

## CHINA

**May 30:** *Arnold Janssen writes to Bishop Anzer*

“On the occasion of your coming feast day I wish your

Episcopal Grace the richest grace filled blessings of the Holy Spirit and all true good for body and soul at the intercession of Saint John the Baptist, your patron saint. On this feast I will not omit to celebrate the holy sacrifice of Mass for you in the above mentioned intention.

“I received your valuable letter of 4.3.. Permit me, following this letter, to express a few thoughts to Your Grace. Even though I don’t like it, I cannot keep silent totally.

Over the years I had to draw Your Episcopal Grace’s attention to several matters. Others drew your attention to other things. Thanks be to God, since 1894 there has been improvement in some matters, but certainly not in everything. Unfortunately, I cannot say that since that time there has been a total change of sympathies in your favor. I would like it if this letter could help that such a change would happen. For as far as I can see, this has to be brought about by Your Episcopal Grace yourself through perfection of your talking and acting.

“Upon leaving Bonn the present archbishop of Cologne, Simar, impressed on his seminarians: “Gentlemen, make this your life’s principle: act always nobly.”

In any case, a bishop and spiritual leader of men who like you have been placed on the open battleground, show themselves in everything nobly and ascetically formed. Actually, every priest has to do this and all the more from a certain age on the more he progresses in age, and how much more a bishop, who according to St. Thomas, should already be in *statu perfectionis* [in the state of perfection].

“You are in an exposed position and I believe, that in the long run you will not do well if you don’t take care in everything of yourself and if you don’t strive to speak always the truth and to act quite nobly.

“In an earlier letter you said that I was happy when some wrote about me unfavorably. That is not the case, just the contrary is true. I am glad when I hear good things about you and I am sad when I hear that the bishop to whose ecclesiastical leadership our missionaries have been entrusted, leaves something to be desired in important things. God the Holy Spirit may bless you!” (Alt, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach China* [Letters to China], vol. II, pp. 171-172).

## JUNE 1901

**Steyl**

**June 2:** In Steyl one Adoration Sister and 17 Mission Sisters begin their novitiate. Five Adoration Sisters and 14 Mission Sisters made their first vows and 22 postulants entered the congregation of the Mission Sisters.



**Divine Word Missionaries**  
Arnold Janssen Secretariat Steyl

VOLUME 18 | NO. 11 | NOVEMBER 2024

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## The Arnoldus Family Story

### 150 YEARS AGO

#### NOVEMBER 1874

In the course of this month Fr. Arnold had visited his Bishop Brinkmann in Muenster and asked for permission to dedicate himself to the work of establishing a mission house. In reply the Bishop told him to submit a written report (Bornemann, transl. John Vogelgesang, *Arnold Janssen*, Arnoldus Press Manila, 1975, p. 49).

**November 23:** Fr. Arnold travelled a third time to Tegelen to look at the property “De Muent”. This time he was accompanied by his brother Peter as expert and adviser. Peter advised his brother “to include the adjacent meadow” and offer 45000 Marks for the property with meadow. The owner agreed and they drew up a purchase contract with the condition “that either of the two parties could withdraw within the next six weeks if they wished to do so” (*ibid.*). Fr. Arnold then met the parish priest of Tegelen who gladly gave his consent. The next day, November 24, Fr. Arnold went to Roermond to visit Bishop Paredis. He also approved of the plan to establish a mission house in his diocese. When Fr. Arnold left him the Bishop said: “I am very curious to know what will come of this,” and a few days later he said to the Dean of Roermond: “Father Janssen, rector of the Ursulines of Kempen called on me. Just think, he wants to build a mission house, and has no funds. He is either a fool or a saint” (Hermann Fischer, transl. Frederick M. Lynk, *Life of Arnold Janssen*, Mission Press SVD, Techny, ILL., 1925, pp. 117-118).

On this **November 24** Fr. Arnold’s own bishop Brinkmann wrote to him: If it is “God’s Providence that such seminaries be built in this country, he will also make it possible. And if he should indicate by some sign that you can be used for this project, I certainly will place no obstacle in your way. However, we must weigh the matter thoroughly and decide according to the norms of Christian prudence, whether God has called you to undertake such a work. For not everything that is good in itself is actually God’s Will for us. In God’s good time you must give me more detailed information” (Bornemann, transl. John Vogelgesang, *Arnold Janssen*, p. 49).

