

Vogelgesang, *Arnold Janssen*, Manila, 1975, p. 287-288). In a thinly veiled way Fr. Arnold pointed out the possibility of his removal from office. “In a spirit of reconciliation but with unabated seriousness the letter concluded: ‘I enjoin you to impress this on all the others too [the priests and brothers], if it applies to them. [...] If you obey my admonitions I can say, Do not lose heart! And think of me gladly as your confrere in the Lord’” (Alt, *Journey in Faith*, pp. 638.639).

ROME

June 23 Audience with Pope Leo XIII

Fr. Arnold reports: “On Friday evening, June 23, I was fortunate to have been received by the Holy Father... After I had reverentially kissed his feet as of the representative of Christ, I gave him a short report about the Society and its missions. I handed him an album bound in white silk with pictures of the different houses of our society. With interest he took note of it... Finally, I asked him ... for his blessing for all priests, brothers, students, sisters and benefactors of the society (*Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote* 20, [Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart] No. 11, August 1893).

STEYL – MISSIONARY SISTERS

First retreat for lay women in the missionary sisters’ convent

June 26-30, 1893

During those days the missionary sisters opened their convent for the first time for a retreat for lay women. This first retreat course, which was conducted by Fr. Blum, had 102 participants - all unmarried women. “It was very lively in the house, so many people from outside.” Since it was very hot, the women had to perspire a great deal in the rather small sisters’ chapel. “But, thanks be to God, all seemed to be pretty content”, and some of them left the sisters with tears in their eyes, Mother Maria writes in her chronicle.



First chapel - later diningroom



Divine Word Missionaries Secretariat Arnold Janssen Steyl

VOLUME 13 | NO. 5 | MAY 2019

Missionshaus Steyl | Postfach 2460 | D-41311 Nettetal ■ Missiehuis St. Michaël | St. Michaëlstr. 7 | NL-5935 BL Steyl/Venlo

The Arnoldus Family Story

JUNE 1893 – ARNOLD JANSSEN IN ROME

South Shantung

In August 1892 the SVD Provincial Chapter had been held in Puoli. On June 1, 1893, Fr. Arnold had finally been able to comment on the chapter’s resolutions (Jos. Alt, ed., transl. Frank Mihalic, Vincent Fecher, *Arnold Janssen, Letters to China*, Vol. I (1879-1897), *Analecta SVD* 83/I, pp. 355-374). Here follows his answer to some of the resolutions.

Remarks of a basic nature

With great interest, even though not agreeing with everything, I have read the minutes of the Chapter held at Puoli in August of 1892. Joyfully, I recognize it as an earnest endeavor to lay a resolute hand on the problem of following our rule even in the missions. I pray the Lord to really bless the way it works itself out – which will be more likely to happen if the correcting hand which I must here and there apply to it is not rejected, but rather accepted by all as true sons and devotees of religious obedience. Accept the resolutions precisely with the improvements made, and in the form which I have thought it necessary to give, after long consultation with God and the General Consultors whom the last General Chapter placed by my side. I have not failed to pay due attention to the deliberations of the Chapter. On the other hand, mine is the serious obligation of maintaining the good spirit and good religious observance. And since this duty weighs upon me in greater measure than others, I trust the Holy Spirit (our Great Father and True Founder) will not have withheld His light at this decisive moment when I had to undertake the review of the Chapter resolutions.

A good night’s rest

“Superiors must insist on each missionary’s daily taking seven hours for sleep. Isolated exceptional cases of a shorter span are not thereby forbidden, if urgent circumstances demand it. But the superior must ever and again insist that there be a return to the correct measure as soon as possible...”

Observance of Silence

The provincial chapter had resolved that the strict and optional silence could not be carried out outside the residences; and even within the residences the optional silence on the corridors could not be carried out. To this Fr. Arnold wrote:

“As to the observance of silence, during vacations this obligation may be restricted to the time from evening prayer till breakfast the next morning; yet this should be done in such a way that a person is not content to spend the whole day in conversation. Moreover, I beg and beseech the confreres over there not to declare so lightly that the rule in question just cannot be carried out. If this happens, then for all future time, almost every other barrier will be done away with – except for very few things. A person ought to make an earnest effort to get as close as possible to the stipulations of the rule. ... So, existing rules about silence should be observed as well as can be. They should remind a missionary to abstain from idle chatter, and always fall back on his work and his communing with God just as soon as the necessary dealings with people are completed. ... “

Prohibition of smoking

The prohibition of smoking cannot be done away with. But Fr. Arnold is willing to grant a dispensation to an individual who has the smoking habit. “I beg all confreres who have not yet acquired a habit of smoking to abstain from it in the future as well, out of love for God and in order to earn through this sacrifice the grace of conversion for many more non-Christians. Anyway, I have learned from my own personal experience, that it is possible to wean oneself from smoking, even if one has a rather strong habit of it. I am convinced that the Good God would never have called me to this task (poor sinner that I am !), if I had not made this sacrifice.”

