

On February 21, Fr. Arnold wrote to the Prefect Apostolic that the very few conversions spoke against accepting the offer and he continued: "Since his Eminence Cardinal Ledochowski appears very much to want us to do something in Norway we will do our best. At the moment I cannot give you a priest but perhaps two next fall. If it turns out that something can be done there, I am ready to help you. If not I must reserve the right to withdraw my priests after giving a year's notice." (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 676).

### Togo

February 22, the Propaganda in Rome separated Togo from the Apostolic Prefecture of Dahomé which was under the Lyons Missionaries. Togo was transferred to the Missionaries of Steyl as an Apostolic Prefecture (*ibid.*, p. 634).

## MARCH 1892

### Norway

On March 8 Fr. Arnold wrote to Cardinal Ledochowski: "We shall consider and comply with the wishes of the Holy See and Your Eminence with all due respect, provided the welfare of our Society and its missionaries does not counsel otherwise. Generally speaking, it is not good to send two or three missionaries for a period of only two to five years to a place where a different language is spoken. In the first place because two or three years are hardly enough to master a foreign language. Secondly, to overcome the serious difficulties of precisely the first years, the new missionary must realize that this is the country to which Providence has led him. Here he will live and die, here he will do battle and be victorious. This has been our practice from the beginning. ...Thirdly, a mission society is obliged to care for its members in a responsible way. But it cannot send two or three young priests to work under a superior who is not one of their own' ... However this should not be understood to mean that he rejected outright every form of collaboration with others" (Bornemann, transl. John Vogelgesang, *Arnold Janssen*, p. 285).

The Cardinal felt seriously offended by this letter. "He spoke of the obedience a mission society owes to the Holy See" (*ibid.*).

### Togo

On March 13 Pope Leo XIII confirmed the decision to entrust Togo to Steyl (Jos. Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 634).

## NEW YEAR

*I wish you all a happy new year,  
all the happiness and health, joy, cheerfulness,  
merriment and everything that is truly good for you!*

Fr. Arnold 1852 to his brothers and sisters and today to us!



## Divine Word Missionaries Secretariat Arnold Janssen Steyl

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## The Arnoldus Family Story

### NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 1891

#### New Mission house in Silesia

On November 21, having completed the work of writing the Rule for the Holy Spirit Sisters in St. Gabriel's, Fr. Arnold Janssen travelled to Silesia where he arrived on November 23. Through Mr. Huch, whose wife Emilie had given Fr. Arnold the idea of starting a mission house in Silesia, he had published an advertisement in several newspapers "of the 'location wanted' type." Mr Huch received 30 offers which his family sorted out and narrowed down to two - one from Neuland near Neisse (today Nyssa), the other from Kamentz. With the consent of his council, Fr. Arnold decided "in favour of the 84 acres of land within the parish boundaries of Neuland, at the very gates of the city of Neisse, which had a population of 23,000, besides several thousand military personnel. With its adjacent towns Neisse formed, as it were, the very heart of the diocese and had excellent means of communication" (Fritz Bornemann, transl. John Vogelgesang, *Arnold Janssen*, Arnoldus Press Manila, 1975, p. 263).

#### Application to the Prince Bishop of Breslau

On December 1, 1891 Fr. Arnold "handed in an application to Prince Bishop Kopp in Breslau to allow the foundation of the mission house in the parish of Neuland near Nyssa and to accept the missionary society itself into the diocese".

On December 2, the Bishop answered that he had no objection and wished "the enterprise much success" (Jos. Alt, transl. Frank Mansfield and Jacqueline Mulberge, *Journey in Faith*, Nettetal 2002, p.441).

#### Letter to John Janssen about the new foundation

On December 2, Fr. Arnold informed his brother John about the new foundation: "There a whole estate is available, 120 acres [...] [...] Will it not be best to buy the whole thing and then sell or lease what is not needed, attaching any conditions that may be desirable. Of course Silesia has to provide the money. [...] I will soon have to go to Berlin. Only when Berlin says yes can we make the matter public. If I buy it now I must reserve the right of backing out" (*ibid.*, p.441).

The next few days, accompanied by Mr. Huch, Fr. Arnold visited several prominent people to win friends and benefactors for the new foundation. "About 15000 Marks were promised" (*ibid.*). The Huch family had already provided half of the money needed to buy the property (Bornemann, transl. John Vogelgesang, p.264).

### ***In Berlin***

On December 10, coming from Silesia, Fr. Arnold arrived in Berlin to negotiate about the new mission house and Togo. In Berlin he was received by the Minister for Education. The latter “approved the foundation near Nysa and received me very warmly; I was with him for forty-five minutes. The gentlemen from the colonial office, Mr Kayser and Mr von Puttkammer, the Imperial Commissioner for Togo, were very friendly, especially Kayser, who mediated for me during the summer at the Education ministry. Clerics and laity welcomed the new mission house as well as the Silesian parliamentarians with whom he spoke, like Count von Ballestrem, Baron von Huene, Dr. Porsch and others” (*ibid*, pp. 441-442).

