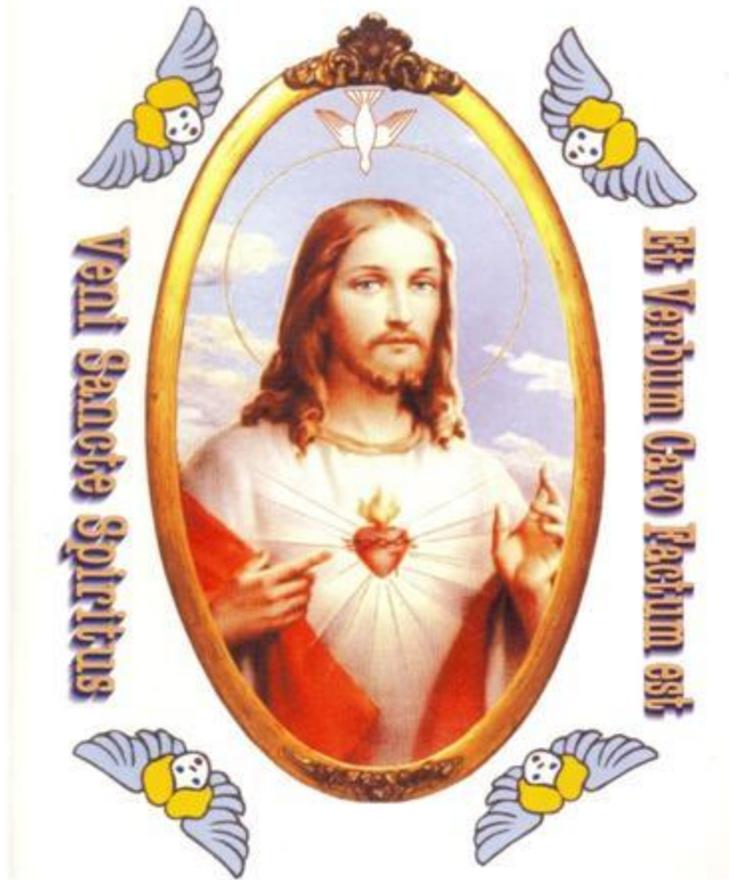


# Our Saints



**St. Arnold Janssen SVD**

**St. Joseph Freinademetz SVD**

**Bl. Maria Stollenwerk SSpS**

**Bl. Josepha Stenmanns SSpS**

**Mother Mary Michael SSpSAP**

**Blessed SVD Polish Martyrs**

by

**Fr. Stan Plutz, SVD  
U.S. Southern Province**

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Note: The cover design is a modified version of the picture that our Founder ordered to be made. Fr. Anthony Hemphill made the modification.

*Veni Creator Spiritus!* = Come Holy Spirit!

*Et Verbum Caro Factum Est* = And the Word became Incarnate.

**MAY THE HOLY TRIUNE GOD LIVE IN OUR HEARTS!**

# **SAINT ARNOLD JANSSEN**

**Dear Partner,**

This is an attempt to write about the life of St. Arnold Janssen. The writer had the privilege of being formed by Priests and Brothers who knew the Founder, St. Arnold Janssen, and who had imbibed his spirit. He also used other sources to gather information about our Founder.

Most people thought that Father Arnold Janssen would meet with certain failure when he started the mission seminary in 1875. But by the grace of God he succeeded. On November 5, 1907, his spiritual sons and daughters threw a surprise party for him on his seventieth birthday. He had had a hand in the admission and formation of all of them, that is, 400 Priests, 700 Brothers, and 550 Sisters. He had sent a good number of them to the missions, that is, to China, countries of South America, Africa, New Guinea, North America, and Japan.

The highlights of the day were the Mass of thanksgiving to God in the morning and the program in the afternoon. In his remarks at the end of the program, Father Arnold could find no better way of expressing his sentiments than the words of our Blessed Mother, namely that God was using him to accomplish his plan.

## **1. LIFE Birth and Youth**

Goch, the birthplace of Arnold Janssen, is a small town in northern Germany, near the border of Holland. The majestic Gothic church of the town symbolizes the faith of the people. The Janssen family lived on Our Lady Street, which received its name from a little shrine adorning the head of the street.