In the November issue of his mission magazine “Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote” (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart”) Fr. Arnold had published the article “A brief word to pious lovers of Jesus. Concerning the establishment of a German mission house”. He wrote (excerpts): “...At present very many of the clergy have been driven into exile [because of the Kulturkampf/cultural war]. Therefore the erection of a mission seminary in a well-situated, safe place has become a matter of unavoidable necessity... The sacred task seems to be comparatively easy to carry out if only it will be undertaken boldly and resolutely. The first and greatest problem is money. A

well-located house with garden seems to be available. But with what can we buy and furnish it? Pious benefactors must come forward. To work for the salvation of souls is the holiest work and even a divine one. The project, however, affects the salvation of not only the one or the other person... but of thousands, who are still dwelling in the night of heathenism. Since we are also thinking of their descendants, it may be more correct to say the salvation of many millions is involved. The holier an enterprise, the more difficulties it is apt to encounter. But the immediate and most serious difficulties will disappear as soon as it becomes evident that many are interested in the project, have already made even considerable sacrifices for it and are ready to make still more. In this case a prompt donation is doubled and even tripled in value. To be pious means, of course, to pray piously. But it also means to work piously with the talents one has been given and to make sacrifices to the extent that conditions demand” (Bornemann, transl. John Vogelgesang, *Arnold Janssen*, pp. 49-50).

Towards the end of November or the beginning of December Arnold Janssen went to Roermond, Louvain and Luxembourg looking for support for his new mission house (ibid.,p.51).

## 27 YEARS LATER

### MAY 1901 - USA

**May 18:** *Fr. Peil writes to Arnold Janssen*

“The speedy establishment of a novitiate for lay Brothers would certainly be a good thing. At the present time we have three candidates, all of them German. [...] Others should be admitted soon. [...] Fr. de Lange is the spiritual director of the Brothers. He wishes, if possible, also to run the novitiate for the novices. He has talent for this” (Alt, transl. Robert Pung, Peter Spring, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to the United States of America*, Steyler Verlag, Nettetal, 1998, pp. 113-114, footnote 7 to letter 49).

Regarding the work of the Sisters in the kitchen of the Fathers and Brothers Fr. Peil writes: “It is not in the least looked upon as improper that our Sisters should take over the cooking; on the contrary, it is the general rule.” He enumerated a series of male institutes in which the Sisters were in charge of the kitchen (ibid., p. 113, footnote 4 to letter 49).

### ARGENTINA

**May 26:** *Arnold Janssen writes to Fr. Provincial Superior Colling*

“Fr. Beckert [the SVD architect] will depart immediately. I repeat what I tell you as well: With the permission regarding the building of the church in Buenos Aires only the permission to begin the building, not however, to begin the building of the church at our expense and to complete it at our expense. Hopefully our dear Lord will help with it. Fr. Beckert will complete the plans for the church building and helps with the beginning. Then one has to see how everything is going to develop. In the meantime he can make the design for the central house of the Sisters and then send it to me for my approval. Hopefully, everything will go well, and once begun, the Lord God will bring the completion” (Alt, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach Südamerika* [Letters to South America], vol. II, p. 224).

### USA

**May 29:** *Arnold Janssen writes to Fr. Superior Peil in Shermerville (excerpt)*

“**1.** You should thank God and my intercession on your behalf! On Saturday, 15 June, the following Brothers will board the steamship Kensington in Antwerp to make the journey to Shermerville and there, under your paternal care, serve God and the Congregation. They are:

“**1.** Brother Joachim, porter and secretary; 2. Brother Liborius, promoter of publications; 3. Brother Dignus, house painter; 4. Brother Landolin, cook or kitchen assistant; 5. Brother Wilho, herdsman; 6. Brother Linus, launderer; 7. Brother Amabilis, typesetter.

“**3.** You ask about the acceptance of Jakob Humpel as a postulant. That cannot be granted until at least in principle the erection of a novitiate for Brothers in Shermerville has been approved. If you want to obtain such approval, you must explain to us what guarantees you can offer that the novitiate will be well established and managed. Since you have already been novice master, you will know what this involves. Would you therefore please list for us everything necessary and indicate how you would be able to provide it.

“**6.** I hear you want to publish a weekly newsletter. I must remind you again that you may not undertake such important initiatives without my advice and approval. If you want to make such a request, it is not enough, as with all important matters, merely to submit it. The higher superiors must first be able to see whether such a newsletter is really necessary or useful and whether it is feasible with the available personnel; they must also know details of how you see its function, for example, whether political issues will also be touched on, and whether there are any major objections to it. At the same time, I would remind you that when I agreed to send you a new typesetter, it was not for this weekly paper, but for the other printing jobs you may have.

“**7.** Would you also please keep in mind that a religious constantly needs the blessing of obedience for any successful activity. ... It was not smart to set up a printing press there without my permission, and I fear that this sin of omission will have to be atoned for by the endurance of much suffering. Please engrave that deep into your heart” (Alt, trans. Robert Pung, Peter Spring, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to the United States of America*, pp. 117-120).

### CHILE

**May 29:** *Fr. Visitor Grüter writes to Fr. Provincial Colling in Argentina:*

“Valdivia has around 10-12000 inhabitants. Perhaps one third of them are Germans, but except for about 50 families all are Protestants, and who knows, if the latter ones through marriage etc. are not more protestant than catholic. The Germans are the more wealthy trade and businesspeople. Among the two-thirds of the Chilean population there are very few rich or wealthy families” (Alt, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach Südamerika* [Letters to South America], vol. II, pp. 255-256, footnote 8 to letter 275).