

**China – April 11:** Arnold Janssen writes to Fr. Freinademetz

This is the continuation of an earlier letter.

“I beg the Lord God that he grant you wisdom and strength to carry on with your important office...

In North- and South America our confreres are making important progress. Near Chicago Fr. Beckert ... is building a grand industrial school. At present he is here [in Steyl]; but soon he will travel from here to Argentina where a church and college must be built in the capital. In Juiz de Fora in Brazil our confreres were given the parish which the Bishop declared to be the first in his diocese, and a short while ago the big building of the academy of commerce was donated to them. In Valdivia in Chile the Bishop of Ancud gave to our confreres as well as the perhaps most important parish of the diocese also the parish in the harbor town of Corral and the institute Mercedes in Valdivia.

Let us trust firmly in our dear Lord. He will come to our help” (Josef Alt, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach China* [Letters to China], vol. II, pp. 158.159),

**USA – April 14:** Fr. Superior Peil writes to Arnold Janssen

“I ask you most urgently to send us 6-8 more Brothers and, if at all possible, to do so immediately. It is quite impossible, with the few Brothers we have here, to run such a large enterprise in an orderly fashion”(Josef Alt, transl. Robert Pung and Peter Spring, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to the United States of America*, p. 110, footnote 9 to letter 48).

“Since we are so miserably provided for with Brothers, the Sisters will no doubt, contrary to my intention, have to take over the work in the Chapel. The same goes for the kitchen [...]. Fr. Beckert knows how very reluctant I have been to have Sisters in the Institute’s kitchen. [...] You were the first to touch on this matter in your letter of 16 January...I immediately gave a negative reply... Yet I will sacrifice my view, if good reasons demand that I should do so” (ibid., p. 112, footnote 2 to letter 49).

**Brazil – April 15:** Arnold Janssen writes to the superior Fr. Tollinger

“Since you humiliated yourself before God and myself, I forgive you the mistakes which you made through the delayed report about the purchase in Biririca. I hold my judgment back concerning the matter of Fr. Willems, regarding yourself as well as Fr. W. and the other priests.

If a superior faithfully does his duty, it is possible that for a while he will have to suffer a bit because of the imperfections of the people under him; however, in the end the Lord comes to his help. This should console you.. I myself will, come time, try to influence the confreres under you for the better as much as I can. Therefore, bow your head humbly and trust in God... However, even “humility has its limits. In particular you must not write anything to the people under you which lets them see that the reins slip out of your hands. God does not want that... Prudence must be with each virtue so that it remains a virtue.”

P.S. ... I have appointed 5 Sisters for Juiz, 3 for Tirol”... (Josef Alt, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach Südamerika*, [Letters to South America], vol. II, pp. 192-194).



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## The Arnoldus Family Story

**1901 – MARCH – Australia**

**March 28:** Fr. Arnold writes to Fr. Fischer in Sydney

Dear Fr. Fischer!

1. Hopefully you have received my letter of 28 February and have seen to it that my enclosed one got to the Cardinal.

2. Don't worry about the future developments in Drummoyne. The cardinal is completely capable of judging the development that is planned for this suburb. Wait patiently for further developments and content yourself for the moment with your little chapel. The most important thing is acquisition of property: 1) for the Society and 2) for the church there, because in time everything will become more expensive. But that the Society take over the debts of the parish there, is out of question. We should be careful about such heroism, which will only have bad effects. The parish must be aware that it alone must carry the debt, but it must be aware that it now has its own pastor, and that gradually money will come in... if you only remind them of this from time to time.

3. To this end haven't you yet introduced the custom of now and then publicly praying for the benefactors of the church? Please do so. That inspires people. Further you should start some sort of parish organization, so that every week or month its faithful members may collect even a small amount. This adds up in time and inspires a sense of giving, especially among the devout, on whom you will mainly depend in the end. I can well imagine that collecting money goes against your grain. Then it is all the more meritorious if done. That is how a person must learn many things in life. The more self-control they entail, so much more blessing do they bring. ... (Josef Alt, transl. Frank Mihalic, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to New Guinea and Australia*, p.70).

**APRIL 1901**

From the NUNTIUS SOCIETATIS Verbi Divini, No. 5, April 1901

(official communication from Fr. Arnold for the whole SVD)

1. Information regarding the completion of our studies and the departure for the missions

During the third General Chapter (1897/1898) the extension of the studies was discussed. It was said: In the case that later on the Superior General in agreement with his council sees it as being helpful to add to the current six years of higher studies, incl. novitiate, a further seventh year, this can be done. The reasons are:

1. The consideration of the large amount of material to be treated. That cannot be done sufficiently in six years, incl. novitiate.

