

seemed to me that the young man, who himself is still in need of guidance, was no match for the situation in Chone. I also reminded Fr. Neuenhofen he would be on his own in the seminary. Since all my arguments were in vain I suggested that Fr. Pierlo should be sent to another place, also more favorable for your Congregation. The priests traveled over there and it was indeed preferable to them” (Jos. Alt, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, *Journey in Faith*, p.567).

In this letter the Bishop also complained about the humiliation he had suffered, when he was handed Fr. Arnold’s letter of December 4 opened by Fr. Neuenhofen. “According to custom here this is a procedure which I wouldn’t dare to follow towards anybody” (Jos. Alt, *Arnold Janssen SVD. Briefe nach Südamerika*, Bd. I [Letters to South America, vol. I], p.122, footnote 1).

January 24, 1895 – Letter of Fr. Neuenhofen to Fr. Arnold

On this day Fr. Neuenhofen answered Fr. Arnold’s letter to him of December 16, 1894. In his letter, Fr. Arnold mentioned his telegram to the Bishop of September 1, 1894. He was of the opinion that the Bishop had to recognize the telegram as coming from him, since nobody else would send a telegram from Kaldenkirchen to him. On January 24, Fr. Neuenhofen contradicted: “There were actually two who could have sent the telegram: 1. Your Reverence, 2. a postulant or Brother from Steyl [Fr. Arnold corrected: St. Gabriel] by the name of Zack or Zaik. He had offered himself to the Bishop and asked for a telegraphic answer to Kaldenkirchen...”. Fr. Neuenhofen admitted that the Bishop, as well as he himself, did not doubt that the telegram had been sent by Fr. Arnold, but they couldn’t explain it. They did not think of answering it, since the Bishop had sent an answer already three months earlier [May 1894], and “we had been assured that letters sent at the same time had arrived in Steyl” (*ibid.*, p. 99, footnote 3 for letter 45).

Furthermore Fr. Neuenhofen wrote that on January 17 he had received a letter of a priest in Steyl, who “talked about my earlier and present situation. In this letter there are several unjustified accusations against the Most Rev. Bishop and myself and also some false views... I believe I have satisfied the priest concerned through a calm, explanatory letter; if not I am ready to continue the initial correspondence in this matter.” Fr. Neuenhofen did not mention the name of the priest in Steyl (*ibid.*, p. 129, footnote 9 for letter 58).

On Christmas Day

Christ wants to be born in our hearts.

(Arnold Janssen)

A blessed and joyful Christmas to all of you!



The Arnoldus Family Story

DECEMBER 1894 - Ecuador

Letters of Fr. Neuenhofen and Bishop Schumacher to Fr. Arnold Janssen

On December 5, 1894 Fr. Neuenhofen wrote to Fr. Arnold that Bishop Schumacher had written to Fr. Arnold on May 30, 1894. However, this letter was never received in Steyl.

On December 6 the Bishop wrote to Fr. Arnold: “It was only with the last courier that I received the explanation why the expected [new] missionaries had not arrived after such a long time” (Jos. Alt, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach Südamerika* [Letters to South America], Vol. I, *Analecta SVD* – 65/1, Rome 1989, p. 99, footnote 6 for letter 45).

STEYL – Missionary Sisters

December 19

Fr. Arnold wrote to Mother Maria, explaining the symbol of the Holy Spirit above the sisters’ cross: “‘Christ offered himself, blameless as he was, to God through the eternal Spirit’ (Heb 9:14). That is why there is a symbol of the Holy Spirit above the cross. Please add this written explanation to crosses that are sent away” – for instance as a memento to relatives of a deceased sister (Ortrud Stegmaier, ed., transl. Jacqueline Mulberge, *Groundwork, Mother Maria Helena Stollenwerk, Quellen 10*. Rome, 2003, p. 321).



December 22

From the foundation of the missionary sisters on, the founder had planned a cloistered branch of the Sisters. In December 1894 he thought about candidates for this new branch, as we learn from Mother Maria’s letter to him of December 22, 1894: “Your Reverence mentioned that I was to become a cloistered sister. Would you perhaps allow me to give up language studies so as to have a little more time for recollection”? (*ibid.*, p. 322).

Holy Night – Christmas 1894

In her chronicle Mother Maria described how the Missionary Sisters celebrated the Holy Night: Rising was at 12.15, followed by a procession with one sister carrying the Infant Jesus into the chapel. At 1 am there was a solemn High Mass, then the Sisters went back to bed.

