Baptist Anzer, who towards the end of the chapter became a bishop.

*For the new year Fr. Arnold tells us:*

*Trust confidently in the LORD!  
It is completely impossible for him  
to abandon those who trust firmly in him.*



**The Arnoldus Family Story**

**NEW BUILDING ACTIVITY IN STEYL**

The new Church in Steyl had still not been consecrated when a new building was begun. In the mission magazine “Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote” (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) of July 1884 we read: “Since the space for the typesetting department, printing press etc. had become insufficient, we considered it necessary to add a new wing to the first building. It looks like an extension to the other buildings along the street. The walls are already standing and reach the roof. The upper floors of the new building will also have a considerable number of small rooms which are very necessary, especially because of the growing number of retreatants.”

**PROGRESS ON THE WAY TOWARDS THE FOUNDATION OF ST. GABRIEL'S IN AUSTRIA**

**July 23, 1884: The Archbishop gives permission for the founding of the mission house**

On 23 July, Prince Archbishop Ganglbauer of Vienna “gave Father Janssen his written approval for the construction of the proposed seminary for foreign missions in Enzersdorf, near Vienna, a foundation ‘desired by several Austrian bishops, and looked upon as salutary and source of blessing’ (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Arnoldus Press Manila, 1975, p. 202-203). But there had also been opposition to the foundation of the mission seminary, such as from the vicar general and auxiliary bishop of Vienna, Dr. Angerer, “who himself admitted to the founder his opposition” (H. Fischer SVD, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. Frederick M. Lynk SVD, Mission Press Techny, ILL, 1925, p. 298, footnote 1).

**July 25, 1884: Fr. Arnold signs the contract of sale for the property in Maria Enzersdorf**

The land was purchased on July 25 for the price of 12500 guilders. According to the contract, the purchaser undertook to drill for water, but he was free to withdraw from the contract in case the result of the drilling was not according to his expectations (H. 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. 143).

To Fr. Freinademetz in China Fr. Arnold wrote: “I am writing to you from the capital of your great fatherland, beautiful Vienna – Oh, would that it were also so

beautiful internally! You probably already know why I am here – to found an Austrian mission house” (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, Steyler Verlag Nettetal, 2002, p. 199). He continued: “I looked around for a piece of property and found one that seems suitable. Just think, it is a parcel of 6 hectares all in one piece, only 15 minutes from the train station in Brunn or Moedling, in an open plain with a magnificent view of the mountains. It can be reached by train from Vienna in half an hour on the southern line (Vienna-Trieste), and has excellent railway connections with the entire monarchy; and all this we get for a relatively low price” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila 1975, p. 203).

### **Petition for dispensation from Austrian citizenship**

On this very same July 25, Fr. Arnold wrote an application “to request exemption from the requirement of Austrian citizenship for himself and the first teachers in the Latin school. The detailed petition was eight pages long and stressed the significance of the seminary for the relations between Austria and the great civilized nations of Asia. He gave an assurance that the projected Latin school would be organized in conformity with Austrian regulations, and that the faculty would soon be made up of Austrian citizens” (*ibid.*).

### **SEPTEMBER 8, 1884: CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH OF THE ANGELS IN STEYL**

#### **The consecration**

On August 6 Fr. Arnold had returned to Steyl from his journey to Rome and Vienna. On September 8 the new church was consecrated. In the “Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote” (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) of October 1884 we read: “September 8, 1875 was the foundation day of the mission house. On the 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that feast that was so important for us, on the feast of the Nativity of Mary, the mission house celebrated another most important event, the consecration of the church dedicated to the angels. ... In spite of his advanced age, Most Rev. Bishop Paredis of Roermond was willing to undertake this most strenuous celebration of consecration himself.” The consecration “took quite a while, but the almost 90 year old bishop completed it without interruption or without taking any rest. – After the consecration the Rev. Rector of the mission house went to the altar to celebrate the holy Sacrifice for the first time in this newly consecrated, beautiful house of God, whereby he was solemnly assisted by the Most Rev. Bishop.”

#### **Why church of the angels?**

The new church is dedicated to the angels, in particular to the holy archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. In the same issue of the Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart we read: “At all the great events and instructions of Divine Providence as we read about them in Sacred Scripture, we find the holy angels as special servants and executors of the divine will.

“In directing and leading God’s chosen people in the old covenant, as well as in the life, suffering and death of the divine Redeemer and also in the life and work of

the apostles: everywhere the holy angels appear in a most special way as familiar with God’s eternal will. Shouldn’t then the heavenly spirits be especially destined to promote and protect the great work of the conversion of pagans? We believe that we must affirm this without any doubt. In this conviction we zealously venerate the holy angels and we firmly trust that they will stand at the side of all those missionaries who go to the missions from this place, always helping and protecting them in the distant pagan countries.”

### **SEPTEMBER 13, 1884: RECOGNITION OF TEACHER’S CERTIFICATE**

On September 13, Fr. Arnold’s request that his Prussian teacher’s certificate be recognized in Austria, won a “favorable response” and was “approved by the [Austrian] Ministry of Education on September 14, 1884” (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila, p. 203).

### **STEYL STUDENTS**

#### **In Steyl**

According to the Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart of November 1884, in October 1884, at the beginning of the winter semester, there were 154 students in Steyl. 51 of whom were studying philosophy and theology, the others were high school students.

#### **In Bonn**

Newly ordained Fr. Weber and subdeacon Henninghaus, who had been studying in Innsbruck, transferred to Bonn and continued their studies there. A Brother who was studying nursing lived with them. The students lived in a private residence and took care of their breakfast and evening meal themselves. They took lunch in a students’ dining hall run by Franciscan Sisters. Henninghaus and Fr. Weber studied mainly geology and mineralogy as well as chemistry.

### **OCTOBER 22, 1884: PETITION FOR DISPENSATION FROM AUSTRIAN CITIZENSHIP REJECTED**

#### *The Rejection*

The educational authority of Lower Austria rejected Fr. Arnold’s petition for dispensation from Austrian citizenship and on October 22 he was informed of this.

#### *Reasons for the rejection*

The educational authority was led by the consideration, “that the State could hardly be interested in the founding of an institution which takes young men away from serving the fatherland and leads them to a very idealistic profession in distant continents, promising minimal, unproductive results for the fatherland; nor can the education system be happy about a school which represents a step back to the kind of institution that has been abolished long ago and which, due to the peculiarity of its organization, denies students the possibility of transferring to other educational

The clerics take their final vows in honor of the Holy Spirit.  
The custom of singing or reciting daily the “Veni Creator” is decided upon; it is to be sung also during solemn acts in the Society, for instance on the way to the chapter hall; during all those acts the beginning of St. John’s gospel is to be sung in the chapter hall...

In the name of the Society the ‘Verbum Divinum’ is not only the second person in the Divinity, but also the word of the Holy Spirit, that is Holy Scripture and in particular the gospel.

Every Monday is especially dedicated to the Holy Spirit, with the same intention. Two further days during the week are dedicated to God the Father and the Divine Word.... (Fritz Bornemann, *Ferdinand Medits und Magdalena Leitner in der Geschichte des Steyler Missionswerkes* [Ferdinand Medits and Magdalene Leitner in the history of the Steyl mission organization], *Verbum Supplementum* 4, 1968, p. 72).

### The visionary Magdalena Leitner

In September 2016 the ‘Arnoldus Family Stories’ already mentioned the visionary Magdalena Leitner, whose spiritual director was the Hungarian Vincentian Fr. Ferdinand Medits living in Vienna. On January 21, 1885 Fr. Arnold described to the three other capitulars his meeting with her in Vienna: “In her look, posture and behavior she is always very guarded, and I have never noticed anything in her which did not give the impression of a pious, pure soul...” (*ibid.*, p.65). She was mentioned several times during the general chapter and in the acts of the chapter she is generally mentioned under the name “Mother Gregoria” (*ibid.*, p. 125, endnote 3 referring to p. 72); perhaps because for this reason: “Pope Gregory the Great is frequently mentioned by Miss Leitner, perhaps because he is pictured with the dove of the Holy Spirit” (*ibid.*, p. 117, endnote 3 referring to p. 46).

### Lay Partners: January 27 and 28, 1885

Another topic of the first general chapter on January 27 and 28, 1885 was the founding of an institute of lay partners: An “institute of secular cooperators to help the missions”. On January 30 “the essential features were laid down.” “The idea was accepted, though most preferred the name ‘mission helpers’”(Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 213).



## The Arnoldus Family Story

### THE FIRST GENERAL CHAPTER (1884-1886)

#### The Mission House and the Statutes of 1876

Not the only, but one of the most important tasks of the general chapter was to write a rule for the ecclesiastical religious society or congregation “SOCIETAS VERBI DIVINI – SOCIETY OF THE DIVINE WORD” still to be constituted. Until then St. Michael’s mission house community was governed by the statutes of 1876 which Fr. Arnold and John Baptist Anzer had written. The first sentence of those statutes reads: The name of our house is ‘St. Michael’s Mission House in Steyl’, ... However, until such a time as it will seem useful to give itself a very short name, the Society calls itself “Society of the Divine Word in the Service of the King and Queen of the Angels”, ... or briefly: “Society of the Divine Word”, “Societas divini Verbi” (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, Transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, Steyler Verlag Nettetal, 2002, p. 125).

During the first 10 years, the priests of the mission house dedicated themselves to the work of the mission house by making the following (private) vow: “*With regard to the fervent wishes of Your Most Sacred Heart, which in such a special way are directed towards the spread of Your holy work upon earth, I, kneeling before You, my Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, make my poor person available to Your divine Heart with regard to the mission work of your holy Church, insofar participation in it is being striven for in this house. This I do at first for the next three years, starting from today. According to this I, N.N. vow for the next three years fidelity and loyalty to this house, reverence and obedience to the Rev. Rector of this house and all his successors and deputies in this office, and to the holy patrons of this house I promise love and faithful veneration.*

*May the good and almighty God help me to become a useful member of this house and through the example of my virtues to contribute towards its spiritual building up. Amen*

*This is my well considered and firm promise, which I make in the presence of the whole heavenly court, in particular of the holy patrons of this house, with the resolve through this to honor in a special way the divine Heart of Jesus which so greatly deserves to be loved and adored.*

*O sweet Heart of Jesus, be my love!*

*O sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation!*

*Holy Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael and all the holy angels help me.*

*Holy Father Joseph, holy Mother Anne, you dearly beloved holy three kings, help us together with all the dear saints.*

*May the light of the Divine Word shine into the darkness of sin and into the night of paganism, and may the Heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all people.*

*Amen*

*(in Hermann auf der Heide SVD, Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl [The mission society of Steyl], Die ersten 25 Jahre ihres Bestehens [the first 25 years of its existence, Steyl 1900, pp. 36-37].*

The historian Fr. Bornemann SVD writes that according to its wording this formula was only a private vow of obedience (Bornemann, *The Papal Approbation of the Constitutions of 1905*, Verbum Supplementum 3, 1967, p.170).