Arnold was born on November 5, 1837, at home. The next day, his godparents took him to the church and had him baptized. The boy received the name Arnold, the name of a local saint. The home in which Arnold was born as well as the room in which his mother gave him birth have been preserved.

The name of Arnold's mother was Catherine. She came from a village a few miles from Goch. She prayed much and worked hard in spite of a hyper-acidic stomach. His father's name was Gerard. To support his wife and children Gerard had a small farm outside of the town. To supplement his meager income from the land, he engaged in a hauling business. With his wagon and a team of horses he transported goods across the German border into Holland. He paid customs at the border on such articles as coffee. Sometimes he transported gold. He prayed the rosary so that Our Lady would protect him and his cargo.

Arnold had an older sister and eventually would have five brothers and another sister.

As soon as Arnold was old enough, he went to school. He also learned his catechism. The assistant priest, Father Ruiter, who taught catechism, invited Arnold to serve Mass.

After many years of war and destruction in Europe, a time of peace reigned. The priests in Goch at the request of the Bishop opened a Latin school to prepare boys for entering the seminary which the Bishop planned to start. Father Ruiter persuaded the parents of Arnold to send him to that Latin school. A year and half later, the Bishop opened a minor seminary in a former monastery building in a town a few miles from Goch called Gaesdonck.

Arnold passed the entrance examination for entering the seminary. The seminary offered him a half scholarship.

Before entering the seminary Arnold received his First Holy Communion. He was almost twelve years old at the time. (In those days the usual age for First Communion was twelve.) In his first year in the seminary he received the sacrament of Confirmation.

Arnold struggled with his studies during that first year in the seminary. His classmates from other towns had three years of Latin before entering; whereas Arnold had only a year and a half. Although he passed his subjects, his teachers thought it would be better for him to repeat the year and thus lay a more solid foundation for his future studies. His parents agreed. This experience of repeating the year helped Arnold to be humble as regards his later achievements in studies, especially in mathematics.

During his seminary days, Arnold composed an Evening Prayer for the family. The family used this Evening Prayer. Relatives and friends asked for a copy and prayed it. Included in it were acts of faith, hope, and charity. He repeated acts of faith hope and charity during the day to keep in contact with God.

Arnold graduated in 1855 with an Abitur degree. The Abitur degree in the German school system was more than a high school diploma; it signified something like having completed high school plus two years of college. Today along the corridor of the school, stain glass windows portray the graduates who became famous in the Church, mostly bishops. Arnold Janssen has the first window as the first graduate to have become famous. On his coat of arms are the Cross and the prayer motto "May the Holy Triune God Live in our Hearts." His achievement is given as being a Founder.

Since Arnold was too young to enter the major seminary, he asked permission of the Bishop to study in a university and obtain a degree for teaching. The Bishop, who was interested in fostering Catholic education and having priests qualified to teach in a high school, gave him permission. Through the influence of his former mathematics professor, he was able to obtain a loan from the trustees of a fund for students. In the University, he concentrated mainly on mathematics and science.

Arnold boarded with a former classmate. He went to daily Mass. He avoided the beer parlor and

spent his time on his studies. The University of Bonn, where he was studying, sponsored a contest in mathematics. Arnold joined in the contest. After months of work during his free time, he had the long complicated problem solved. The solution filled 26 long columns and made use of 90 drawings. After four months the judges announced Arnold Janssen as the winner, for he was the only one with the correct answer and the correct procedure. He used the fifty Talers of prize money to pay for his father to come to the university and then to take a trip with him down the Rhine River. His father never forgot that experience and talked about it to all his friends.

Arnold passed the difficult examination for becoming a teacher and received a degree in the science of education qualifying him to teach all the subjects in a secondary school. Because of his achievements, the University of Berlin offered him a teaching job with a good starting salary. This he declined because he wanted to continue his studies for the priesthood.

Arnold entered the major seminary and pursued the study of theology. Arnold loved the major seminary and felt at home with his fellow students, the professors, and the studies. He listened attentively to the spiritual conferences and joined wholeheartedly in the community prayers. His fellow seminarians nicknamed him the Teacher because of his teaching degree.