### **Letter to Prince Bishop Kopp of Breslau**

*Still in Berlin, on December 12 Fr. Arnold wrote to the Prince Bishop:*

“ ‘The Minister of Education has approved the establishment of a mission house near Nysa and told me I should ask for permission for the foundation, enclosing a letter from Your Lordship, not on the previous basis of a private educational establishment but as a foundation of a religious congregation.’ The Minister would not make any demands regarding teachers. ‘Everywhere the plan was welcomed, by priests and laity, particularly by the Silesian parliamentarians in Berlin. Only the question of money still causes difficulties ‘since considering its own lack of resources our house in Steyl will not be in a position to go into debts for the Silesian house.’ For this purpose he was looking for a church collection in the diocese of Breslau and a recommendation from the Prince Bishop to the Africa Association in Cologne ‘since the gentlemen there seem to want a mission house in the West, although this could be done later.’ It was only a matter of time before a mission in Africa was transferred by the Propaganda to the Steyl congregation” (*ibid.*, p. 442)

### **Application to the Ministry of Education in Berlin**

On December 18, Fr. Arnold made an application to the Ministry of Education for the foundation of a mission house in Nysa (*ibid.*)

## **JANUARY 1892**

The most important event during the month of January was the investiture of the first Missionary Sisters. After it had been postponed several times, the final date for the investiture was January 17, the feast of the Name of Jesus.

However, the day of investiture was not the day on which the novitiate began, since the Bishop of Roermond had not yet approved the Sisters’ Rule. That only happened on January 14, 1893, and so only from that date onwards could the canonical novitiate begin.

### ***January 11***

This day was important for Fr. Arnold for two reasons: For on that day the ministry of education requested him to send in to them the Rule of the Society of the Divine Word, which Fr. Arnold did on January 12.

Secondly, on this day he informed the Sisters that the investiture would take

place on January 17 and the retreat before investiture would begin that very evening. Fr. Arnold himself conducted the retreat with four talks a day, the first one at 6:15 in the evening of January 11.

### ***January 14/15***

On these two days Fr. Arnold told the Sisters their religious names. Helena Stollenwerk received hers as the first on January 14. In her chronicle she wrote: “I cannot express the feeling of joy and delight that overcame me when I first heard Fr. Superior say: ‘You are to be called Maria’.”

On January 15 the other sisters received their religious name. Hendrina Stenmanns got the name Josepha. She wrote: I could hardly believe what I heard; for I had not thought that St. Joseph would become my patron. Oh, how I silently thanked the dear Lord for that grace! Saint Joseph be and remain my protector until the end of my life and ask for me from your dear foster Son the grace of perseverance.”

### ***January 17 - Feast of the name of Jesus - Investiture***

The day began with a talk given by Fr. Arnold; then those to be invested took part in the Eucharist. At 8 a.m. the investiture celebration for the 16 novices began. The religious habit was given to them with the words: “The Lord clothe you with the new person who is created in God’s image in justice and true holiness.” To the confreres in China he wrote: “In the little convent of our Missionary Sisters... there are now twenty-one sisters, sixteen of them received the habit on the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus – a splendid celebration! And how beautiful the Sisters look in the light blue dress with the white cingulum and veil” (Jos. Alt, transl. Frank Mansfield and Jacqueline Mulberge, *Journey in Faith*, p. 352-353).

After the celebration, Sr. Maria Stollenwerk wrote, “with tears in our eyes we congratulated each other as dear sisters, called by God the Holy Spirit to the same holy service; for from now on we were allowed to call ourselves Servants of the Holy Spirit” (in Assumpta Volpert, *Mutter Maria Stollenwerk, Mutter Josefa Stenmanns*, Herz Jesu Kloster Steyl, 1920, p. 76-77). Then the novices greeted their relatives who had attended the celebration and were waiting for them in the visitors’ room.

For the liturgical investiture celebration Fr. Arnold used the following sources: Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Osnabrück and Tegelen; Religious of Our Lady of the Love of the Good Shepherd; Congregation of the Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus; Franciscan Sisters of Heythuysen; Sisters of Divine Providence [Muenster], Pontificale Romanum (Jos. Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 353).

## **FEBRUARY 1892**

### ***Norway***

On February 15 Fr. Arnold informed the general council of the wish of the Prefect of the Propagation of the Faith in Rome, Cardinal Ledochowski, to send some priests to Norway. The Cardinal had told Fr. Weber, who was the contact man between Fr. Arnold and the Vatican, that he really would like the SVD to help the Prefect Apostolic of Norway. The latter offered to Steyl the station of Christianssand, in the south of the country.