On the first day of Christmas rising was at 6 am. From 6.30 am two silent holy Masses [without singing], were celebrated – one after the other. At breakfast the Sisters found a plate with Christmas gifts at their place. At 9 am High Mass was celebrated. 5 small cribs were placed in different locations of the convent. During noontime all the Sisters, professed, novices and postulants had recreation together. In front of the crib in the paper folding room the Sisters sang Christmas carols. Carrying the Infant Jesus, the Sisters then went to the sick Sr. Magdalena who was very happy to see them. From there the Sisters also went to the other cribs and to the Child Jesus of Prague which had been donated to them a few days earlier.

Mother Maria's final report for the year 1894

In her chronicle she wrote: The year has ended. Praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for the many special graces and benefits that he so generously bestowed on us. This year 23 postulants entered our congregation. 12 postulants received the holy religious habit. 20 novices were admitted to their first vows. On around 62 nights we had adoration – private exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, on 16 days we had private exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. 578 ladies took part in the retreats [in the Sisters' convent]. Sr. Salesia passed away so peacefully and edifyingly, the first Servant of the Holy Spirit to die.

BRAZIL

December 26

From Nova-Friburgo in Brazil Bishop Francesco do Rego Maia of the diocese of Niteroy wrote to Fr. Arnold that he had granted Frs. Tollinger and Dold the necessary faculties to hold parish missions and invited the priests to visit him (Jos. Alt, *Journey in Faith*, transl. Frank Mansfield, Jacqueline Mulberge, Nettetal 2002, p. 574).

JANUARY 1895

Steyl – Training of the Missionary Sisters

Purpose of the study program

Fr. Arnold insisted “that at least an hour be set aside in the late afternoon for the postulants and novices to study or attend classes, especially in foreign languages. He did so primarily in order to be able to make a better selection of the candidates. After all, missionary sisters must be able to learn a foreign language. But the study program also served another purpose. The missions were especially in need of teaching Sisters: other skills were secondary. Therefore how the Sisters did in their studies would determine who would receive further teacher training and who would be all-purpose Missionary Sisters.”

Teaching Syllabus

The teaching syllabus for the postulants “called for two periods of German and four of Spanish during the summer semester, and four of English during the winter semester. A similar schedule was followed during the three semesters of novitiate. Classes in German remained the same as during the postulancy, but English and

Spanish were reduced from four to two periods. There were also two periods of Bible History or of ... Catechism. The study of music, especially of organ and piano, was encouraged”. Fr. Wegener, the uncle of Sr. Michaela, gave lessons in Gregorian chant and church music. All the Sisters attended them.

The academic achievement played an important part in admission to the novitiate and to the vows. “Failure in studies ruled out further training for a teaching career. However, character traits, moral and religious qualities could offset that failure and the candidate would be admitted anyway.”

“The study of foreign languages continued for several semesters after the novitiate for the professed Sisters. Both Bible History and the catechism were now read in Spanish and English and the subject matter was then retold extemporaneously in Spanish and English” (Fritz Bornemann, *Arnold Janssen*, transl. John Vogelgesang, Manila, Arnoldus Press 1975, pp. 238-239).

Lessons given by Fr. Arnold

After Fr. auf der Heide had taken over the English classes from Fr. Arnold, the founder himself gave the following classes: “First, in the refectory he gave a catechism lesson. A big blackboard had been brought from the mission house. After the lesson he asked who was courageous enough to give a catechism class in the next lesson about a topic which he would give.

After catechism, he taught his favourite subject: mathematics.” (Ortrud Stegmaier, *Schwester Gregoria Theisen, Erinnerungen und Erlebnisse 1889-1931* [memories and events]. Quellen 13, Rome 2003, p. 45).

January 1, 1895 – Letter of Mother Maria to Arnold Janssen

In her letter of January 1, 1895 Mother Maria mentioned disagreements between herself and Sr. Michaela. After a talk between the two, it seemed that peace was restored (Ortrud Stegmaier, *Groundwork*, p. 325).

January 11, 1895 – New Buildings for the Sisters

On this day the SVD provincial council in Steyl approved the planned new buildings for the Sisters (church, convent for the Cloistered Sisters, new wing for the Missionary Sisters) (Jos. Alt, *Arnold Janssen SVD, Briefe nach Südamerika*, Band I, [Letters to South America, vol I,] p. 116, footnote 24).

The plans of a building for the cloistered sisters show that Fr. Arnold seriously worked towards the opening of the second branch of the Servants of the Holy Spirit, the cloistered Sisters; he not only looked for candidates, such as Mother Maria, but he also thought of a new building for them.

ECUADOR

January 17, 1895 – Letter of Bishop Schumacher to Fr. Arnold

Expecting the arrival of new missionaries, “I personally prepared everything in Chone; the people promised to pay 4,000 pesos. The priests did not come. Then, without allowing for objections, Fr. Neuenhofen impetuously insisted that Fr. Pierlo should alone, and indeed immediately, move to Chone. I was totally against it, for it