**Mother of Jesus, Consoler of the Afflicted, at Kevelaer**

During vacation, Arnold would make a pilgrimage to the shrine of our Blessed Mother at Kevelaer, a walk of about two and half hours from his home. His brother William described the time when Arnold took him along: Having fasted from water and food from midnight, we walked to the shrine, joined in the devotions there, made our confession, and then participated in the Holy Mass. After our thanksgiving following the Mass and Holy Communion, Arnold bought an apple tart for each of us. Since I was still hungry, Arnold bought another, divided it, and gave the bigger half to me.

Arnold Janssen received priestly ordination on August 15, 1861. He was nearly 24 years old. His father came for his First Mass two days later. Some weeks after that, Father Arnold had a Mass of thanksgiving in Goch with his parents, brothers, and sisters participating. He preached his first sermon on the birthday of our Blessed Mother in the church where his uncle was the parish priest.

## **The Priest**

As expected, the Bishop appointed Father Arnold to be a teacher and educator. He was appointed to be the assistant of an older and more experienced priest in a newly opened secondary school in the town of Bocholt. He usually taught twenty-four periods a week. He prepared his lessons well, corrected composition and test papers. He built up the library and acquired equipment for teaching science. As a teacher he received a modest salary. His first salary he used to buy a new coat for his mother.

In 1863, Father Arnold helped his brother William, the jolliest of the Janssen boys, to enter the Capuchin monastery and to become a Brother. Then the next year Father Arnold started his youngest brother, John, on the road to the priesthood by paying all John's expenses.

Father Arnold helped the parish priest on Saturday afternoon with Confessions and on Sunday with Masses.

Near the end of each school year, the school sponsored a special program to which were invited the parents and relatives of the students as well as the prominent people of the town. On some of these occasions, Father Arnold gave a carefully prepared lecture on a scientific subject. For example, one year he spoke about volcanoes, another year on the grouping of stars as in the Milky Way, and still another year about how clouds and fog are formed. These lectures seemed to be well received since Father Arnold tailored them to fit the audience. Father Arnold loved the study of science, for in the study of science he learned of the handiwork of God and it helped him to appreciate God, the Creator, all the more.

As Jesus during the busy days of his public ministry prayed late at night and early in the morning, so did Father Arnold. In the early years of the school, Father Arnold lived in the school building. Boys, who came early to school, out of curiosity sometimes would pull the curtain aside and peek in to see a priest kneeling in prayer.

After teaching for a number of years, Father Arnold had his classes fairly well prepared; so he looked for some other way, besides his teaching, to promote the kingdom of God. At that time the recently started movement called the Apostleship of Prayer had made its way into Germany. Several religious houses and a few parishes had joined. Realizing the need of prayer for the spread of the kingdom of God, Father Arnold became a member of the Apostleship of Prayer. Not content with being a member, he immediately began promoting the Apostleship by enrolling others. At his own expense he also wrote and published a 22-page booklet explaining the Apostleship. He sold copies and gave the profit to priests in Bohemia in the form of Mass stipends. His family was one of the first to receive a copy of the attractive booklet. He wrote to them, "Read it and often say the prayers in this little booklet." He enrolled 600 new members of the Apostleship in Bocholt and Goch. With such a record, Arnold received the appointment of diocesan director.

During the shorter vacations and the longer summer vacation, Father Arnold walked from parish to parish to establish units of the Apostleship. Sometimes he was welcomed and other times not. Over a number of years he established units in 160 parishes of the diocese.

During those years, Father Arnold took time out to participate in the "Catholic Congress," a meeting of important Catholics of Germany and Austria. He was given the opportunity to address the assembly. In his address he recommended the Apostleship of Prayer. The Congress unanimously endorsed the Apostleship. To supply the demand he had 20,000 copies of the third revised edition of his booklet on the Apostleship printed.

