

APRIL 1893 – Retreat

Still on April 1 a new retreat course began for men of all kinds of professions and states in life which lasted until April 4; it was attended by 178 participants.

Printing Press

On April 10, 1893 Fr. Arnold wrote to Bishop Anzer: “The police department demanded that we leave more space between the machines in the printing press, which is not possible; there is simply no room. Even though typesetting and bindery were moved out long ago. The result is, that we must put up a new building for the press. Work has already started [April 10] (Alt, J. ed., transl. Frank Mihalic, Vincent Fecher, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to China*, vol. I, *Analecta SVD* – 83/I, Rome 2002, p. 349).

April 28 - On the way to Rome

Throughout winter time Fr. Arnold had suffered from Bronchitis. To Bishop Anzer he wrote in May 1893: “This winter, because of bronchitis, I had to keep to my room almost the whole time; and yet, thank God! I was able to follow the daily order and share meals at the common table.” When his health had improved and the warmth of spring time permitted it, he began on April 28 his sixth journey to Rome which he interrupted several times for visits.

MAY 1893

May 8 - Arrival in Rome

On May 8 Fr. Arnold finally arrived in the evening in Rome, having made many stops along the way for visits. In Rome he hoped “to obtain permission from the Propaganda for his missionaries in South Shantung to look in the Franciscan mission territory for long – practicing Christians, some of whom could serve as catechists and translators” (Alt, J., transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, *Journey in faith*, Steyler Verlag, Nettetal, 2002, p. 561).

May 17

Visit to the Propaganda

On May 17 Fr. Arnold visited Cardinal Ledochowski, the Prefect of the Propaganda. To Bishop Anzer he wrote on this day: “I have just seen Cardinal Ledochowski about the old Christian communities. Of course, I did not get a decision yet, that would have been impossible. The Cardinal must first hear out the Franciscan side. Nevertheless, I am very well satisfied with the way the audience went” (Alt, J. ed., transl. Frank Mihalic, Vincent Fecher, *Letters to China*, Vol. I, *Analecta* 83/I, p.352).

Request from Bishop Schumacher from Ecuador

On this very same day, May 17, Fr. Arnold was visited by Bishop Schumacher of Portoviejo in Ecuador. “He urgently asked me to open a house in his totally neglected diocese. He is German and a very good Bishop” and a Vincentian missionary (Alt, J. ed., transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, *Journey in faith*, p. 561).



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The Arnoldus Family Story

OCTOBER 1892 –

The new “Holy Cross” mission house in Neisse (Nyssa), Silesia / Poland

Beginning of classes

On October 1st the first students for the new mission high school arrived in Neisse, two of them coming from Steyl. Classes began on October 16 in one of the old farm buildings which belonged to the property Fr. Arnold had bought. Three priests were the teachers, one of them was newly ordained Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt, later the founder of the Anthropos. He did not only teach Latin, French, Geography, world history, Bible, but also singing; he played the harmonium in the chapel (Bornemann, Fritz, *P. Wilhelm Schmidt SVD, Analecta SVD* -59, Rome 1982, p. 16).

Blessing of the chapel

The mission house community of 8 Brothers, 3 Priests and 8 students got its own chapel on October 24, the feast of the Archangel St. Raphael. Fr. Arnold blessed it. The local newspaper “Frankenstein-Münsterberg newspaper” reported on October 25 about the celebration: “The chapel was placed under the protection of the sorrowful Mother Mary and the house under the protection of the Apostle Andrew”, both lovers of the “Holy Cross” which was the name of the new mission house given to it by Fr. Arnold. The solemn high mass was celebrated by Fr. Arnold and the students sang the Gregorian chant, “which they had learned only a few days earlier under the direction of their prefect, Fr. Schmidt. Considering the short time available for practicing the chant, their performance must be called amazing, for the difficult Gregorian chant was sung firmly and exactly, almost without mistakes” (*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart], 20, No. 3, December 1892, pp. 22-24).

TOGO – It began with a school – beginning of the Catholic Church in Togo

The first SVD missionaries arrived in Togo on August 27, 1892. Their foremost task was to learn the Ewe language. However, they were able to make themselves understood, since in Lomé English was spoken. Three days after their arrival the missionaries started a school. On October 26, 1892 Fr. Dier gave this report: He gave classes to small boys from Lomé at 9 am and 3 pm and taught them “the ABC, mathematics, German, a mixture of many things. And then I tell them stories about God and Our Lady. Sometimes we also sing the Marian Song “Maria zu lieben” – ‘For love of Mary’. In our chapel I prayed today with our small pupils the ‘Hail Mary’ for the

first time in the Ephe language” (Auf der Heide, H., *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl, Ein Bild der ersten 25 Jahre ihres Bestehens* [The mission society of Steyl, a portrait of the first 25 years of its existence], Steyl 1900, p. 385).

