

5. You would like to have Sisters by the beginning of March! Why? It is still ice cold there. You already had a frost at the beginning of November.

6. I have looked over the plan of the farmhouse which you intend to give to the Sisters. It has only very thin walls, and is hardly suitable for a larger number of Sisters. Then you intend to start building again in 1901! I think that's impossible. You will have enough on your hands just furnishing the present huge buildings you have already constructed. ... (Josef Alt, transl. Robert Pung, Peter Spring, Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to the United States of America, pp. 103-105).

ROME/STEYL – The Papal Approbation of the SVD

January 25 – Pope Leo XIII “ordered the preparation of the decree [of the approval of the Society], which appeared under the same date.”

January 28 – *The decree was sent to Arnold Janssen.*

It was accompanied by a letter from the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda which stated that the Society had been approved by the Pope, but not yet the Rule. The SVD historian Bornemann writes this comment: “Thus January of 1901 brought an end to the negotiations which had begun in April 1899 with the submission of the Rule in Rome. The name of the Society was assured against unfavorable attack. The Society as such had been recognized by the Pope. The actual purpose of the petition submitted in 1899, papal approval of the rule, even ad experimentum, had been denied.”

January 30 – *The decree arrives in Steyl*

In the afternoon of January 30, the mail brought the decree of approval. Quickly Fr. Arnold went from dining hall to dining hall and made the announcement. In the evening there was a devotion of thanksgiving with a festive Te Deum. He held a solemn service for the Brothers in the lower church. All confreres should, he observed, be strengthened in the conviction that ‘they belong to a religious community which basically has no other founder than the eternal God Himself. For He is truly the origin of everything good on this earth’. Furthermore, Fr. Arnold spoke about our name which had been “expressly recognized by the Holy Father” and about our veneration of the Trinity: “Therefore we have...dedicated ourselves to the special service of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and will so continue as long as God gives us breath and life, for His honor and the salvation of immortal souls” (Bornemann, The Papal Approbation of the Constitutions of 1905, Verbum Supplementum 3, 1967, pp. 34-35).



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The Arnoldus Family Story

1901 – JANUARY – AUSTRALIA

January 7 – *Fr. Arnold writes to Fr. Fischer in Sydney*

Dear Fr. Superior

Yesterday I received your letter. I wish you all the best for a successful voyage and ask the Lord to bless your work in Sydney. Herewith I will answer your questions.

1. The setup there is in the first place a procure; and in the second, a rest house. You seem to think that a procurator need not live there, but could come in daily and do his business. I doubt whether he could do that so well. Besides I don't want the procurator to develop into just a businessman. We are there to do good; but we've got to live, too. From what I hear, the cost of living in Sydney is high. On the advice of the [MSC] priests at Randwick, Fr. Limbrock has retained both the properties as possibilities for a parish. He said that the Cardinal is a good man; but a person must do what he says. As it is, both of your superiors there, and I don't want to disagree with them, and also the will of God seem to indicate that they would like you to take over the Drummoyne parish as soon as you can and then in all prudence try to work for the good of the Society and the parish.

2. But don't even begin to think of putting up a technical school. At least not now. Even in the future it is questionable. One cannot send Brothers to Australia as easily as to America. Besides, we badly need Brothers. You are still a newcomer and you don't have a German pastor at your side, as in Shermerville [USA].

3. You are greatly concerned about a sanitorium. At the moment it is already a great help if our sick confreres come from a tropical environment to a healthy temperate environment. Perhaps later on we could take over a parish in a healthy rural area outside of Sydney, but near a railroad. But it should not be a sinecure. Remember: “Idleness is the source of all vice.” Whether one could establish a parish like that based only on Sunday supply, I doubt. Supply work won't amount to much.

4. Earlier on, Prefect Apostolic Limbrock wrote to tell me that Cardinal Moran is a good man, but you have to do what he says. I would not stress that last point too much. In any case you have to watch out that you straighten out the matter as best you can, if your delay was taken amiss.

5. As far as running the parish is concerned, ask the Cardinal for advice and do what he says. Also consult the priests at Randwick and the old pastor. Naturally you are not obliged to follow every bit of advice. Get to know your parishioners and

try to start a building fund. Trust in the Lord and don't lose your courage if in the beginning you don't get much. Everything in the world has to be learned; also how to give. Always show yourself grateful to the people, even when you don't get as much as you expected. Be careful not to compare them to people of other countries or areas.