Differently from the priests, right from the beginning of the Brothers' department the Bothers made "canonical private vows". "The main part of the formula read: 'I vow to render obedience to the superior of this house as heretofore, faithfully to observe virginal chastity and to practice holy poverty to the end that I forego the free use of all property and therefore, without the permission of my superiors, will take nothing for my permanent use or possession. I make these vows with the provision that the superior of the house is always free to dispense me from them, and declare before God that I would be willing, even now, to make the vows for life ... if holy obedience permitted it'" (Fritz Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila, 1975, p. 164). In addition the priests and brothers were members of the Third Order of St. Dominic.

### **On the way towards establishing the religious congregation SVD**

Already in the first session of the general chapter, on December 10, 1884 a "unanimous yes was given to the question, 'Should the Society constitute itself in the form of a religious society or congregation?'" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 210). The following day, December 11, it was decided to introduce the three vows. With that the promise to follow the rule of a Third Order, concretely the Third Order of St. Dominic, was cancelled, at first for the priests only.

### **The capitulars' method of working**

On December 10, 1884 the capitulars also decided on the procedure to be followed during the chapter: everything was to be discussed twice, first provisionally in small groups and then a second time, definitively, in general sessions (see Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 211).

At the beginning of the first full session each capitular, kneeling in front of the cross and with the hand on the gospel book took – in Latin – the oath "to vote only for what is in keeping with the desire of the Sacred Heart, the greater glory of God and the true welfare of our Society, without human consideration. May God and these holy Gospels of God help me!"

### **Pressure on the capitulars**

To his missionaries in China Fr. Arnold wrote on March 6, 1885: "Since we badly need priests and cannot wait with the vows and the ordinations [until the Rule was completed and approved] for the time being a provisional Rule, called the February

1885 Rule was worked out" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 212). Since it was written in February 1885, it was called the February 1885 Rule; it did include "the most important regulations, especially the canonical ones" (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, Manila 1975, p. 175). The next ordination was that of six Steyl Theology students to the sub-diaconate on February 28, 1885. Therefore, as we read in the foreword of this February Rule, "the next feast day, that of St. Matthew the Apostle (24 February 1885), was fixed as the day when the first Rule [the Statutes of 1876] would cease to be in force and the second Rule of February 1885 would take its place. And it was resolved to invite all confreres and those in temporal vows according to the first Rule to repeat their profession on Monday evening, 23 February, together with themselves and the novices [the six students and Bernhard Eikenbrock who was already ordained a priest], that is, in various forms according to circumstances (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 212-213). On March 19, 1885 the Brothers made their vows on the February Rule as well (*ibid*, p.213).

### **The introduction of a special Veneration of the Holy Spirit: January 17 and 18, 1885**

Until the first general chapter the Sacred Heart devotion was the most prominent one. However, on January 17 and 18, 1885 the General Chapter decided to introduce a very special veneration of the Holy Spirit. In the minutes of the second session, written by Fr. Arnold, we read among other things:

*The reason for the introduction of the special veneration of the Holy Spirit*

"The Society of the Divine Word decides, 'to accord a very special devotion to the person of the Holy Spirit, who is sent by the Father and the Son, and who accomplishes all things in us. The Society does so, on the one hand, to draw down a special blessing on the apostolic labors of the members, and especially on their administration of the sacraments. On the other hand, it seeks to offer reparation since the holy sacraments are sadly dishonored and abused by so many people, and because the Holy Spirit himself receives so much dishonor from men through ... being adored and implored so little."

*Place of the veneration of the Holy Spirit within the devotion of the Blessed Trinity*

"However, since the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the Father and the Son, the Society resolves so to venerate the Holy Spirit that the special veneration of the other two divine Persons, and especially of the Divine Word Incarnate, is included, as has been the tradition in the Society until now.

"In the more concrete execution of this thought it was decided: 1) The principal feast of the Society is to be the one of the Blessed Trinity" (for all this see: Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila, 1975, pp. 188-189).

### **Further decisions**

In those two days several more decisions were made, for instance:

St. Michael's mission house in Steyl "under the protection of St. Michael is dedicated in a special way to the Divine Word, the planned foundation in Austria under the protection of St. Gabriel is specially devoted to the Holy Spirit."

## Declaration of the General Chapter regarding the Holy Spirit: February 15 and 16, 1885

The capitulars decided, “to believe in all humility” that the Holy Spirit [in a vision of Miss Leitner] had “called us sons of His Words.” Furthermore it was decided that we were to consider the Holy Spirit “as our father and true founder; he gave us the guiding thoughts as is the task of a founder” (ibid.).

### Completion of the February 1885 Rule

By the middle of February the Rule, that is the first and second part of the later full or September Rule, had been so far accepted that vows could be taken on it as a provisional Rule. It was presented to all those who had already made vows on the statutes of 1876 as well as to the seven novices. All were willing to make vows on this new rule. From February 20 all of them took part in retreat conducted by Fr. Arnold.

### Vows on the new rule

The first vows on the February 1885 rule were taken in the evening of February 23, 1885. “With lighted candles we all approached the high altar of the Upper Church and, after the *Veni Creator*, then the Prologue of St. John’s gospel sung by Krampe, we four (Arnold] Janssen, Anzer, Wegener, [John] Janssen) made our profession according to the new Rule and vowed for life poverty, chastity and obedience according to its regulations; then, for different time-spans, Mueller, Holthausen and Blum for three years; Erlemann and Weber for four; Steger, Krampe, Weissenfels and Henninghaus for five, and the rest for seven years. Then followed the *professio fidei* [profession of faith] for the candidates for ordination, the taking of the oath prescribed by the Propaganda, and the *Te Deum*” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 212).

For the final vows the formula read: “Herewith, I, N.N., take vows on this rule of the Society named, and in honor of the Holy Spirit, and trusting the help of my holy patrons I vow poverty, chastity and obedience according to the regulations of this rule and I do so for the time of my life which is still left to me.” “Those who only made temporary vows, made the appropriate changes in the formula” (H. auf der Heide SVD, *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. 111).

### Vows and still secular priests

In the Steyl mission magazine “Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote” (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) we read in January 1886: “In the month of February the development of our Society took an important step forward through the writing and acceptance of a provisional Rule. According to this rule the members, even though remaining secular priests, bound themselves together to a united congregation by taking the three-fold vow of voluntary poverty, chastity and obedience.”

### Ordination to the subdiaconate

The eventful month of February 1885 ended with the ordination to the subdiaconate of 6 Steyl major seminarians on February 28, 1885. This ordination was later followed by the ordination to the diaconate and priesthood.



## Divine Word Missionaries Secretariat Arnold Janssen Steyl

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## The Arnoldus Family Story

### THE FIRST GENERAL CHAPTER (1884-1886)

#### Lay partners: January 27, 28 and 30, 1885

On January 27 and 28 the capitulars had discussed an “institute of secular cooperators to help the missions” – mission helpers, and on January 30 its essential features were decided upon: “Since some pious people living in the world wish to join us in our spiritual endeavors, it was resolved to offer them that possibility by establishing an institute of secular cooperators as mission helpers. It was resolved: To grant them a share in all the good works and prayers of the Society.” Mission helpers had to be willing to lead a good Christian life, to join “spiritually in the endeavors of the Society of the Divine Word”. They should also where possible receive “Communion on the feast of Pentecost for the missionary work of our Society, offering it up at least partially for the greater sanctification of the priestly state.” In addition, they should offer up “a Holy Communion once a year for the mission work of our Society, if possible totally for this purpose, in order thus to have a greater share in the good works of the Society.” Finally, they also should sometimes give “a donation to help the missions or urge someone else to do so”. Only the Superior General “and those he delegates have the right to accept someone as a mission helper, who thus shares in the good works of the Society”.

The Society of the Divine Word will every month, “whenever possible on the first Monday, in every bigger house of the Society” offer a Mass “for the mission helpers and their intentions, and the members of the Society are invited to offer their Holy Communion for the same intention. At the same time the helpers are invited to commend to God the Holy Spirit at Communion or in their prayers, if possible on this day or another day, the works and the intentions of the Society” (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, pp. 213-214).

### Decisions of the General Chapter of February 12, 1885 – incorporated into the February 1885 Rule

#### Name and Explanation of the name of the Society

“The name of the Society is: Society of the Divine Word (Societas Verbi Divini). We declare that the adjective *divinum* refers to all three divine persons; therefore we understand the *Verbum divinum* in this way:

The Word of the divine Father or the second person of the Godhead,

The Word of the divine Son in his holy humanity or the gospel of Jesus Christ, The Word of the Holy Spirit or scripture in its entirety, and in a subordinate way also the priestly word for the admonition and instruction of people, insofar as it is proclaimed on behalf of and in line with the mind of the church.”

### **Members of the Society**

The Society consists of *fratres clerici* (clerics) and *fratres laici* (lay brothers). All of them first take temporary and then final vows.

### **Purpose of the Society**

The purpose of the society is in the first place the “adoration of the Divine Word and the spread of the devotion to the Holy Spirit; furthermore the promotion of the veneration of the angels and saints and help for the poor souls in purgatory.” The second purpose is to work for the greatest possible sanctification of the priests and to preserve the sanctity of the sacraments. In addition, those confreres who are able to do so, should pursue scholarly studies according to the mind of the Church. In third place we read: “The most preferred work, however, is work for the conversion of heretics and unbelievers and let us continue to regard this as our main task.”

### **The Vows**

“All the vows include the observance of poverty, chastity and obedience according to the norms of this rule. The temporary vows of the *fratres laici* will be made three times, each time for three years and each time dedicated to one of the three archangels; the final vows are to be dedicated to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The *fratres clerici* make the temporary vows immediately for nine years in honor of the most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary; this time can be shortened for the *fratres clerici*, and also for the lay brothers, by a dispensation granted by the superior general. After temporary vows the *fratres clerici* make the final vows in honor of the Holy Spirit.”