When the father of Father Arnold lay on his deathbed, he and his brothers and sisters were summoned. The father made his sons and daughters promise to participate, if at all possible, in a second Mass on Sunday to thank the Blessed Trinity for all the graces which they received during the week and to participate in Mass on Monday to implore the blessing of the Holy Spirit on the work-week ahead. Devotion to the Blessed Trinity, to the Divine Word, to the Holy Spirit, and to the Rosary, Father Arnold inherited from his father.

To promote prayer, Father Arnold put together a prayer book. The Bishop not only gave Father Arnold permission to print the prayer book but endorsed it in these words: "The Prayer Book has meaningful and concise prayers... Its teaching is in perfect accord with the spirit of the Church." Since the 1,000 copies Father Arnold had printed as trial run sold quickly, he ordered 5,000 more to be printed.

About this time the first Vatican Council was being held and papal infallibility was being discussed. In a meeting of priests, only an elderly priest and Father Arnold declared themselves in favor of the declaration of papal infallibility; the others thought the declaration would be not be timely. When the declaration of papal infallibility by the bishops of the Council was made public, Father Arnold received congratulations from fellow priests for thinking in line with the bishops of the Church. He attributed his thinking to a good article he had read in a magazine.

The director of the school and Father Arnold took turns in giving religious instructions to the out-of-school youth on Sundays after Mass. Father Arnold felt the lack of a proper atmosphere in the hall; so he got the idea of giving a series of lectures on electricity to raise money to have a statue of Our Blessed Mother made for the hall. He brought up this idea at a coffee break, and the teachers favored the idea. He went ahead and gave the lectures and gained enough money for a statue of our Lady.

When a certain member of the school board heard about Father Arnold's plan, he vigorously opposed it and won over the other members of the school board. The school board said that he could use the money for a cross or scientific equipment but no statue of Mary. Father Arnold stood up for our Blessed Mother. After several years of a standoff, he used the dispute as a chance, with the Bishop's permission, to resign from teaching and devote himself full time to promoting the kingdom of God more directly.

Divine Providence led him to the convent of Ursuline nuns in Kempen. They needed a chaplain for themselves and their students. He offered Mass, taught religion and a science class. He also helped the parish priest in the town. Yet he still had time. The inspiration came to him of starting a monthly magazine. By this means he could reach the entire German reading population. Once Father Arnold became convinced that God backed up this project, he went ahead with all his energy. For the first issue he wrote most of the articles. He used his meager

savings to have the magazine printed. He named the magazine "The little Messenger of the Sacred Heart."

It turned out to be a mission magazine, promoting the great intentions of the Sacred Heart. He had 10,000 copies of the first issue printed. The magazine had eight pages with a beautiful cover. The articles were written in popular language. Each issue began and ended with a prayer. Soon he had 3,000 paid subscriptions. The sales not only covered the expenses but brought in a slight profit.

In the magazine Father Arnold mentioned the need for a mission seminary for the German speaking population. Other countries had mission seminaries, he stated, and were sending missionaries abroad; Germany had none. To collect material for his magazine, Father Arnold invited himself to a parish, which he heard was hosting Monsignor Raimondi, the superior of the Hong Kong mission. During the course of the conversation with the monsignor and the parish priest, Father Arnold mentioned the need of a German mission seminary. The parish priest and the monsignor were already promoting the idea.

The monsignor visited Father Arnold twice and encouraged him to found a mission seminary. He pointed out to Father Arnold that his twelve years of experience in educating young men had prepared him for such a task.

Father Arnold prayed over the suggestion to find God's will. In the process he went around to visit the German speaking bishops, for he knew that Jesus had entrusted the mission of the Church to the Apostles, whose successors were the bishops. He obtained the signature of thirty-three bishops, approving the project. Most of them while approving the project thought the time for founding a seminary in Germany was not favorable, for Bismark was persecuting the Catholic Church in Germany.

Once Father Arnold was convinced that God wanted the founding of a mission seminary, he went full steam ahead. He mentioned the project in his magazine and pleaded for prayers, recruits, and money. A few small donations started coming in. He went around trying to collect money for the project. One evening he arrived late at a certain railroad station. He planned to visit a nobleman in the vicinity at his castle. The parish priest was out taking a walk. He saw Father Arnold and invited him to stay in the rectory overnight. During the course of their conversation, Father Arnold explained his project. The good priest asked him if he had entrusted the enterprise to Our Blessed Mother. Father Arnold replied that he had entrusted it to the Sacred Heart. The parish priest encouraged him to entrust the project to Our Blessed Mother and assured him of success. Things began to go better after he had done so.