Young Arnold smoking tobacco-pipe



ARGENTINA

June 5 – Letter to Fr. Rector Becher

An outward sign of the advanced development of the mission

As Fr. Becher was the community leader of an SVD house, Fr. Arnold had given him the title “Rector”. According to the 1891 constitutions the next higher title was “Praepositus”, and the area in which the confreres lived in several SVD houses was a “provincia minor” or “praepositura”.

On June 5, Fr. Arnold wrote to Fr. Becher: “By now the time will have come that the confreres give you the title which is proper for you, and that is praepositus. It will be good to begin with it in the near future.” The title “Superior” was also higher than Rector, as Fr. Arnold had informed Fr. Becher in January 1893. Therefore on June 5, Fr. Arnold wrote: “Insofar as no other

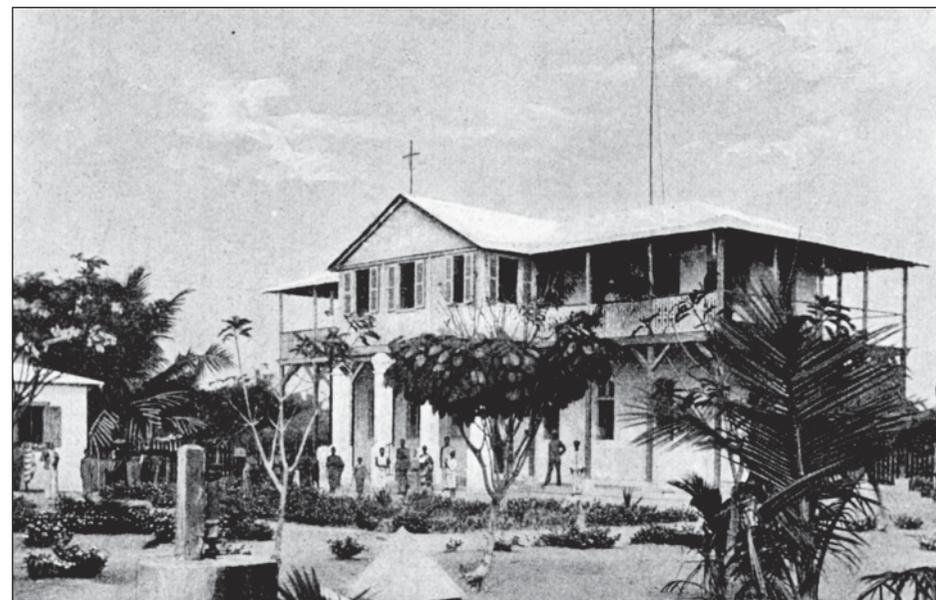


considerations, neither now nor later, seem to be against it, once in a while the title “Superior” may also be used” (Jos. Alt, ed., Arnold Janssen SVD, *Briefe nach Südamerika* [Letters to South America], *Analecta SVD* – 65/1, Rome 1989, pp. 65.66).

Newspaper

Already in March 1890 Fr. Becher had informed Fr. Arnold of his plans for a newspaper. Now, three years later, Fr. Arnold asks: “What do you think about your earlier newspaper project? Aren’t you afraid that it will make the free masons hate you too much? Who is to edit it? Where?” (*ibid.*, p. 67).

TOGO



SVD-house in Lome before 1900

First Difficulties

In Togo serious difficulties arose between the imperial commissioner, von Puttkamer, and Fr. Pro-Prefect Schaefer. There were faults on both sides. Fr. Arnold admonished Fr. Schäfer “to be humble and to work peaceably with the colonial officials”. The director of the colonial office in Berlin “also rebuked the commissioner in Togo”. In a letter to Fr. Arnold the commissioner listed his complaints (Jos. Alt, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, *Journey in Faith*, Nettetal 2002, pp. 637-638).

To Fr. Schaefer Fr. Arnold wrote on June 17, 1893: “The great zeal and unselfish dedication you have so far displayed merit sincere appreciation, but unfortunately that is not enough.” He warned him against making hasty decisions and writing irritating letters. “I beg and entreat you to take refuge in holy humility. Then both God and men will remain your friends and everything will go smoothly” (Bornemann, transl. John