### **Main Patrons of the Society**

- a) The most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, the holy foster father Joseph.
- b) The holy Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.
- c) The following holy apostles: The princes of the apostles, *Peter and Paul*. They are the chosen sons of the Father for the foundation of his holy church on earth. *John* as the apostle of the Eternal Word and protector of the holy Mother of God. *Andrew* as a great example of the denial of everything earthly and dedication to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- d) As representatives of the later church: Pope *Gregory* the Great, the bishop and doctor of the church *Augustine*, the priest *Vincent de Paul*.

### **Secondary Patrons of the Society**

A future general chapter should determine these, however, the following must be among them: Francis Xavier, Joachim and Anne, the holy Three Kings and the founders of those three religious orders which contributed particularly many missionaries to the church: namely Saints Dominic, Francis of Assisi and Saint Ignatius. Overall, there is

freedom; and those saints can be chosen which are particularly suitable for veneration by the ordinary faithful in the missions (all of this from: *Fontes Historici SVD*, vol. I).

### **The Influence of Miss Leitner during the general chapter**

Fr. Arnold gave such convincing testimony regarding the truth of Miss Leitner’s visions that the capitulars were assured of their supernatural character (Fritz Bornemann, *Ferdinand Medits und Magdalena Leitner in der Geschichte des Steyler Missionswerkes* [Ferdinand Medits and Magdalena Leitner in the history of the Steyl mission organization], *Verbum Supplementum 4*, Rome 1968, p. 74). She practices veneration of the Holy Spirit, “in a way we find in only few saints and doctors of the church; secondly, what she says about the dignity of the priesthood and the sacrifice of the Mass are church doctrine at its best” (ibid.). For the Society it was important that according to her, it was the express will of God that the Society work for the veneration of the Holy Spirit and for the priesthood. And then Fr. Arnold made a remark which is most interesting for the present day development of the SVD: “The inner structure and institution of the Society has [in the constitutions] and through her [Miss Leitner’s] admonitions reached such a fullness and grandness which in hindsight astonishes even ourselves. Probably through this, it [the Society] will detach itself sooner from its national limitations and will be more easily able to achieve greater expansion” (ibid., p. 75).

### **Declaration of the General Chapter regarding Miss Leitner - February 15 and 16, 1885**

The chapter wanted to give special honor to Mother Gregoria [Miss Leitner] because of her services to the Society and, therefore, gave her the title spiritual Mother of the Society. This title, however, did not place her in competition with the superiors of the Society; they remained the only ones to give orders which could not be rejected by reference to Mother Gregoria (ibid., p. 77). Furthermore, the Society would always have the right to examine whether in an individual case she [Miss Leitner] was expressing only her personal opinion, or if she had not understood something well or whether she had perhaps been deceived herself (ibid.).

### **A Sisters’ congregation is to be founded – February 15 and 16, 1885**

During these days the foundation of a Sisters’ congregation was discussed and decided upon. Looking back at the foundation history of the sisters, Fr. Arnold wrote later that during the first General Chapter the foundation of a Sisters’ congregation had been discussed and had been accepted in principle (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 336-337). Fr. Bornemann SVD writes that this decision also included a time frame for the foundation for which the capitulars expressly referred to the will of the Holy Spirit as it had been made known by Miss Leitner. According to this time frame, the foundation had to come about before six years and five months had passed (Bornemann, *Ferdinand Medits und Magdalena Leitner...*, p. 65). Since the capitulars believed in the supernatural character of Miss Leitner’s visions, for the time being they had also to believe that the foundation could not be postponed indefinitely. The congregation was to have two branches: cloistered adoration Sisters and active missionary sisters, not cloistered.

## 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 Medits 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!*



## Divine Word Missionaries Secretariat Arnold Janssen Steyl

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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.



## The Arnoldus Family Story

### GOOD NEWS FROM THE CHINA MISSION

During the General Chapter in Steyl Fr. Freinademetz sent a very encouraging report about the South Shantung Mission to Steyl. On May 24, 1885 he had written: "I just returned home from a mission trip to Ischui, where I stayed for more than a month and baptized 126 catechumens; among them are some excellent Christians who give us great joy, particularly in the district of Mungin. The mission in Tschingzuin in Mungin has to be mentioned in a special way, because it encountered such great difficulties that I already feared it to be lost.; likewise the mission in Zingwangdschuang. However, presently just these two communities are our most flourishing Christian communities. And not only that; even the non-Christians in the neighbourhood who in former times had raged so furiously against us, are now full of admiration towards the Christians and they often ask them: "When will your big man (the missionary) come? We also want to speak to him" (*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], vol. 13, No. 1, October 1885, p. 7).

### SUPPORT FROM THE LAZARISTS / VINCENTIANS

On June 14, 1885 Fr. Arnold travelled to Paris where he met the Superior General of the Lazarists or Vincentians, Fr. Fiat and other experienced priests. He also took excerpts from the Vincentian Rule. On this June 14, Fr. Arnold wrote a letter to Fr. Fiat with the following requests: "that he adopt a spiritual fatherhood over the sons of the SVD, agree to a fraternity of prayer and a community of good works, grant counsel in extraordinary matters himself and that Fr. Medits do so in ordinary questions and that the latter assist in establishing the novitiate in Steyl" (*Josef Alt, Journey in Faith*, p. 216). On June 15, 1885 Fr. Fiat sent a positive answer and on June 24 the General Chapter agreed unanimously to the agreement (*ibid.*). On this very same day the General Chapter decided that Fr. Medits "should direct the novitiate for some months, however under our own superior" (*Fritz Bornemann, Ferdinand Medits und Magdalene Leitner in der Geschichte des Steyler Missionswerkes* [Ferdinand Medits and Magdalene Leitner in the history of the Steyl mission organization], *Verbum Supplementum* 4, Rome 1968, pp. 19.108, endnote 6 to p. 19).

### FRANCISCAN VISITORS IN STEYL

During the General chapter, on July 18 and 19, the minister general of the reformed Franciscans, Fr. Bernardino da Portogruaro and some more leading members of the Franciscans visited Steyl. One topic will have probably been the elevation of

### Criticism of the many days of fasting and abstinence

In St. Michael's mission house there were many days of fasting according to the Rule of the Third Order of St. Dominic. Still in the February 1885 rule "the year had about 100 days of fasting." Even though dispensation could be granted according to the rule, "on an average every fourth day" was a day of fasting. Upon Fr. Medits' suggestion, except for the general church fast days, all these special days were cut out, except for three: Those three were: "vigil of the feast of the Sacred Heart in honor of the Divine Word, vigil of the feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary in honor of the Holy Spirit and his Immaculate Spouse, and in the evening of the feast of an angel or patron of the house in honor of the Eternal Father" (*ibid.*, p. 18).

Regarding the days of abstinence, at Fr. Medit's proposal all were cut out, "except those that were prescribed by general church law, that is the ordinary Fridays". However, that did not mean that the confreres had the right, to demand daily meat for lunch and dinner. There was the possibility that on some weekdays no meat was served in the evening "and it took more than one year until the abstinence had really been abolished. August 2, 1886 was the first time that on Mondays meat was served; meat was served on Wednesdays and Saturdays only in summer of 1887" (*ibid.*).

### FRS. ARNOLD AND ANZER IN ROME

October 7, 1885 Frs. Arnold and Anzer travelled to Rome where they arrived on October 9. The goal of the journey had been the separation of the South Shantung mission from the Apostolic Vicariate of Shantung and the elevation of South Shantung to an Apostolic Vicariate with Anzer as first bishop. At their arrival no hope was given to them for a speedy decision. "Cardinal Simeoni ... has been influenced and is obviously trying to put things off. The Secretary is still in favor of the proposal, also concerning Tsining" (*Bornemann, Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila, 1975, p. 152). The cardinal offered an Apostolic Vicariate to Fr. Arnold in India and the Secretary of the Propaganda offered him a mission in Africa. Fr. Arnold interpreted these two offers in this way: They were "obviously made to make it easier for us to give up China, but we are absolutely unwilling to do that, even if we are in the way of others" (*ibid.*).

### THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN ST. MICHAEL'S MISSION HOUSE IN STEYL

When in October 1885 the winter semester 1885/86 began, the mission house numbered 192 students. More than 60 new students had applied, but only 25 could be accepted. "That tells us in no uncertain terms that we must continue building", we read in the "Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote" [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart] of November 1885.

the South Shantung mission to an Apostolic Vicariate which Fr. Arnold had applied for. In 1883 the visit of Msgr. Cosi, the Franciscan Vicar Apostolic of Shantung, had fostered personal contacts and in that way helped to make some progress; in the same way the visit of Fr. Bernardino and his confreres “was of a great significance” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 185).

## **FR. JOHN BAPTIST ANZER ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY OF GERMAN CATHOLICS**

Leaving the General Chapter for a short while, Fr. John Baptist Anzer attended the Assembly of the German Catholics in Muenster from September 1-4, 1885. He launched this appeal with the assembly:

“That the General Assembly of the German Catholics in Muenster may specially recommend to the generosity of the German Catholics the extremely poor mission of South Shantung, the first German mission in China.”

### ***Fr. Anzer's speech***

In his speech justifying the appeal, Fr. Anzer pointed out that the mission in South Shantung was the first German mission. From the reformation on until the foundation of a mission house in Steyl/Netherlands there had been no German institute for the formation and education of missionaries. “When I recommend to you urgently the German mission house in Steyl, then I recommend at the same time the South Shantung mission and vice versa.” Concluding his speech he said: “Gentlemen! I come to the end. When I was in Rome a few months ago and complained about the poverty of my mission, the answer I got was: How is that? You are complaining!?! A German and superior of a German mission! The generous Catholic Germany will never let down its own mission! This response I had also frequently received elsewhere. Gentlemen! With that trust in the generous German Catholics I went to China for the first time and will return to China.”

Anzer asked the assembly to remember all Catholic missions in the whole world, and he finally said. “And since everybody has the right, to ask first for his own benefit, I ask you to show interest and effective help for the German mission in South Shantung.” This speech achieved its goal: The appeal was accepted unanimously and with enthusiastic Bravo (all this from: *Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart] 13, No. 1, October 1885).

## **THE SEPTEMBER 1885 RULE**

Most of the work regarding the Latin version of the Rule was done in September 1885, “So it was called the ‘September 1885 Rule’, also to mark the tenth anniversary of the Mission House which occurred in that month” (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 216).