2. Out of consideration of other congregations. Almost all of them have, exclusively novitiate, 2 years of philosophy and 4 years of theology, some also 3 years of philosophy and 4 years of theology, or even more.

Regarding the mission sending celebrations, it was decided that from 1904 on they should be held on the third Sunday after Pentecost. The reasons are:

1. For the departing missionaries it is more pleasant when their holidays are not during lent or during the cold season – even though this is not a very powerful argument.

2. At the time of the mission sending ceremony all new missionaries gather in Steyl and ordinarily stay there until they depart for the missions. Therefore many rooms must be reserved for them there and they must have a heater in case the ceremony takes place during the cold season... Therefore the mission sending must not take place during the cold season.

3. Furthermore, it is to be taken into consideration that the missionaries arrive in the missions at a time which will be relatively the best and easiest for the acclimatization. For that purpose the chosen time, as far as we can judge it, will be the relatively most favorable one. For if we calculate as time of arrival in the missions the middle or end of July, so this is, as far as we know, good for China, further for New Guinea where the rainy season is from the end of October until the middle of April. It is also good for Togo where the rainy season is from the beginning of April until the beginning of July and from the middle of September until the middle of November. It is good for South America where the great heat begins only in November and also for North America, where everything is frozen during winter time.

### Some hints concerning our prayers and devotions

1. It happens here and there that a prayer leader leaves too little time in the evening for the examination of conscience. With regard to this, the *Vademecum* on p. 28 has the remark: “If only a pause is given, one is to wait until two minutes on the clock are over, which can be shortened if the people present have gone for confession a short while earlier.” This should be well observed. If someone is prayer leader then he has to fulfill an important task, since he leads the liturgical exercise of many people. Therefore he must do his best to absolve this task well. If he leads the evening prayer he must see to it that his time for the examination of conscience is neither too short nor too long. Actually, that has been made pretty easy for him. A definite time is marked, and so it is only necessary for the prayer leader to look at his watch and pause for this time. But that he must do. The necessity of determining a time was the result of my observation of cases where the prayer leader did not allow half a minute’s time for the examination of conscience. Therefore a definite time has been marked. May it now be observed.

2. This remark is connected with the following: One can agree when during the examination of conscience most times it is left up to the individual which questions he will ask himself. But to do this all the time is not good. It is, however, good to be

made aware from time to time of different things which one should not overlook.

4. Concerning the help for the poor souls in purgatory, I wish that the members and students of the Society as well as other faithful will be guided towards it. It should be done particularly at least in the first half of November, that is on November 2 and the eight to fourteen days which follow this by the church appointed day of intercession for the poor souls. Perhaps on many of these days or during the whole month of November a short evening devotion for the poor souls is possible where suitable prayers will be said for them.

8. Together with this issue of the *Nuntius* I send pages with the heading “Intercessory Prayers”, called after their main content... for all of us must be apostles of prayer...In the world things look still so sad. Therefore all who love the Lord must do all they can that it will be changed, and particularly those must do it who have consecrated their lives to him.

### Argentina

**April 3:** Fr. Superior Colling writes to Arnold Janssen

“It is inevitable that from time to time I judge the situation and needs here in some points differently from your Reverence; and in that case I feel obliged to express my view” (*Josef Alt, Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach Südamerika* [Letters to South America], vol. II, p. 260, footnote 15 to letter 276).

**April 11:** Arnold Janssen writes to Fr. Superior Colling and Mother Andrea (excerpt)

Having discussed a specific issue regarding promotion or dismissal of a Holy Spirit Sister postulant Fr. Arnold turns to other issues:

5. The General Council agrees that our Sisters go to Posadas to take over the hospital there and furthermore to establish an elementary school as soon as possible.

6. Regarding the training in music and drawing we will do what we can ...

8. May God grant that the number of teaching sisters will increase. Right now every evening we give to our postulants and novices 1 hour class in catechism, Bible, German, mathematics, Spanish and English which are being taught by and by. Each year a new course for teachers will be formed from the newly professed sisters. They study for three years as students do in the German female teachers’ colleges. Those studies will then be followed by teaching practice for six to twelve months. ... May God grant us that soon we will be able to send 10 or more teachers to the missions every year.

11. A pharmacist we don’t have here, but we will see about training one (*ibid.*, pp. 191-192).

### Steyl – Meeting of the General Council

**April 11:** On this day the general council approves three plans presented by the Society’s very own architect, Fr. Beckert: 1. for the church and college in Buenos Aires, 2. for the new house of the Missionary Sisters in the Steyl sand hills and 3. for the church in Holy Cross Minor Seminary (Neisse/Nysa) (*ibid.*, p. 200, footnote 24 to letter 253).