

ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF THE STEYL STUDENTS IN ROME

May 30, 1890

On this day Fr. Arnold wrote to Superior Rev. Becher in Argentina about the academic success of some Steyl students in Rome: “Rev. Colling and Schumachers are Doctores theologiae [Doctors of theology] and Rev. Giese and Gier recently did their first theological exams at the Propaganda and received in all subjects the best marks which the Propaganda gives” (Arnold Janssen, ed. Jos. Alt, *Briefe nach Südamerika* [Letters to South America], vol I, p. 16).

NEWS OF THE MISSIONARY SISTER CANDIDATES

June 2, 1890

During the Kulturkampf [cultural war] in Prussia, Notre Dame Sisters from the German city of Essen had been expelled from their convent there and found a new home in Steyl. After the end of the Kulturkampf they returned to Essen and sought to sell their house in Steyl. On June 2, Fr. Arnold accompanied by the prefect of students, Fr. Wegener, went to the Sisters to negotiate with them about buying the house. The Sisters were asking 60,000 Marks – too much for Fr. Arnold (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 340).

June 12, 1890

On this day, Bishop Boermans of Roermond presented in Rome Fr. Arnold’s request to set up an oratory with tabernacle for the *virgines* (virgins) who had been living in community for two years, *ut pro missionibus possint laborare* (that they may work for the missions). Thus far Mother Maria and her companions had been attending Holy Mass in the Upper Church of St. Michael’s. Our SVD historian Fr. Bornemann writes that very likely “that was the first written communication about the missionary Sisters to the Roman Curia”(Fritz Bornemann, transl. John Vogelgesang, *Arnold Janssen*, Arnoldus Press Manila, 1975, p. 229).

June 20/22, 1890

June 20 the negotiations regarding the purchase of the Notre Dame Sisters’ convent came to a conclusion. The Sisters’ representative “came today and offered the Sisters’ house for sale once again. We finally agreed on 48,000 Marks.”

Two days later, June 22, the representative’s letter was delivered, “setting out once again the conditions of purchase, and this assured us that these conditions had been approved by the Convent and by the Auxiliary Bishop Dr. Fischer” (Jos. Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 340).



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The Arnoldus Family Story

THE PROTECTORATE QUESTION FOR GERMAN CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES IN CHINA

**April 19, 1890: Letter of Fr. Arnold Janssen to Cardinal Simeoni,
Prefect of Propaganda Fide**

In his letter to the Cardinal, Fr. Arnold expressed the following thoughts among others:

In China France was the protective power of the German Catholic Missionaries, the missionaries from Steyl included. The German government wanted to take the place of the French government and issue missionary passports for German citizens. Fr. Arnold knew very well that the German government would make the permission for a mission house in Germany and the mission in Togo dependent on his decision regarding the protectorate question. However, in his opinion “the decision rests in the first place with the head of our mission, Most Reverend Bishop Anzer”. He had to ask himself “whether any adverse consequences will follow if he accepts the German protectorate for those of his missionaries who are not German nationals, or for his relations with other Catholic missionaries in China who are under the French protectorate and who would not like to see any infringement of that protectorate” (Josef Alt, *Journey in Faith, The Missionary Life of Arnold Janssen*, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, Steyler Verlag Nettetal, 2002, p.479).

DEVELOPMENTS IN ARGENTINA

April 26, 1890: Letter of Arnold Janssen to Superior Becher

(Arnold Janssen, ed. Jos. Alt, *Briefe nach Südamerika* (Letters to South America), vol. 1, 1890-99, *Analecta SVD* – 65/1, pp. 8-11)

Permission to begin in Santa Fe / Esperanza

Superior Rev. Becher had sent a letter to Fr. Arnold informing him of the number of German settlers in the dioceses of Buenos Aires and Santa Fe. However, Fr. Arnold would have liked to have received information about the number of German settlers in other dioceses as well. Then Fr. Arnold wrote: If everything is “as it seems to me according to your report, I agree to Santa Fe being the place where we will make the initial beginning and for the time being it will be the center. - If Santa Fe is chosen, then judging from your and Rev. Löcken’s description, it is pretty certain that Esperanza is the most appropriate place.”

Building

Rev. Becher had told Fr. Arnold that he had already bought bricks. However, in Fr. Arnold's estimate "100,000 will hardly be enough. [In Steyl] we needed 400,000 for our first building." And he continues: "In God's name you may make the beginning there [in Esperanza]! May the Holy Spirit give his blessing through his grace!"