Regarding the name of our Society “SOCIETAS VERBI DIVINI” it was decided that the short form of our long name was to be “VERBISTAS” (Fontes Historici, Vol. I, p. 95).

### ***Sources of the September Rule***

*Fr. Arnold used the following sources and documents for the September Rule:*

Life of St. Vincent de Paul, Rule of the congregation of the Most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, called ‘Picpus’ after the first House of the congregation in the Rue de Picpus in Paris (Wikipedia)], Rule of the Resurrectionists, Rule of Mill Hill (in Eng-

land), Rule of the Paris Missionaries, Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. II-IIae. The Rule of the Lazarists/Vincentians was not mentioned; however Fr. Arnold had taken excerpts from it (see: Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 216).

## **FR. ARNOLD IN VIENNA**

On September 28, 1885 Fr. Arnold went for a short visit to Vienna. He gave the September Rule to Fr. Medits for his evaluation and since Miss Leitner did not understand Latin, she was only given some individual matters for examination (Bornemann, *Ferdinand Medits und Magdalene Leitner.....*, p. 82)

## **MISS LEITNER'S INFLUENCE ON THE SEPTEMBER RULE**

### ***Change Regarding the religious habit***

According to Fr. Bornemann, Miss Leitner's influence was restricted to minor matters, for instance she agreed to a change regarding the religious habit which originally, with her agreement, had been rather colorful. It had been changed to look simpler; the red color of the cincture was to be worn on the inside, except for the Brother novices. The red color symbolized the acceptance of martyrdom and – this was new – the love of the Holy Spirit (*ibid.*).

### ***Term of office of the superior general***

According to the February 1885 Rule and with the agreement of Miss Leitner, the superior general was elected for life - as happened with Fr. Arnold. However, a year later Miss Leitner strongly advocated a term of office of only seven years as being in accordance with God's will and she gave the following reasons: Fr. Janssen had failed against the “childlike humility which was owed to God. 2) he committed some offences against justice and love, and towards his subjects he had not been like a father and mother, but more of a Lord and he had not treated everybody in the same way, but was led and dominated by his natural attraction and aversion!” (*ibid.*, p. 83) The general chapter, therefore, decided on March 15, 1886 “that the general chapter is to elect a superior general only until the next general chapter, that means for seven years...”. However, this change did not affect Fr. Arnold, since he had been elected for life according to the February 1885 Rule. But, so Fr. Bornemann writes: “Through the change in the text he perpetuated the drastic *Correctio fraterna* of Leitner-Medits” (*ibid.*).

## **FR. MEDITS' GENERAL CRITICISM OF THE LATIN RULE**

### ***Criticism of the overall conception of the rule***

Fr. Medits criticized the “overall conception of the Rule. He wished a short summary of the legal rules for the society.” He said, Fr. Arnold should publish his explanations in a separate small handbook or appendix. This was also the opinion of Fr. Arnold's Franciscan friend Fr. Ignatius Jeiler, who lived near Florence, and to whom he had also presented the rule for his comments. The thinking of the censor of the Dioese of Roermond, Prof. Drehmanns, was along the same line. However, Fr. Arnold strongly believed: “Compared to the religious content of the rule, the laws are only marginal. Therefore he stuck to the unity of law and spirituality”; he probably never presented Fr. Medits' comments to the general chapter (*ibid.*, p. 19)

## APPOINTMENT AS VICAR APOSTOLIC OF SOUTH SHANTONG

In the second document issued on January 12, 1886, Fr. John Baptist Anzer was appointed Vicar Apostolic of South Shantung. The document reads as follows: “To our beloved son, John Baptist Anzer, priest of the Steyl Mission house. Leo XIII. Pope.

Beloved son! Greetings and apostolic blessing. Since our apostolic office has entrusted to us the task of looking after all the churches, we always, according to circumstances and the times, take great care for their well-being and to provide good leadership for them. Therefore it seemed to us to be useful in the Lord, to divide the Apostolic Vicariate of Shantung into two and to create a new Vicariate of ‘South Shantung’. You, beloved son, have already administered the office of pro-vicar in that southern region in a praiseworthy manner. So, according to the advice of our venerable brothers, the cardinals of the holy Roman Church, who have been entrusted with carrying out the administrative tasks connected with the spread of holy Faith, we have now decided that you, beloved son will be chosen as Vicar Apostolic of the new Vicariate. Through a similar document issued by us today we have already appointed you titular bishop of the church of Telepte. At the same time we now choose and appoint you and place you in charge as Vicar Apostolic of the new Vicariate of South Shantung with all the necessary and appropriate powers. We therefore order all those concerned that they, by virtue of this letter, receive and admit you as ‘Vicar Apostolic’ of the already mentioned new Vicariate of ‘South Shantung’ and that they will help you and be at your service. They must obey you and receive your salvific admonitions respectfully and effectively; and the judgment you make over the recalcitrant or which you lawfully decide, we will confirm and in the strength of the Lord we will see to it that it will be observed inviolably in accordance with worthy satisfaction.

Given at Rome at St. Peters’ under the fisherman’s ring on January 12, 1886, in the eighth year of our pontificate” (“Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote” [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], vol 13, No. 6, March 1886, pp. 45-46).

## PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

These documents having been issued, the Founder could “go public and tell the happy news to the entire world: ‘After ten years of existence, the Mission House in Steyl has its own independent mission territory with its own SVD bishop.’” (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 187).

## DATE OF EPISCOPAL ORDINATION

January 24, 1886 was decided upon as the day of the Episcopal ordination of Fr. Anzer. Archbishop Krementz of Cologne was invited as principal consecrator, and co-adjutor Bishop Boermanns of Roermond and Bishop Korum of Trier as co-consecrators.



## EPISCOPAL COAT OF ARMS

As his coat of arms bishop elect Anzer had chosen a picture of the Holy Spirit as a dove. Underneath was his motto written in Latin: *Esto lux et fortitudo mea* which means: Be my light and my strength!.



## Divine Word Missionaries Secretariat Arnold Janssen Steyl

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## The Arnoldus Family Story

### ARNOLD JANSSEN IN ROME

In October 1885 Frs. Arnold and John Baptist Anzer had travelled to Rome. Their goal had been the separation of the South Shantung mission from the Apostolic Vicariate of Shantung and the establishment of a new Apostolic Vicariate entrusted to the SVD under an SVD Vicar Apostolic and Bishop.

They were supported by an old acquaintance of Fr. Arnold, the former archbishop of Cologne and now Cardinal Paulus Melchers, who for some months had been living and working in Rome. To help bring about the decision, in the spring of 1885 Fr. Janssen had already sent “a detailed folder with the development of the territory up to the present time, including the long drawn-out negotiations with the Franciscans, and the candidates he himself suggested for the office of vicar apostolic. Anzer was clearly preferred before Joseph Freinademetz and Anton Wewel” (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, Nettetal, Steyler Verlag, 2002, p. 186).

### Success

On December 10, 1885 the cardinals of the propaganda met and decided the establishment of the Apostolic Vicariate of South Shantung and the appointment of Fr. Anzer as Vicar Apostolic. In the afternoon of that day Fr. Arnold heard of the cardinals’ decision “who all had been very much satisfied with the report they had received and who had unanimously decided in favor of the Society [of the Divine Word] (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. 95).

On December 13 Pope Leo XIII confirmed the decision of the cardinals.

### Fr. Arnold received by Pope Leo XIII

On December 10, 1885 Pope Leo XIII received Fr. Arnold in private audience. “It was not all pious chat; concrete matters were also discussed”. Fr. Arnold remembers: “When I was received in private audience by His Holiness Pope Leo XIII on 10 December 1885, His Holiness asked me if we would be ready to take over a mission in a German-African protectorate as well” (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, pp. 186-187). It was at that time that the German government had declared South West Africa, Togo, Cameroun and territories in East Africa (Tanzania) a German protectorate.

## Also important....

### TELEGRAMS TO STEYL AND CHINA

On December 14 Fr. Arnold heard of the Pope's confirmation of the Cardinals' decision. "It was time to inform Steyl as soon as possible of the good news. And on that same December 14 Fr. Arnold sent a telegram to Steyl with the two words: 'Anzer episcopus' [Anzer bishop]. This news electrified the students and all the residents of the Steyl mission house were most happy" (*Auf der Heide, Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl*, p. 95) Everybody rushed to the church in order to thank the Lord with an enthusiastic *Te Deum* for the proofs of his love and mercy!

On December 18 Fr. Arnold sent a telegram to China. "Freinademetz, Tsining, Anzer Bishop". However, that telegram arrived there only on December 25, 1885 (*Arnold Janssen, Letters to China*, vol. I, Ed. Jos.Alt., transl. Frank Mihalic, Vincent Fecher, vol. I, Rome, 2002, p. 166).

### LETTER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE PROPAGANDA TO FR. ARNOLD

With great joy the undersigned secretary of Propaganda can inform your Reverence that in an audience of the current week the Holy Father approved the decisions of the general assembly of the cardinals of December 10 of this month, and he graciously established a new apostolic vicariate, that is of South Shantung. He entrusts it to the well deserving Steyl institute for foreign missions and he appoints as vicar apostolic with episcopal rank the Rev. John Baptist Anzer, who as Pro-Vicar has already worked and suffered so much for the spread of the holy Faith in those regions.

With regard to the borders of the new vicariate the Holy Father, following the vote of the cardinals of Propaganda, decided that not only the three Fu or civil prefectures of Yenchofu, Itchofu and Zautchofu would be entrusted to it, but also the region of Tsinngzho, which your Reverence in your cautious and modest request had wanted to renounce.... In the meantime it is my pleasure, with regard to the above-mentioned decisions of the Holy Father, to convey to you, Reverend Father, and to your well deserving institute, and in particular to the newly elected, the congratulations of his Eminence the Cardinal Prefect and my own. Such a success honors the institute and your wise and zealous direction of it and will certainly all the more kindle the good spirit amongst the young group of missionaries which, to the joy of the supreme office for the spread of the holy Faith, has joined the laborers for the Gospel whom it sends to the missions. With God's grace may the young group greatly increase in number. Then Propaganda will joyfully assign it new places for apostolic work. Finally it is my pleasure to be able to express anew on this occasion my sentiments of special respect for you.

Rome, December 18, 1885 + Dominicus Jacobini, Archbishop of Tyre (in "Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote" [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], vol. 13, No. 5, February 1886).