6. About the question of where to locate the church building, pray yourself and have them pray that the Lord may guide and direct and inspire you to do what is best for his honor and the good of souls in this matter. Then try to discern the will of God in the circumstances around you, and quietly go ahead. Non mea voluntas, Domine, sed Tua sanctissima fiat [Not my will, but your most holy will be done]. That should be your motto.

7. Since Drummoyne is a rapidly developing suburb, from time to time you will have to think about getting more property while it is still cheap.... For example, land for schools, Catholic organizations, plus your own presbytery with a small garden adjoining... Keep me informed about your experiences in all these developments (Alt, transl. Frank Mihalic, Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to New Guinea and Australia, pp.56-58).

CHILE

January 13 – Fr. Arnold writes to Fr. Superior Albers

Dear Fr. Albers!

1. I have received your more extensive report together with the two maps and thank you very much for them. (Also for the longer letter of Fr. Langenstein, whom I also kindly thank for it.) Taking into consideration these two longer reports I will happily tolerate that since then more than ½ a year has gone by before I once again got some news. It is true, you are under Fr. Colling, but otherwise the mission there is of such a kind that the superior must give me report much more often than an ordinary superior. And then particularly the beginning is the most interesting time. ... If you don't keep us well informed of everything, then that will do damage to your mission, even though our support is not just dependent on the number of letters. ...

3. Moreover, stick faithfully to this: What you can't do is not yet God's will for you, and you must not act prematurely, being afraid and too much concerned....

4. By now you have received two new confreres – an important increase for a mission which is limited to one parish only. I expect from you:

1. that you keep a good regular order and that you cultivate the good spirit of the confreres in every way possible;
2. that you seek to introduce them pretty well into the Spanish language and into good pastoral care.

5. Concerning the first item, for the time being I will dispense you from the second meditation; but later, when you have a bigger house and when life will be more ordered, then you must take it into consideration. The more work, worries and distractions will be part of parish work, the more recollection in prayer is necessary, so that all one's spiritual treasures don't go with the wind, early and uselessly.

6. Do you have Spanish conversation in the house? Actually you should, if not always, then still pretty often. For on the practice of Spanish by your confreres depends when they will be of real help to you (Alt, Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach Südamerika [Letters to South America], vol. II, pp. 142-144).

USA

January 16 – Arnold Janssen writes to Fr. Superior Peil (excerpt)

The first General Chapter 1884-1886 had established the SVD as a religious congregation with its own rule and with the three vows. Yet still in 1901 there were priests who had not taken final vows. One of them was Fr. Superior Peil. Now Fr. Arnold wrote:

1. I agree that you, together with Brothers Wendelin, Placidus and Blasius, should make your perpetual vows in mid-February, and that one of the other Fathers, whom you may choose for that purpose, should take my place at this ceremony. I exhort you to prepare yourself as diligently as possible. Due to the great amount of work that you and the Brothers have to perform, I fear that your preparation will perhaps not be as thorough as it ought to be; hence I order that whatever had to be neglected in your preparation thus far should, as far as possible, be made up later on.

2. From your report I have learned various things, but only what is happening on the surface, not really the crux and exact state of affairs. Hopefully that will still follow; for example, now in January, I need a clear insight into your financial condition. How could you have erected such a large building? And now there are two. So what's the situation regarding your debts? How could you furnish such a large number of rooms and have all the carpentry work finished? How many assistants do your master-craftsmen have? What must you pay for their daily wage?



3. I was amazed to hear that you have already moved into the enormous house. I only hope that all goes well. And now you want to take in orphan boys already in March! How many? And for what kind of work do you want to train them?

4. I gather from all the letters I have received [from North America] that the daily wages

are very high there. That makes me think that the labor question must be a burning issue. How do you intend to face this problem? Perhaps it may soon be possible to send you a few more Brothers. The worrying part of the whole matter is that you are immediately beginning in such a big way. I only pray that it will become something solid and the task does not get out of your control! I beg you to proceed cautiously and with due deliberation. Also report to me about which parts of the house are now finished and already in use, and when you hope to have the rest finished.