

And so you may not charge fees for board and keep, or for services rendered. However, the mission itself must naturally pay for anything that you order or procure in its name. In all these things you should not hesitate sometimes to question purchases or express doubts about them (Alt, trans. Frank Mihalic, Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to New Guinea and Australia, pp. 51-54),

## DECEMBER 1900

### Brazil – December 13: Arnold Janssen writes to Fr. Tollinger in Brazil

In this letter among other things, Fr. Arnold gives Fr. Tollinger some advice for carrying out his office as superior: “Please, keep this in mind. To administer your office as superior well, extreme prudence is necessary. Particularly, one must not repel the people whose goodwill one needs. Sometimes one will see something, and if it is not too bad, do as if one had not seen it, but one must hear and act as if one did not hear it. And then one must wait with great patience and prudence for the right moment where one can speak about the matter. – Do you still not know this rule?” A little later Fr. Arnold writes: “To govern is an art. One must do his duty, but at the same time one has to ask himself always: Will I succeed in this way without alienating their feelings? In particular it is necessary never to speak and act when you are worked up” (Alt, Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach Südamerika [Letters to South America], vol. II, pp. 135-137).

### Rome – December 19: Roman decision about the name SVD

In the session of December 19 the Holy Office discussed the name Societas Verbi Divini which had been questioned by Cardinal Satolli. However, “the observations of Cardinal Satolli were not considered weighty.” And so the Holy Office “formulated the decision, which was promulgated by the Holy Father in the following audience: Stet titulus ut stat, et nihil immutetur.” (“The name shall remain as it is and nothing shall be changed.”) On December 29 the Propaganda was informed of this decision and on January 8, 1901 the Propaganda informed Cardinal Satolli and Arnold Janssen in Steyl” (Bornemann, The Papal Approbation of the Constitutions of 1905, Verbum Supplementum 3, 1967, p. 34).



St. Wendel's  
Missionhouse  
2024



## Divine Word Missionaries Arnold Janssen Secretariat Steyl

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## The Arnoldus Family Story

### 1900 – NOVEMBER – Argentina

#### November 1: Arnold Janssen writes to Sr. Superior Andrea in Argentina

The theme of this letter is the reception of Argentinian women into the Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit. The founder admonishes her to be strict in the process of the selection of candidates. “Proper strictness, no soft hearted mildness” when it is a matter of character flaws, “which make a candidate hardly fit for life in the convent” (Alt, Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach Südamerika [Letters to South America], vol. II, p. 118).

#### November 1: Arnold Janssen writes to all the Holy Spirit Sisters in Argentina

First of all he thanks the Sisters for their congratulations for the silver jubilee of the SVD. Then he mentions buildings of the Sisters in Steyl and Argentina. “In Steyl we have bought the good property of the former Sisters from Essen. And on this property two pretty important buildings have been built. If possible we want to help the Sisters in Argentina as well. In Diamante this has already been done. Furthermore we hope that, when later on Fr. Beckert [the SVD architect] goes to Argentina, also in Crespo or in another well located place a suitable mother house can be built.

“But in the first place it is necessary to build at the same time or even earlier the spiritual house of the Congregation. And since this will be built through serious striving for holy perfection, through faithful observation of the Rule, through holy love of God, of the Sisters and through the holy love of sacrifice, all the Sisters should do their best in this.”

Finally he admonishes the Sisters to learn the Spanish language. “If you don’t do this you will forever remain strangers in a country where you are, and you will not be able to do for God and his holy intentions what you should.” In order to learn the language he recommends amongst other things to have conversation in Spanish, to read for instance Spanish parts of the catechism or the New Testament. “If a good Spanish lady can be found and if the superiors think it to be proper to receive her for a fee in one of our houses, so that she can help the Sisters with Spanish, I am not against it, provided there is reasonable hope that she will not do harm to the good spirit of the Sisters (ibid., pp. 119-121),

#### STEYL – November 1: Arnold Janssen writes to Mother Josepha

First Arnold asks her to read the two letters to the Sisters in Argentina and copy them and then send everything back to him.

Then he makes another interesting request: “Please also think about how much of the enclosed letters you will allow Sister M. Michaele [superior of the Cloister Sisters] to read; for instance I wish her to read my two letters. When she is somewhat informed about everything, you will have a good counselor in her; (because she has much commonsense) and you will be a good support for one another.

I very much wish that you regard each other as good sisters and mutually love and advise one another, and that all the more as you do not have enough support in Sister Hildegard” (Stegmaier, Arnold Janssen, M. Josepha, Hendrina Stenmanns, Correspondence, pp.189-190).