## STATISTICS OF THE NEW APOSTOLIC VICARIATE

When Frs. John Baptist Anzer and Joseph Freinademetz started mission work in South Shantung on January 18, 1882, there were 158 Christians belonging to a single mission station, Puoli. At the end of 1885 the statistics showed: 700 baptized Christians, 3500 children baptized in danger of death, 3000 catechumens, 32 cate-

chists, 20 seminarians. Furthermore the mission was caring for 60 orphans (Richard Hartwich SVD, *Steyler Missionare in China*, Bd. I, *Missionarische Erschließung Südshantungs* [Steyl missionaries in China, vol. I, Missionary Opening of South Shantung] 1879-1903, Rome 1983, p. 98).

## Return to Steyl

On December 19 Fr. Arnold began his return journey to Steyl. He interrupted his journey in Florence in order to meet with the Franciscan Fr. Jeiler who lived near Florence. "On 2 October he had sent Fr. Jeiler the Latin Rule of the First General Chapter drawn up in September 'with the urgent request to check through the same with your trained eye and mature judgment, the more carefully the better, and then send it back to me with your suggestions about changes together with your overall opinion'" (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, p. 187).

## Death of Msgr. Dr. Ludwig von Essen

The beginning of the history of the Steyl mission organization is connected with the parish priest of Neuwerk, Dr. Ludwig von Essen. He was a man most enthusiastic about missionary work and he had already undertaken first steps for the foundation of a German mission house and received the Pope's blessing for it. In his presbytery Fr. Arnold met the Prefect Apostolic of Hong Kong, Raimondi. Raimondi encouraged both men to cooperate, but it only came to a rather tense and temporally limited cooperation between Fr. Arnold and Dr. von Essen. On the occasion of his death on January 6, 1886 we read in the "Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote", [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], March 1886: "On January 6, after a short illness, Rev. Dr. Ludwig von Essen, died in Neuwerk, district of Mönchen Gladbach, parish priest there and honorary papal prelate. He was 55 years old. In some ways he participated – even though in a more reserved way, in the foundation of the Mission House during the years 1875 to 1876, when he voluntarily withdrew. At the opening of the mission house on September 8, 1875 he celebrated the solemn high Mass. May the Lord reward him for everything! We urgently recommend him to the prayers of our readers and friends."

## On the way to the Episcopal Ordination in Steyl

Before Fr. Anzer could be ordained bishop, the following three documents had to be issued: Establishment of the Apostolic Vicariate of South Shantung, Appointment as titular bishop of Telepte and appointment as Vicar Apostolic of South Shantung.

### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE APOSTOLIC VICARIATE OF SOUTH SHANTUNG

On January 8, 1886 the document establishing the Apostolic Vicariate of South Shantung was issued.

### APPOINTMENT AS TITULAR BISHOP OF TELEPTE

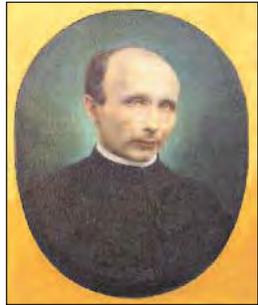
On January 12, 1886 two documents were issued. In the first Fr. Anzer was appointed titular bishop of Telepte in Northern Africa. Hundreds of years earlier Telepte had been an Episcopal see, but was conquered by the Moslems and was an Episcopal see in name only. Fr. Anzer was ordained bishop of this nominal Episcopal see and had the title of rightful Bishop of Telepte, (he was titular bishop) and he did not have to live or work there.

adapted to those laws. “For instance, none of our teachers actually had the right to teach since they were all foreigners. So we had to apply for royal permission,” which Fr. Blum then got. “Since then everything has been done according to the law” (*ibid.*). There were still two other major problems which he had to solve. He wrote: “Apart from the bookkeeping and accountancy there were two other important matters to settle: 1) safeguarding our property, and 2) the matter of taxes” (*ibid.*). Fr. Blum settled both matters conscientiously.

## AN IMPORTANT DATE IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY OF THE DIVINE WORD: MAY 16, 1886

### Beginning of the Brothers’ novitiate

On May 16, 1886 the brothers’ novitiate began officially “with the novices moving into a hall reserved for them” (Bornemann, *Ferdinand Medits und Magdalene Leitner ...*, p. 23).



The Brothers’ novice master was Fr. Bernard Eikenbrock. However, at first Fr. Medits directed the novitiate, that is “the exercises, conferences, chapter of faults, ratio, vocation renewal” (*ibid.*). When Fr. Medits concluded his work in the novitiates for clerics and brothers, Fr. Eikenbrock also became novice master of the clerics. So he was the first SVD novice master for clerics and brothers. At that time Eikenbrock was 32 years old, “had been a priest for almost 8 years...Fr. Eikenbrock’s ‘unique, pleasing and inspiring piety’ had recommended him for the office of Brother novice master. But he himself agreed only under obedience”

(Johannes Kraus SVD, “Die Steyler Brüdergemeinschaft und ihr Wirken” [The Steyl Brothers’ community and their work]. Nova et Vetera, 1975, p. 249).

### Appointment of Bishop Anzer as provincial superior of the SVD Province in China

The second important event of this May 16, 1886 was Bishop Anzer’s appointment as first provincial superior of the newly established SVD China Province. “He was appointed because of his services in establishing the [mission ] house [in Steyl], founding the vicariate [South Shantung], consolidating the Society and drawing up the statutes.” Fr. Arnold added: “And furthermore, in recognition of the sacrifices you have made for the Society and the mission and as a token of my special trust, with the agreement of the General Chapter, I have appointed you provincial superior not for seven but for fourteen years ...” (*ibid.*, p. 220).



## The Arnoldus Family Story

### APRIL 1886 IN THE LIFE OF FR. ARNOLD JANSSEN

The month of April 1886 had great importance for the SVD, since it was in this month that the Hungarian Vincentian Fr. Ferdinand Medits began with the first SVD novitiate. For Fr. Arnold and the foundation of St. Gabriel’s seminary near Vienna, April 1886 was of special importance, for on April 4 the Austrian ministry of the interior declared that the secular priest Arnold Janssen could be given Austrian citizenship, with the condition that prior to receiving citizenship he could prove his release from the Prussian state (Csaky, *Die Staatlichen Verhandlungen um die Gründung des Missionshauses St. Gabriel* [The negotiations with the government regarding the foundation of St. Gabriel’s mission house], p. 120).

### NEWS ABOUT THE UPPER AND LOWER CHURCH IN STEYL

The Upper and Lower church in Steyl had a number of altars which had not been consecrated during the consecration of the church by Bishop Paredis of Roermond. So on May 5 Bishop Anzer consecrated 6 altars, 3 side altars in the upper church. In the lower church he consecrated the main altar and two side altars. “Including the solemn pontifical Eucharist at the newly consecrated main altar in the lower church, the whole celebration lasted from 4.30 am in the morning until 11 am” (*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], vol. 13, no. 9, June 1886, p. 70).

### LIFE IN THE NOVITIATE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF FR. MEDITS

#### The conferences

Fr. Medit’s main task was to direct the novitiate of the clerics. Six conferences a week had been planned; three of them were connected with the chapter of faults. So three full conferences remained. One of those was given by the novices themselves. “Each week the novices had to prepare a topic given by the novice master; during the week they could discuss it among themselves. During the conference itself the Magister called upon one of them who had to give the conference from the pulpit. The talk was always concluded with these words: ‘These were some of the thoughts which I had with regard to this topic. I use this opportunity to most humbly ask those present for forgiveness for all the mistakes and offences I am guilty of and I ask your Reverence for a penance’” (Bornemann, *Ferdinand Medits und Magdalene Leitner in der Geschichte des Steyler Missionswerkes* [Ferdinand Medits and Magdalene Leitner in the history of the Steyl mission work], *Verbum Supplementum* 4, Rome 1968, p. 21).

## METHOD OF MEDITATION

Fr. Medits taught the novices the following method of meditation: 1. Exercises before meditation: Place yourself in the presence of God – short examination of conscience, penitence – resolution – ask the saints for the grace of a good meditation. Some acts showing one's love for God 2. During meditation: ask the Holy Spirit what to meditate on – ask yourself: Quid (what)? Quare (why)? Quomodo (how)? – Always have, with appropriate pious aspirations, a conversation with God. The more childlike the manner of doing this, the more it comes from the heart, the better it is. In that way here on earth we can already learn the language of the angels which we will later be able to use in heaven. – Special resolution fitting to the soul's needs. A meditation without a resolution is useless. – Conclusion of the meditation: thanksgiving for the meditation – short examination on how the meditation went – penitence and resolution” (*ibid.*)

### **Scripture reading**

Every day read one chapter up to fifty verses; if there are more than fifty verses, distribute the material over two days; you must evaluate how you can make use of it for your own life.

### **Vocation Day Celebration**

This celebration was to show appreciation for the vocation. Fr. Medits recommended four points for the celebration: “1. The Te Deum before the Blessed Sacrament in thanksgiving for the holy vocation and all graces received with it. 2. A short examination of conscience concerning all the sins committed so far and prayer of the Miserere. 3. A reflection regarding future improvements. 4. Preparation for a happy death, together with the Veni Creator for the grace of perseverance.” After that the novice went to the novice master and asked him to point out to him those failings he himself was not aware of. Then the novice accused himself of his main failings and requested a “penance and salutary admonition”. The novice then confessed all his sins and kissed the floor. After that the novice master gave him an admonition and the blessing (*ibid.*, p. 23).

### **Fr. Medit's concluding recommendations**

Before his departure from Steyl, Fr. Medits recommended the following points to Fr. Arnold: In the first place he recommended the observation of these two principles: the faithful observation of the Holy Rule and the maintaining and renewal of the spirit of the novitiate. Next he recommended to retain “the two year novitiate at all costs.” “What is the use of having many priests if they don't have the proper spirit?” “Rather a few but humble members who are animated with the best possible spirit than many who seek themselves.” “With an iron hand separate the novices from the rest of the community” (Bornemann, *Ferdinand Medits und Magdalene Leitner...*, p. 24). Medits also urged “that the daily menu be improved and made more plentiful.” What is saved on food, goes doubly to the pharmacy and the members' health will suffer (See Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Arnoldus Press Maila, 1975, p. 182).

## **Changes with the help of Fr. Medits**

The new rule required of the priests half an hour of meditation and 15 minutes spiritual reading. Bishop Anzer “urged that there be shorter morning and evening prayers.” At the request of Fr. Arnold, Fr. Medits wrote new texts “with the nature and the needs of the mission seminary in mind.” He also suggested a shorter evening devotion and that the community stand more frequently during religious services, for instance when singing. In particular he requested for the Brothers the reduction of the “number of Our Fathers, Hail Mary's and Glory be's that the Brothers were required to say according to the Third Order Rule [of St. Dominic], and that the Brothers also be allowed a longer night's rest” (*ibid.*, p. 183).