STEYL – News of the missionary sisters

In January 1892 the first novices had received their religious habit, and on October 26, 1892 Superior Mother Maria Helena Stollenwerk wrote about her small community of 29 Sisters to Fr. Arnold in Neisse: “As far as I am aware, all the sisters are happy and content. It is very consoling to see that all appear to be completely of one mind. May the Holy Spirit grant that it will always stay that way with regard to sisterly love.” About the renovation of the small chapel she wrote: “Our chapel is becoming so beautiful, you almost have a premonition of heaven there.” The sisters took a deep interest in the new mission house in Neisse as Mother Maria wrote: “We will pray fervently for the Silesian Mission House, ...” (Stegmaier, Ortrud, ed., transl. Jacqueline Mulberge, *Groundwork, Correspondence*, Rome 2003, p.116).

STEYL – Statistics of St. Michael’s mission house

According to the statistics of October 28, 1892, which Fr. Blum had compiled for the diocesan authorities, 464 persons belonged to the mission house community: 25 priests, 191 Brothers, 219 students, and 29 missionary sisters in their own Notre Dame convent.

NOVEMBER 1892 – first new building in Neisse

On November 1st Fr. Arnold laid the foundation stone for a new building on the mission house property in Neisse. Present were also a large number of people from the area who were asked to join in the three hammer blows (Auf der Heide, *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl* [The Mission House Society of Steyl], Steyl 1900, p. 189).

ROME – An important document about the presentation of religious for ordination

On November 4, 1892 a decree was published with the following directives: Presentation for ordination is permitted three years after the completion of the novitiate, for subdiaconate after one year of theology studies, for diaconate after two and for priesthood after three years of theological studies (in Alt, ed., transl. Frank Mihalic, Vincent Fecher, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Letters to China*, vol. I, *Analecta SVD* – 83/1, Rome 2002, p. 346).

ST. GABRIEL/VIENNA – AUSTRIA

A new church building and number of students

On November 6 the State’s permission was given to build a new church. On November 14, Fr. Arnold performed the ground breaking ceremony; on November 21, Fr. Arnold’s adviser and friend, Vincentian Fr. Medits, laid the foundation stone for the new Holy Spirit Church (Alt, J., *Die Geschichte des Missionshauses St. Gabriel* [the history of St. Gabriel’s mission house], p. 59).

In December 1892 the Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart] reported the increase in the number of students (novices, philosophy, and theology) to 132.

JANUARY 1893

Inner and outer development of the new missionary sisters’ congregation

January 14, 1893

Bishop Boermanns of Roermond approved the constitutions of the Sisters on January 14, after having studied the printed edition of 1892. The title of the book is “Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit of the year 1891.” The reason for that is that the constitutions were printed according to the official manuscript of 1891 (Stegmaier, Ortrud, *Mutter Maria Helena Stollenwerk, Briefwechsel mit Arnold Janssen, Quellen* 10, p. 26, footnote 1- the English edition does not have the complete footnote 1).

The Bishop’s Curia decided the day of the approbation of the constitutions, January 14, 1893, was to be the beginning of the Sisters’ 18 month long novitiate, even though they had received the religious habit already in January 1892 (Auf der Heide, H., *Die Missionsgesellschaft von Steyl* [The mission society of Steyl], Steyl 1900, p. 556).

January 15, 1893

At first Bishop Boermanns had only been able to approve the first part of the SVD constitutions. On this day Fr. Arnold received the decrees of approbation of the complete SVD Constitutions for five years and of the Sisters’ constitutions for three years. After receiving this news the sisters went to the chapel and sang the Magnificat and Veni Creator (*Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach Südamerika*, Vol. I [Letters to South America, Vol. I], *Analecta SVD* – 65/1, Rome 1989, pp. 62f). In her chronicle Mother Maria wrote that from the chapel the sisters went to the dining room, where they read from the constitutions for 15 minutes.

January 26, 1893

Until January 25 the Sisters had received lunch and frequently also the evening meal from the mission house. However, from January 26 on the Sisters did their own cooking in their own kitchen.

FEBRUARY 1893 – Argentina

In Argentina the SVD missionaries began their pastoral care also among the German–Russians in Entre Rios. In their zeal the people had already begun to build a church in honor of the Holy Spirit.

MARCH 1893 – Steyl

The mission sisters’ work for St. Michael’s mission house

In March 1893 several mission sisters began to do the folding of the mission magazines and also books published and printed by the Steyl press. That was in addition to all the other things they did like mending, sewing, church laundry.

In the service of spiritual renewal / retreat

From March 29 – April 1, retreats were given in the mission house for teachers and students – altogether there were 221 participants, 158 of them teachers.