

4. Hence, the sisters will be divided into Cloistered and Missionary Sisters, similar to the former distinction between choir and lay sisters. Both groups take the usual three vows” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p.343).

April 22, 1891

“The four capitulars, Arnold Janssen, Bishop Anzer, Hermann Wegener and Bernhard Eikenbrock requested the following permission from the Bishop” on this day:

a) “That for the Missionary Sisters a provisional Rule might be drawn up, based on the above directives and presented to Your Lordship for approbation;

b) “That we make a small start and experiment with the Cloistered Sisters and that, therefore, some thought already be given to them in the above-mentioned Rule” (*ibid.* p. 344).

April 24, 1891

On this day Arnold Janssen personally carried a copy of the basic characteristics of the statutes, the formal request of the capitulars and his own letter of thanksgiving to Bishop Boermans of Roermond and “I received his oral approbation”, Fr. Arnold wrote (*ibid.*, p. 345).

April 25, 1891

While on the previous day Fr. Arnold had presented the request to start with the congregation of the missionary sisters to the SVD’s local ordinary, the Bishop of Roermond, on April 25, Fr. Arnold had another great joy: he was able to present to the SVD’s very own and first Bishop, John Baptist Anzer, six candidates for ordination to the priesthood and nine for the subdiaconate (*ibid.*).

END OF THE SECOND SVD GENERAL CHAPTER

APRIL 27, 1891

On this day the chapter was concluded with the signatures of the four members present: Arnold Janssen, John Baptist Anzer, Hermann Wegener and Bernhard Eikenbrock (*ibid.*, p. 228).



The Arnoldus Family Story

FEBRUARY 1891

AN INTERESTING EXCHANGE OF LETTERS

February 7

Miss Leitner, the visionary living in Vienna /Austria, writes to Bishop Anzer who was in St. Gabriel’s: she had to suffer a lot on his behalf because the Bishop “was not on good terms with Superior Janssen” (Bornemann, *Ferdinand Medits und Magdalene Leitner, Verbum Supplementum 4*, Rome 1968, p. 129).

February 8

Bishop Anzer replies to Miss Leitner: “Don’t worry, I am not leaving the Society”. Also on this day the Bishop wrote to Arnold Janssen.

February 11

Arnold Janssen answers Bishop Anzer.

Right up to the present time he had hoped for the Bishop to change his heart and so he had reported nothing [about Anzer’s threat to leave the SVD] to the Propaganda. As to the other points “*it would be better to discuss them by word of mouth, as I trust that the Holy Spirit will finish the work He had begun, and that a better relationship will set in. To this end, I urge Your Episcopal Grace: let both of us seek to make ourselves worthy of the divine light by most earnestly praying the Psalm Miserere during the interval. Because nothing will last that does not have its root and ground in humility*” (Arnold Janssen, *Letters to China*, Vol I (1879-1897), ed. Jos. Alt, transl. Frank Michalic, Vincent Fecher, *Analecta – 83/1*, Rome 2002, p.307-308).

February 14

Bishop Anzer replies to Arnold Janssen: He can see “there has been a lot of misunderstanding. How nice it would have been, if we had gotten together earlier! For my part, reconciliation and a better relationship is not only possible, it is something that I want, downright long for” (*ibid.*, p.308, footnote 7)

AUDIENCE OF BISHOP ANZER WITH POPE LEO XIII

On March 5, 1891 Bishop Anzer had an audience with Pope Leo XIII. First he gave the pope a book as present from the German Emperor as a sign of his appreci-

ation of the Pope. “The Holy Father accepted the above-mentioned gift with special pleasure (*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], 18, No. 7, April 1891, p. 56). At the same time the Pope agreed orally to the Bishop’s request to have the Holy Spirit painted in the human form of a young man - something that had been forbidden. Bishop Anzer himself wrote and signed the paper containing the Pope’s permission (Hartwich, *Steyler Missionare in China*, [Steyl Missionaries in China], *Analecta SVD* – 61/1, p. 197).

NEWS FROM THE SECOND PERIOD OF THE SVD GENERAL CHAPTER IN ST. GABRIEL’S

The General Chapter which had begun in November 1890 and had been postponed in the same month was resumed on March 14.

March 19, 1891

A new rule

From March 19 to April 1, 1891 the main issue was the new Rule which the founder’s brother, Rev. John Janssen, had written. The rule is new “to the extent that the draft and lay-out is new; it is old to the extent that most of the essential regulations are from the old Rule and the definition of the special goal of the Society is taken word for word from the old Rule” (Jos. Alt, *Journey in Faith*, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, Steyler Verlag Nettetal, 2002, p. 230).

Discussion topics

One topic was the beard of the confreres in Europe: “The proposal to ask Rome if beards could be worn in Europe was turned down ‘because the application did not have sufficient support from the confreres asked about it.’”

Furthermore, a decision was made regarding smoking in South Shantung: “1. Missionaries who wish to smoke outside the residence may do so. 2. It is the wish of the Chapter that those missionaries who observe the no-smoking rule would continue to do so.” Obviously, so Fr. Alt comments, “this resolution could not be communicated to all the Society and Arnold Janssen did not like it.”

The chapter also discussed a new order of studies: five years of lower studies, two years of philosophy, theology including novitiate, four years. In the second year of novitiate a greater study load could be undertaken. “The last semester of the theology should be used as a more immediate preparation for the holy priesthood” (*ibid.*, p. 231).

March 29 - A new General Council

Arnold Janssen remained Superior General. The two general councilors Rev. Wegener and John Janssen were confirmed in office and Rev. Holthausen and Blum were newly elected. The term of office was until the next general chapter. “There is a basic principle for the general council, for matters of greater importance absent councilors will be consulted by mail; day to day affairs will be settled by the councilors who are present” (*ibid.*, p. 230).



Hermann Wegener



Joh. Janssen



Arnold Janssen



Nikolaus Blum



Joh. Holthausen

Division into provinces

The Society was divided provisionally into the following provinces: “Europe with the three foundations in Steyl, Rome and St. Gabriel’s: China with the houses in South Shantung; America which at that time only consisted of Argentina as a *provincia minor*” (*ibid.*).

April 5 and 9 - A joyful event

On April 5, Bishop Anzer ordained his nephew, Rev. John Weig, to the priesthood in St. Gabriel’s. On April 9 the newly ordained priest celebrated his first holy Mass, while his uncle, Bishop Anzer, assisted.

April 6, 1891 - Postponement and Transfer of the General Chapter

On this day the chapter was postponed and moved to Steyl.

GOOD NEWS FROM STEYL

On April 7, 1891, in Steyl the summer semester 1891 was begun with a solemn high Mass. “The number of our students, including the newcomers, is 247” (*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], 18, No. 8, May 1894, p. 64).

THIRD PERIOD OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER (APRIL 19.-27., 1891)

In Steyl the third period of the General Chapter began on April 19.

The founding of the Missionary Sisters

April 20, 1891

The chapter decided to ask the Bishop of Roermond, to approve “the basic characteristics of this institute” of the Missionary Sisters:

1. “An institute of sisters is to be established under the name of ‘Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit’” (*in Latin: Societas servarum Spiritus Sancti*).

2. “The primary purpose of this society shall be: To support by prayer and work the activities of the priests of the Society of the Divine Word, by working especially in the missions for the benefit of their own sex, which is naturally more appropriate for women than for men.”

3. Although all sisters are to pray for the greater honor of the Holy Spirit, for the greater sanctification of the priestly state and true reverence of the sacraments, one section of the sisters is to make this task the main purpose of their lives.”