## **CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST GENERAL CHAPTER**

On May 12, 1886 the General Chapter decided that “the new Rule would come into effect on 12 May 1886 and in future the vows would be taken according to that. With this the First General Chapter closed” (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 218).

On this very same day, May 12, Bishop Anzer left Steyl for Rome and from there on to China. He was accompanied by the new missionary Augustinus Henninghaus.

## **AFTER THE FIRST GENERAL CHAPTER**

### **Competence of the Superior General**

The first general chapter, with Frs. Arnold and John Janssen, John Baptist Anzer and Hermann Wegener as members, had given to the superior general in the newly constituted Society of the Divine Word “complete jurisdiction... for the period between the Chapters. In his hands he held the reins of authority over the Society as a whole, over individual members and over all goods” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, transl. Frank Mansfield SVD, Jacqueline Mulberge SSPs, p. 258). He appointed the superiors who were his deputies “who enjoyed a certain share in his fullness of power.” The Chapter “assigned two councilors to him until further notice; he had to hear their opinion in important matters; but he remained free not to accept their counsel if his own reasons seemed more cogent” (*ibid.*). The two councilors were his brother John Janssen and Fr. Hermann Wegener.

### **Fr. Nicolaus Blum responsible for the finances of the SVD**

Responsible for the finances of the newly constituted Society of the Divine Word was Fr. Nicolaus Blum. From 1889 on he taught exegesis, church history and also canon law to the theology students. Canon law, so he wrote, “had a good effect on my work as procurator. I searched for all the relevant regulations and did my best to manage our business according to the rules of canon law. This entailed much time and trouble. I read and studied until late at night and then applied it. But Fr. Superior Janssen had little understanding for this. If he didn't like something he would say, That does not apply to us, or, it is obsolete, or I did not know the law. So in most cases I had to act off my own bat” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 945). In his legal studies Fr. Blum included the Dutch civil laws and found that the legal situation in Steyl had still to be

Sisters (John Kraus, *Die Steyler Brüdergemeinschaft und ihr Wirken* [The Steyl Brothers community and their work], Nova et Vetera, December 1976, pp. 280-281).

On March 10 Fr. Arnold wrote to his brother John: “Christopher and Michael are already managing the cooking well. Bonifatius and Andreas wash the dishes and prepare the vegetables. Four Sisters have already left. The maids [Helena Stollenwerk, Theresia Sicke, Hendrina Stemanns, Gertrud Hegemann] are learning how to mend the clothes (cf. Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 337).

#### Acquisition of land near the mission house

With the growing number of residents in the mission house their needs increased. The land which Fr. Arnold had bought in 1875 was too small to be used for farming. In 1877, 1879 and 1883 and later as well the mission house acquired some pieces of land during an auction. That, however, made the people in Steyl angry. Fr. Arnold wrote: “At the same time we noticed, how unpleasant it was for the people who lived nearby when a piece of land which they had hoped to buy, was bought by someone else” (in 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. 90).

#### The Handerthof [Handert farm] in Tegelen

In that situation it was very fortunate that the owner of the Handert farm in Tegelen, *Miss Josephine de Ryk*, several times offered the farm to the mission house provided the mission house would pay her a fixed amount of money for the rest of her life.

The farm is situated “25 minutes from the mission house at the paved road to Kaldenkirchen [Germany], in a pretty lonely area... First we had a few reservations, but then we accepted the offer and later it became clear to us how lucky we had been to take over the farm. Now we did not have to act as rivals of the local people for buying small pieces of land ...”

#### St. Anne's farm

“We placed the farm under the protection of St. Anne and called it St. Anne's farm. With papal permission a chapel was built there and we could have the Blessed Sacrament.

We were able to begin with animal husbandry, connected with a butchery. So from the farm we received meat, milk, butter and cheese which we always needed very much, since the house gradually numbered more than 600 residents. In addition, in the mission house there were the big retreat groups with quite often 100, 200 or 300 and more people” (all of this: *ibid.*, pp. 90-91).



## Divine Word Missionaries Secretariat Arnold Janssen Steyl

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### The Arnoldus Family Story

#### JULY 1886

##### July 8, 1886

On this day the General Council expressed the opinion “that it would be best to have brothers in the kitchen later” (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, Steyler Verlag Nettetal, 2002, p. 337).

This is reflected in *Mother Maria's*, *Helena Stollenwerk's* entry in the chronicle of the Sisters: “In summer 1886 Rev. Fr. Superior informed us that the Reverend Sisters of Divine Providence would be leaving the Mission House. The Brothers would take over the kitchen. We would then live in a house in the neighborhood where we would take care of the Mission House laundry. He gave us to understand that this would bring us a step nearer to our goal. For the time being, however, things remained as they were; we continued with the dishwashing, looking after the preserves in the cellar, preparing vegetables and potatoes and helping the Sisters in the kitchen.”

##### July 12, 1886 – Chapter of Faults

In his letter to Bishop Anzer of this date he told the Bishop how he tried to support Fr. Medit's work in Steyl, by setting a good example, also during the chapter of faults: “Recently I asked all the priests to attend all the conferences and exercises of the novitiate”, including the chapter of faults. “Then I also have the opportunity to express my *culpa* [fault] well and truly and humiliate my proud head. [...] During this, one row comes forward and kisses the floor before and after the confession of faults. Public admission of faults is a way of making reparation to God” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 221).

##### July 31, 1886 – Bishop John Baptist Anzer arrives in Puoli – South Shantung

The general chapter had ended on May 12, 1886. On that same day Bishop Anzer and newly ordained Rev. Augustinus Henninghaus began their journey to China. On July 31, 1886 they finally arrived in Puoli, which was the central station in South Shantung. Before they reached Puoli, they were welcomed by Brother Ceslaus, catechists and leaders of the Christian community, riding on horses. “Then the flags waved in the wind, the brass band played, as well as Chinese pipes and clarinets; there were gun salutes and there were fireworks. At the entrance of the village all Christians, orphans, students and innumerable non-Christian spectators. . A whole week long non-Christians and Christians brought presents to welcome the new bishop” (Richard Harwich, *Steyler Missionare in China*, [Steyl Missionaries in China], vol. 1, *Analecta SVD* – 61/1, Rome 1983, p. 106).

## **AUGUST 1886**

### **August 15, 1886 – Vows on the new Constitutions in South Shantung**

In Steyl the confreres had taken vows on the new Constitutions in February and March 1885. Bishop Anzer had taken a copy of the Constitutions to China, and so the confreres in South Shantung were able to take their vows on August 15, 1886 during a solemn Holy Mass celebrated by Bishop Anzer. In his capacity as Provincial, the Bishop presided over the vow ceremony before the exposed Blessed Sacrament. Fr. Joseph Freinademetz took final vows at that time. In his diary we read: “Then we pronounced our vows. I, through the grace of God and with the permission of my superiors, for life. So Brother Joseph, the die is cast. Pray, work and sacrifice, suffer and endure for the whole of your life for your beloved Chinese; then, when you come to the evening of your life and lie on your deathbed, you can sleep surrounded by your dear Chinese. Adieu! Farewell for ever, dear homeland beyond the sea!” (Fritz Bornemann, *As wine poured out, Blessed Joseph Freinademetz SVD Missionary in China*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Rome 1984, p. 105).

### **August 17, 1886 – Fr. Arnold Janssen celebrates his silver jubilee as a priest The celebration**

At 10 am the solemn High Mass began with Fr. Arnold as celebrant. The sermon was preached by the diocesan priest Rev. Fr. Bless who, 25 years earlier, had been the altar server at Fr. Arnold’s first holy Mass. After Mass Fr. Arnold received the congratulations of his guests and then followed the festive meal. Around 4 pm there was another solemn gathering in honor of Fr. Arnold (Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote, [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], vol. 13, No. 12, September 1886).

#### *What the catholic press said about Fr. Arnold*

Occasioned by Fr. Arnold’s jubilee the Catholic press wrote about him: “If anyone wishes to see a truly amazing work of Divine Providence, he should go to Steyl. Arnold Janssen, the founder, was formerly a teacher in Bocholt. He is a man of prayer, mortification, with a serene and imperturbable trust in God. The founding of the mission seminary is another proof of an ancient truth. If God takes a project under his special protection, one can see immediately that it grows to greatness, not by grace of circumstances, but by God’s own providence” (in Fritz Bornemann SVD, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Arnoldus Press Manila, 1975, pp. 179-180).

#### *Prayer and technical machinery*

“Indelible is the impression one receives when attending, either in the early morning or in the evening, the common prayers of the future missionaries. The institution houses more than 300 people. One sees on every side exemplary order and cleanliness. Brothers of the Society run the press, which is equipped with the most modern technical machinery, and there is also a shop for painting and wood carving. The press, the mill and even the kitchen all run on steam power” (*ibid.*, p. 180).

#### *The founder*

“Who built the house? A man who is as firm as a rock. He is the very personification of energy. Despite his frail body, he has hardened himself; he works all day

long and seems to have his need for rest completely under control. He sleeps on a hard bed and often only a few hours a night. He occupies a room without the slightest adornment. There the mathematician and master designer drew the plans for the building and its organization. The accomplishment of a single man in scarcely eleven years. Or better: the work of God” (*ibid.*).

## **OCTOBER 1886**

### **October 3, 1886 – Prayer in St. Michael’s mission house**

Fr. Hermann Fischer, the biographer of Fr. Arnold, remembered: “I entered Steyl on October 2, 1886. The following day was a Sunday, the feast of the Holy Rosary. Except for the time needed for meals, we spent the whole day in the church gaining indulgences. The Founder led the prayers; he could not do enough to free as many souls as possible from Purgatory that day. By evening my knees were really sore; I was so depressed that I said to myself: ‘If things go on like this, you certainly won’t be able to stick it out.’ But things didn’t go on like that. Still a lot of praying was certainly done in Steyl during those days” (in Fritz Bornemann, *Remembering Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Rome 1978, p. 118).

## **DECEMBER 1886**

### **December 1, 1886 – Fr. Arnold Janssen becomes an Austrian citizen**

On December 1, 1886 Fr. Arnold took the oath as a subject [of the Austrian Emperor] in the building of the Austrian embassy in The Hague, Netherlands, and so he became an Austrian citizen.