#### **USA – November 9:** *Fr. Peil writes from the USA to Fr. Arnold*

“As regards the building costs, I previously wrote to your Reverence and also to Fr. Blum that we wished to cope by ourselves. In this I had in mind the procedure of our esteemed Rev. Superior General, who, it is said, never asked whether money for a building was available, but rather whether the intended building was necessary. This latter is the case with us. The presence of Fr. Beckert, who is now helping us to save a lot of money, should also be taken in consideration” (Alt, transl. Robert Pung and Peter Spring, Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to the United States of America, Steyler Verlag Nettetal, 1998, p. 101, footnote 3 to letter 46).

#### **Germany – November 11:** *Blessing of the new mission house St. Wendel*

Arnold Janssen could not attend the blessing, so the Dean of St. Wendel blessed the house. In the Steyl Sacred Heart Messenger of January 4, 1901, we read about the celebration:

“For the celebration of the blessing, the still not fully completed building was beautifully decorated... Just above the entrance were the words: ‘Go into all the world, preach the gospel to each creature’. With these words the purpose of the house is expressed. Referring to the special patrons of the house were the inscriptions which were written above the two niches in which their statues were placed. At the top it read: ‘Regina Angelorum, Dux Missionariorum. Sis patrona nostra’ – Queen of the angels, leader of the missionaries. Be our patroness”. The niche with the statue of St. Wendelin was a storey lower. Around it was the inscription: “St. Wendelin! Your prayer was the seed of this house. Now blossoms, what you implored!”

After the blessing the Dean said: “If the Lord does not build the house, the builders build in vain. It is true, the Lord built this house. We saw how the foundation stone was laid, how it grew up and it is standing here and a short while ago it was handed over to its exalted mission. And this blessing gives this day a twofold beautiful character: it is a day of joy and blessing, of joy for the members of this house who have found in it their new home; it is a day of blessing for the region, yes for the whole world. ... It is a mission house, founded in poverty and with trust in God. When 25 years ago the Rev. founder of the Congregation took the first steps to build up the organization, people shrugged their shoulders – people did not trust his plans and were full of doubts.... But the Lord God built and the work grew, and now it has taken root in the soil which is fertilized through the sweat and the virtues of St. Wendelin. ... It usually

is the custom to give a new enterprise a motto: I will also do so for this house – and may it be a milestone for the house – a word of flame for its residents: ‘Trust in God in persevering prayer’ and ‘patience in suffering in union with the crucified savior. This shall be the motto.’

#### **Australia – Sydney – 26:** *Arnold Janssen writes to Fr. Fischer who had been transferred from the US to Sydney*

1. I hope that this letter reaches you in your new place of assignment in the capital of Australia. Greetings to you and your excellent partner Fr. Fey, as well as the good Brothers Theodulph and Gottfried. ...

2. Get well acquainted with the conditions and the lifestyle there; and without compromising yourself, try to gain the good will of those you have to deal with, especially the Cardinal whom you will have to visit soon after your arrival, and also the pastor to whom the parish of Drummoyne still belongs, plus the priests at Randwick [MSC]. When the right time arrives, try to get Drummoyne separated from the present pastor and given over into your care.

3. Keep a good daily order and a good observance of our rule, also of the “regula de regimine Societatis” [Rule of Governing the Society].

4. The house there, together with the property and furnishings are directly under the generalate; however, I have given part of my jurisdiction to the religious superior and Prefect Apostolic Fr. Limbrock in Wilhelmsland, but only delegated authority. You are not subject to him either as Prefect Apostolic or as your religious superior. In my absence he has control over arrangements for the ordinary things that would normally fall to me if I were there. In weightier matters which do not need an immediate solution, including buildings and the like, the decision remains with me. So does anything else of greater importance. With whom do you have the most frequent and fastest connection: with Limbrock or with me?

5. You are definitely a superior. But your jurisdiction is still in its infancy, since you are still under the direction of Fr. Limbrock. But even if that is not the case, you still do not have any extraordinary rights; for example, for purchasing real estate or for building without first sending your plans to the General for prior approval. Furthermore any superior who does not have at least six priests under him is only a beginner and as such remains under the guidance of the General. In this regard I warn you not to follow the footsteps of Fr. Peil in matters where he overstepped his authority. From that you can learn that you cannot take him as a model in everything. I write you all this so that you can take care not to let yourself get involved in all kinds of difficulties.

8. Fr. Fey reported about many buildings being for sale in the vicinity of the church. The present councilors are not against buying real estate, probably not even Fr. Eikenbrock and Fr. Gier, from whom I await an answer.

10. Especially during the first years, keep me informed regularly and somewhat in detail so that I can get to know the situation there... also the financial one. You will have to do that more often than you wish if you want the Society to give you a helping hand. Sorry, but at this moment I cannot honestly make you any promises.

11. With regard to Wilhelmsland [New Guinea] mission, you represent the Society.