Pastoral work among all nationalities

Furthermore Fr. Arnold wrote: "Based on your explanation, I agree that in your pastoral efforts you need not limit yourself only to the Germans, but as far as possible include all nationalities living there. In the long run you will need a printing press and an elementary and high school. However, before I agree to such more intensive activities I will turn to the respective spiritual offices."

Wish for recommendation by the Bishop of Parana

In his letter to Rev. Superior Becher Fr. Arnold also expressed the wish that the bishop of Parana write a few kind lines to him to the effect, "that he was willing to accept the priests of our house joyfully into his diocese and to support their activities to the best of his ability, in particular that he would be happy for them to publish Catholic magazines, particularly for the immigrants, and that they would establish Catholic schools for elementary and higher education. – I then would have something which I could present in Rome, as that is necessary, and at the same time I would have the proof that the Ordinary is accepting of your activities. It would be good if the two of you introduced yourselves to him, in case you have not yet done so, and that then you would tell him about my request. This you should give him also in writing, so that none of the points which I want to be made would be missing in his letter to me. This you could do either already at your first visit or better, after you become convinced that he agrees with the publication of Catholic papers and the establishment of elementary and high schools by us. Initially simply assure him of my respect and, perhaps a few days later, inform him in writing of my wish (as if I had written only now) and tell him that regarding those issues I would like to hear the opinion of his Episcopal grace.

God the Holy Spirit bless you, all your activities, your zeal; may he give you light and strength and may he bring everything to its completion. Dedicate to him also your first house and church."

PS (post scriptum)

Rev. Becher had informed Fr. Arnold also about the size of the property he wanted to buy. However, Fr. Arnold replied: "You think an area the size of 100x100 meters is big. For a few people, yes. But if something good is to be built, it is too small by far. You do the right thing when you first acquire more land before you start building. Later on it will be much more expensive. What a great task is waiting for you there. You must adopt the heart of the Good Shepherd and open the kingdom of heaven to as many sheep as possible." Then Fr. Arnold recommends the establishment of a house for the sons of Catholics whose dwellings were scattered, in order to teach them "truths of our religion and to prepare them for first holy communion. Such an institution must be filled throughout the whole year. And when one group goes the next must

come." Girls must also be taught by Sisters. Therefore Rev. Becher ought to buy a large property. "10-25 hectares would not be too much."

At the end of his letter Fr. Arnold adds this piece of news: "An African mission seems to be on the horizon. I am negotiating with Berlin. Please pray for it, both of you. But don't write about it to Europe."

NEWS FROM ST. GABRIEL'S /Mödling (AUSTRIA) – FEAR OF WORKERS' UNREST

May 1, 1890

On May 1 there was a fear of workers' unrest. "Everywhere workers stopped working. The military had been stationed in Mödling in case of unrest. The fire brigade was on stand-by as well. The mission house was advised not to let the builders work. However, the builders themselves wanted to work. And so they did. But at 9 am there was a May devotion to our Lady for the workers in the small chapel. Some students sang polyphone Marian songs which impressed the workers. We saw tears running down the weather-tanned cheeks of these simple people. Afterwards, at the building site the workers were full of joy and praise for the 'marvelous devotion'. 'If you had a big chapel or church people from the whole region would come to you,' some said (*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart), 17, No. 9, June 1890, p. 72).

NEWS REGARDING THE PROTECTORATE QUESTION IN CHINA

May 4, 1890

The Propaganda Fide "ordered Arnold Janssen and Bishop Anzer by telegram not to enter into negotiations with the Berlin government but to wait for the opinion of the Propaganda" (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, p. 481). The Propaganda had handed the whole issue over to the papal Secretary of State.

THE AFRICA SEMINARY DEMANDED BY POPE LEO XIII

May 9, 1890

Prince Bishop Kopp of Breslau advised Archbishop Krementz of Cologne "first to make all the necessary arrangements with Janssen, perhaps also ask Amrhein [the founder of the missionary Benedictines] to say what he intends to do. For the moment other mission societies are not necessary, these two are enough" (*ibid.*, p. 629)

May 14, 1890

Bishop Korum of Trier, who had been one of the co-consecrators of Bishop Anzer in Steyl, is opposed to entrusting the Steyl missionaries with the African seminary. "I have a feeling the enterprise is still not on a firm basis, the students' studies are incomplete and the whole situation very uncertain." But "he was ready to correct his rather harsh judgement if those in Cologne had a more favorable impression" (*ibid.*).