*Part of the formula of the oath was read to Fr. Arnold to which he then responded:*

“You will take an oath to the almighty God and, guaranteeing with your honor and faithfulness, you will vow to be always faithful and obedient to His Majesty..., Franz Joseph the First, by the grace of God Emperor of Austria and Apostolic King of Hungary as your rightful territorial prince and Lord, and ... also to his heirs who are of his blood and family.”

*Then Arnold Janssen said:*

“That which was just said to me and which I understood clearly, I must and will faithfully follow.” “So help me God!” Arnold Janssen (in: M. Csaky, *Der Untertaneneid* [oath of loyalty] of Fr. Arnold Janssen, in the K.U.K [Imperial and Royal] embassy in The Hague in the year 1886, *Verbum* 2, 1960, p. 428).

## **THE YEAR 1887**

### **News regarding the kitchen and agriculture of St. Michael’s mission house**

*January 12, 1887*

Since the Sisters of Divine Providence wanted to give up their work in kitchen and laundry, Fr. Arnold looked for Brothers to replace them. On January 12, 1887 Bros. Christopherus Knaup and Michael Fecken began as cook apprentices of the

11:54 AM	Examination of conscience
12:00	Noon Lunch, prayer, walk, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
2: 00 PM	Studies
3:00-3:50 PM	Classes. Monday and Wednesday: canon law; Tuesday and Saturday moral theology; Friday: dogmatics
3:50 PM	Recreation and afternoon coffee
4:30 PM	Meditation
5:00 PM	Preparation for conference, taking notes, spiritual reading or studies
6:00 PM	Stations of the cross
7:00 PM	Evening meal, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, recreation
8:00 PM	Evening prayer, prayer or spiritual reading

(Bornemann, *P. Wilhelm Gier, Analecta SVD* 50, p. 388-389, endnote 75).

## ANOTHER VISIT TO AUSTRIA

### *In the interest of the foundation of St. Gabriel*

In October 1887 Fr. Arnold travelled again to Austria. There, Fr. Arnold met with Baron von Braun at the latter's holiday resort. Von Braun had previously helped him very much in his negotiations regarding the establishment of the theological college of St. Gabriel's. In the meantime the situation had changed, since St. Michael's mission house had developed into the religious congregation of the Society of the Divine Word. Therefore Fr. Arnold now no longer needed permission to establish an educational institution, but the admission of a religious congregation into Austria. As a result of his deliberations with von Braun, Fr. Arnold "abandoned the efforts he had made for four years to obtain approval for a private school. Instead he now sought to gain the admission of the Society of the Divine Word into Austria. One of the purposes of the Society, according to its Constitutions, was the education of its own candidates. Therefore, if it were allowed into the country, the legal requirements for a private school would no longer apply. In effect, this meant that no further questions would be asked about the citizenship and qualification of teachers who staffed the school. So the rector set out on a new course of negotiations with a new objective in view" (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila, 1975, pp. 205-206).

### *Consecration to the Holy Spirit*

On October 3, 1887 Fr. Arnold consecrated himself totally to the Holy Spirit in the Vincentian Church in Vienna. He himself said: "I have given myself completely to Him in body and soul as an offering, and I have asked Him for the grace to know the greatness of His love, to live and die for Him alone. May He assist me to live in the world free from sin and to act according to the will of God in all perfection" (in Peter McHugh, *The Spirituality of our Society, a Theological Appreciation*, SVD, Manila Province, Philippines, 1975, pp. 141-142).



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## The Arnoldus Family Story

### PEACE FOR THE CHURCH IN PRUSSIA

On April 25, 1887 the Prussian parliament approved a law which restored peaceful relations between the church and the Prussian state. Article 5 of this law read that those religious orders or similar congregations of the Catholic Church which a) did supply work in the pastoral care of people, b) practiced Christian charity, c) educated girls in high schools and similar educational institutions, d) whose members lived a contemplative life would be readmitted to the kingdom of Prussia (in: "St. Michael's Almanac" 1888, p. 140).

### CHANGE OF WORK FOR THE FOUR SISTERS-CANDIDATES

Since the Sisters of Divine Providence would leave the mission house in the foreseeable future and the Brothers were to take over the kitchen, a new kind of work had to be found for the four young women who hoped to become missionary sisters: Helena Stollenwerk, Hendrina Stenmanns, Theresia Sicke and Gertrud Hegemann. Helena Stollenwerk writes in her chronicle of the missionary sisters: "Since the spring of 1887 Hendrina Stenmanns learned how to arrange the laundry in the linen room ... Theresia Sicke and I, Helena Stollenwerk, alternated with the dishwashing, that is for 1-2 weeks, and then 1 week sewing and mending ... Around Pentecost 1887 Sr. Andrea's [Gertrud Hegemann's] state of health was not good and she was not strong enough to do dishwashing; therefore she worked, as much as she could, in the linen room."

### A NEW PUBLICATION IN HONOR OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

According to the visionary Miss Magdalene Leitner, the Holy Spirit wanted Fr. Arnold to add to his mission magazine "Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote" (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) a supplement in honor of the Holy Spirit. Fr. Arnold did so and called the supplement "Komm, Heiliger Geist hernieder!" which means "Come down Holy Spirit". He published the supplement for the first time in June 1887 and gave it the subtitle "Festive supplement for the time of Pentecost". At first it was published at regular bimonthly intervals and then at irregular intervals.

In the foreword Fr. Arnold wrote: "How happy we would be, if we could do something towards His greater honor, if this paper would at least result here and there in a greater invocation and adoration of the Holy Spirit! May the lines which we publish herewith in His honor serve this purpose! In the first place may they further stimulate

our own love and veneration of the great Dispenser of grace, the God of beautiful love, and secondly may they also similarly animate one or the other of our readers.”

### SOLEMN INTRODUCTION OF THE SEPTEMBER 1885 RULE (PART ONE)

Fr. Arnold wrote to Fr. Medits: “We have had two beautiful feasts, the feast of the Holy Trinity [5 June] and the feast of the Sacred Heart [17 June], both highly meaningful for us because the new Latin Rule was introduced. On the first of feasts all the priests with the exception of Fr. Schaaf, who was sick and not there, transferred their vows to the new Latin Rule. Also Deacon Johannes Neuenhofen and Subdeacon Briers who were ordained the day before” (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, Steyler Verlag Nettetal, 2002, p. 222). A consequence of the new rule was the abandonment of the Dominican rule and thus meat could be served on Wednesdays and Saturdays from then on (ibid., p. 223).

### FUTURE OF THE SISTER-CANDIDATES

On June 8, 1887 Fr Arnold wrote to Fr. Medits: “We are getting closer to the day when the the [Divine Providence ] Sisters will be discharged and our Brothers themselves can take over the kitchen. But then the big question arises: What is to be done with the four maids [Helena Stollenwerk, Hendrina Stenmanns, Theresia Sicke, Gertrud Hegemann]? If they are to stay, we will have to get a house ready for them nearby with kitchen, etc. and the mending of the laundry will have to be given to them. Then new ones will have to be accepted, and then we will not be able to postpone any further the decision to start a women’s congregation from these elements. That thought scares me, however. It would cause new work and worries, and I really don’t know how to do justice to all the things I already have to do” (Bornemann, *Ferdinand Medits and Magdalene Leitner...*, p. 66).

### BROTHER MISSIONARIES

The second part of the solemn introduction of the September 1885 Rule took place on June 17, 1887, the feast of the Sacred Heart. The brothers transferred their vows to the new Latin Rule. Furthermore, “eight candidates took their first vows on the new Rule. Apart from that 14 brothers were admitted to the novitiate. So we now have twenty-six lay brothers, thirty-nine novices and twenty-five postulants, altogether ninety. Also about ten apprentices” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 222-223).

### TROUBLES BETWEEN BISHOP ANZER AND FR. FREINADEMETZ

Due to some critical remarks by Fr. Freinademetz, his relationship with Bishop Anzer had deteriorated to such a degree that, so Fr. Freinademetz felt, the Bishop did not trust him any longer. In fact, the Bishop believed it was Freinademetz who instigated those confreres who were critical of the Bishop” (Bornemann, *As Wine Poured Out, Blessed Joseph Freinademetz SVD, Missionary in China 1879-1908*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Rome, 1984, p. 115). Freinademetz was the “chief reason”, that since his return from Europe the Bishop “had not had a happy moment.” So on June 21, 1887 Fr. Freinademetz wrote to Bishop Anzer: With the disobedient Jonas he exclaimed: “If the storm has

arisen because of me, then throw me into the sea! Your Excellency, you see more deeply than I do and you are more enlightened from above than I am. Still, no matter how wicked I am and how full of evil, the good God has allowed me to retain at least the desire to be good. I beg Your Excellency to do whatever you wish with me without the least regard for human respect. Put me in the very last place, in the smallest corner of the mission. ... I ask only one favor, ... Do not send me back to Europe” (ibid., p. 115-116).

### THE VISIONARY MISS LEITNER AND THE MISSIONARY-SISTERS

On June 8, 1887 Fr. Arnold had written to Fr. Medits about the possible foundation of a missionary sisters’ congregation. Fr. Medits showed the letter to the visionary Miss Leitner and her response was: “The idea of the foundation of a women’s congregation is pleasing to God. However, this congregation must be completely separated from the mission house ...”. She also made the point that the following was to be stressed in the sisters’ rule: The Sisters must not be considered laborers, but brides of God.... Therefore, you have to see to it that a greater importance is placed on prayer and other spiritual exercises.... Most important for these sisters is that they work spiritually... This must not be forgotten. Only then can a flourishing of the congregation be hoped for.” “Work for the [male] mission society can be done in the time left over. You must not be afraid, the work will not suffer a disadvantage” (in Bornemann, *Ferdinand Medits and Magdalene Leitner...*, p. 66).

### NEWS FROM ST. MICHAEL’S IN STEYL

#### *Wintersemester*

The winter semester 1887/88 began in October. There were 233 students, 82 of them were doing higher studies or were in the novitiate.

It was this October that, following the model of the Roman colleges, Fr. Arnold introduced as an experiment “the custom of the free Thursday and made it part of the school program... The free day actually began with the afternoon snack on Wednesday and ended on Thursday afternoon with the 5:00 p.m. study period” (in Bornemann, *Remembering Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, *Analecta SVD* - 42, Rome 1978, p. 110).

#### *Daily order for the novitiate 1887/89*

5:00 AM	Rising
5:28 AM	Morning prayer and meditation
6:00 AM	Holy Mass and thanksgiving
7:10 AM	Breakfast
8:00 AM	Free
8:15 AM	Conference or chapter of faults
8:45 AM	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, taking notes, spiritual reading
9: 28 AM	Work in the house. Recreation
	Private adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
10:05 AM	Studies
11:00-11:53 AM	Class(es)

was: "I intend to present myself to His Majesty as his subject, as an Austrian citizen, and to request that he admit our congregation to Austria, so we can establish a mission seminary in Maria Enzersdorf" (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, p. 206). This he did with a formal petition to the Emperor.

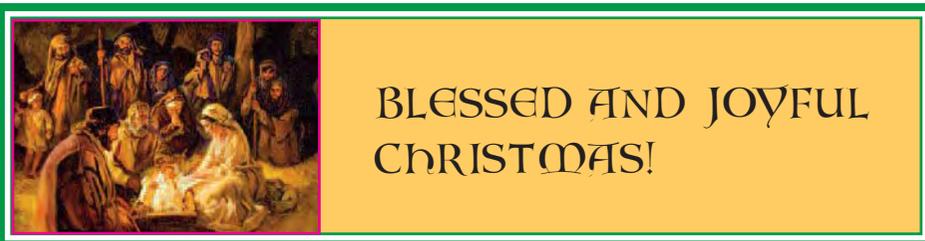
### **Formal Petition**

In this formal petition Fr. Arnold gave "a brief résumé of what had transpired so far. He mentioned the permissions he had obtained from the Ministry of Education, the provincial government of Lower Austria, the National Board of Education, the archbishop, Rome, the Franciscans in Enzersdorf, the parish priest and the mayor." He furthermore pointed out the development of the mission house in Steyl and the mission in South-Shantung. Then he went on: "Necessity has forced us to constitute ourselves as a religious congregation with the customary three vows, with particular reference to the foreign missions, which we regard as our principal work. We shall be happy to do what we can to promote Austria's special mission in the Far East. Since we are now a congregation, and Your Majesty's gracious permission is necessary before we can enter Austria, I most humbly implore, for the honor of the Triune God, and the spiritual welfare and advantage of the Church and this monarchy, and especially for those among your people who aspire to the missionary vocation, that you graciously bestow on our Society the authority to accept candidates for the foreign missions and to train them accordingly. I will do my best to inspire the students, and all those under me, with a genuine love of country, and with that devotion to your Majesty's royal house with which I myself am animated. And since in Steyl we have been on the best of terms with both the Dutch and the German authorities, I do not doubt that the same will also be true here" (*ibid.*).

### **Result of the Petition**

The petition "was transmitted to the Ministry of Education, with the sovereign signature attached." On Ascension Thursday Fr. Arnold was able to have a conversation with the Minister of Education. Fr. Arnold reported: The Minister "was unusually friendly, shook hands with me three or four times, and assured me he was most favorably disposed towards the admission of the Society of the Divine Word into Austria and the establishment of a seminary in Maria Enzersdorf."

In the middle of May Fr. Arnold returned to Steyl.



## **The Arnoldus Family Story**

### **A WOMAN AT THE BEGINNING OF A NEW MISSION HOUSE**

#### **Emilie Huch**

The number of St. Michael's residents in Steyl grew steadily. Germany was looking for German missionaries for the German colonies and that meant that more missionaries and new formation houses were needed. For the students of philosophy and theology a new mission house was planned in Austria. But the high school students would soon need a new school in Germany. And in the midst of all this Fr. Arnold received an unexpected hint of how to solve the problem: a lady, not known to him, Mrs. Emilie Huch from Silesia sent him a letter with the proposal to start a mission house in Silesia which in those days still was part of Germany. Emilie Huch was married to Franz Huch and they lived with their children in Berlin. There Mr. Huch was editor-in-chief and director of finances of a Catholic newspaper. "In addition he had a provincial paper with 'a real Catholic slant' and a printing press in Nysa which yielded a secure profit and could be of use for a publicity campaign among the Catholic population" (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, Steyler Verlag Nettetal, 2002, p. 427).

#### **Mrs. Emilie Huch's letter**

The letter was dated October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1887. Mrs. Huch had heard of Fr. Arnold's plan to start a mission house in Austria; however, from everything she had come to know about Fr. Arnold's efforts, she had concluded that he had been obliged to give up the idea. And so she suggested the foundation of a mission house in the vicinity of a pilgrimage church to Our Lady near Nysa in Silesia. She assured him, "You will have a second Steyl there in no time." She herself and many benefactors would support the project. And candidates for the new mission house would not be lacking. The parish priest will support the project, but he must not hear who was behind the plan. "For some priests consider it below their dignity to follow the advice of women." At first, even her own husband should not be told about her involvement "because he would say she should not start too many things" (*ibid.*). On November 11, 1887 Fr. Arnold replied: "At the moment not yet. Later. I will accept your kind offer and ask you to keep your word faithfully" (SVD Generalate Archives, *Letters of Arnold Janssen*, CD Arrangement Sebastian Mattappallil, transcription Franz Bosold,).

## ROME – ANOTHER PLACE OF STUDIES

Mrs. Emilie Huch had written to Fr. Arnold at a time when he was concentrating very much on the foundation of the Austrian mission house. Furthermore he planned to send some confreres for higher studies to Rome. In a letter to Bishop Anzer in China, also from November 11, 1887. he wrote about two priests and the bishop's own nephew who was still a theology student, whom he wanted to send to Rome in the autumn of 1888.

## SOME SPECIAL TASKS FOR FR. ARNOLD IN THE AUTUMN OF 1887

In his letter to Bishop Anzer of November 11, 1887 Fr. Arnold mentioned a couple of special tasks for him: Since the two lecturers for moral theology were not able to teach, "I must teach Moral Theology, which requires much preparation from me, because besides Gury I must at least study St. Alphonse. On Mondays and Fridays after [afternoon] coffee, I practice solving moral questions of conscience with the clerics à la Gury". Since the Vincentian Confraternity of the Holy Spirit had been elevated to an Archfraternity for Germany, "I'm working with Fr. Medits on the revision of our statutes". Furthermore, Fr. Arnold worried about the mission in China: "How dedicated I am to your mission! May the good Lord strengthen you! How often do I remind the confreres of your struggles and toils." He also addressed directly the problematic relationship of the bishop to his missionaries: "I pray to the good Lord that your sincere condescension and fatherly behavior may succeed in winning the hearts of priests wholly to yourself ..." (see, *Arnold Janssen, Letters to China*, vol. I, Josef Alt ed., transl. Frank Mihalic, Vincent Fecher, *Analecta* – 83/1, Rome 2002, p. 229.230).

## THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND THE GERMAN MISSIONARIES IN CHINA

In agreement with the Chinese government, France issued missionary passports to missionaries of any nationality which enabled them to enter the interior of China. At the same time the French government promised its protection for the missionaries. When the German government learned of the presence of German missionaries in Shantung they wanted to take over the protection of those. That was opposed by France. When in January 1888 Bishop Anzer called on the German ambassador in Peking, the latter pointed out the advantages of a German protectorate. Anzer, however, did not agree and he did not change his mind when at Easter 1888, during another visit of the Bishop in Peking, the German ambassador "extended every courtesy to him" (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Arnoldus Press Manila, 1975, p. 249).

## IDEAS REGARDING THE FOUNDATION OF A NEW MISSION HOUSE IN SILESIA

January 19, 1888 Fr. Arnold wrote a letter to Mrs. Emilie Huch describing his ideas about the size of the property for a new mission house: "In order to begin anywhere it is most necessary that we will have a pretty large area – the larger, the better, a peaceful, healthy surrounding and easy access to a well-located railway station. ... I consider Frankenstein (where the Huch family was officially residing) and Nysa as suitable locations." Then he announced a possible visit: "Perhaps in April or

May I must travel to Vienna. That would perhaps be a good opportunity to visit and see you and to have a good look around in Silesia to find a suitable place:" That was necessary in order to make a decision (SVD Generalate, *Letters of Arnold Janssen*, CD Arrangement Sebastian Mattappallil, Transcription Franz Bosold).

## FR. ARNOLD ON THE WAY TO VIENNA

### *Visit with the Huch family*

On April 5, 1888 Fr. Arnold began his journey to Vienna. His first stop was Berlin where he visited the Huch family. Years later he recalled: "In the evening of 5 April I arrived in Berlin and remained there till Tuesday, 9 April, when I continued the journey to Silesia. During that time I was received with the greatest kindness and hospitality by the Huch family" (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 428).

### *Continuation of the journey via Silesia*

From Berlin Fr. Arnold travelled first to Breslau. There he requested an audience with Prince Bishop Kopp who only a few months earlier had been transferred from the diocese of Fulda to Breslau. However, the audience was refused. Fr. Arnold could not understand it, since a year earlier the very same Bishop had received him quite cordially in Fulda.

From Breslau Fr. Arnold travelled to Frankenstein in Silesia, Nysa, Olmuetz, and Bruenn. "In Nysa I visited Rev. Canon Pischel. In Bruenn his Lordship the Bishop invited me for dinner. At that time I could not think about the foundation of the mission house in Silesia because the Austrian foundation {St. Gabriel's} was necessarily a priority and the political situation in Prussia did not allow the foundation there" (*ibid.*).

## IN VIENNA

In the evening of April 15, Fr. Arnold arrived in Vienna. A first success there was that the Archbishop of Vienna gave his oral approval for the introduction of the religious Society of the Divine Word into Vienna (Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, p. 206).

### *Miss Fanny Steffko*

As already in 1884, so on May 1, 1888 the Viennese woman Miss Fanny Steffko donated 14000 crowns for the new mission house St. Gabriel on condition of receiving the interest for her whole life. She was a friend of Miss Magdalene Leitner and like her, she also belonged to the circle around Fr. Medits. With her money Fr. Arnold was able to buy the piece of land for the new mission house in Maria Enzersdorf" (Bornemann, *Ferdinand Medits und Magdalene Leitner in der Geschichte des Steyler Missionswerkes* [in the history of the Steyl mission organization], *Verbum Supplementum* 4, p. 115, endnote 2 to p. 42).

### *Another audience with the Emperor and its purpose*

On May 3, 1888, through mediation of the Baron von Braun Fr. Arnold was admitted to the general audience with the Emperor. The purpose of meeting the Emperor