A young lady joined the Order of the Poor Clares with a substantial amount of money. Mother Abbess felt that in conscience, the Order, professing strict poverty, could not keep the money. She had read about the proposed mission seminary and decided that the money be given to Father Janssen. Likewise a servant lady of a rich childless couple received much of the couples' money as an inheritance. She wanted to give the money to God. At the advice of her confessor, a Franciscan, she gave it to Father Arnold.

A priest and two major seminarians wrote and expressed their desire to join Father Arnold in starting a mission house for the foreign missions. Father Arnold suggested that the four of them consecrate themselves, each in his own place, to the Sacred Heart on June 16, 1875, the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the apparitions of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary. They did. Boys and young men also were interested and a number applied for admission to the minor seminary.

After an early Mass with the Sisters, Father Arnold took the train to the town of Venlo in Holland. He walked in the direction of Tegelen. There, at Steyl, a part of the municipality of Tegelen, he came upon an inn facing the beautiful Meuse River with a "For Sale" sign on it. He entered, met the owner, and inquired about the price. Father Arnold had 20,000 Marks. They bargained over the price and reached an agreement for 17,000 Marks for the buildings and property; Father Arnold would need the 3,000 for fixing up the inn.

William, now Brother Juniper, the brother of Father Arnold, was having some health problems. The doctor advised him to take a rest and not wear the heavy habit. Brother Juniper asked Father Arnold if he could use some help. Father Arnold wrote to Brother Juniper's superior and received permission to borrow Brother Juniper for a year and a half as handyman. Brother was of jolly disposition and had learned the art of begging.

After bidding good bye to the Sisters and the priests of the town of Kempen, Father Arnold with the help of Brother Juniper transferred to Steyl.

The first young man to be accepted for the minor seminary was Henry Erlemann. He was 23 years old, a trained carpenter. Father Arnold accepted him on condition that he work mainly as a carpenter. Father Arnold told him that he could study Latin (required in the seminary in those days) in his free time and that he, Father Arnold, would tutor him.

## **The Founder**

One of the first acts of Father Arnold was to set the date for the blessing and inauguration of the new mission seminary. He chose the birthday of Blessed Mother, September 8. Brother Juniper mobilized the people of Steyl to prepare for the more than twenty dignitaries, whom Father Arnold had invited.

The Mass took place in the village church. During his sermon, Father Arnold confessed frankly that the work of founding a mission seminary was the work of God: "If the mission seminary succeeds, we will thank God. If nothing comes of it, we will humbly strike our breast and confess that we were not worthy of the grace."

The invited guests enjoyed the delicious meal prepared by the ladies of Steyl. About four o'clock in the afternoon a representative of the Bishop blessed the former inn, now the new mission seminary. The blessing ceremony took the invited guests from room to room. What did they see? Mostly bare walls. Nails in the wall served to hold the clothes in absence of cabinets or closets. The beds had sheets that did not cover the whole mattress. After the guests left, the villagers collected their tables, chairs and dishes. Left behind was the poverty of Bethlehem. In the evening a telegram arrived: "With heartfelt love the Holy Father imparts

his apostolic blessing on the new seminary, the rector and students."

The little community went to the parish church for Mass and for their visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Since the parish priest was quite sickly, Father Arnold frequently was the celebrant of the Mass. The community prayed their morning and evening prayers in the mission house. They knelt on the floor either before the picture of the Sacred Heart or the picture of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. To keep in contact with God throughout the day, they prayed acts of faith, hope, and charity each fifteen minutes at the signal given by the grandfather clock.

Father Arnold organized the courses of studies of the various groups: theology subjects for major seminarians Anzer and Reichart, special courses for older students, and a regular classical course for the youngsters. In his magazine Father Arnold mentioned the need for workmen. A number volunteered. Father Arnold continued also to involve the village folk. Brother Juniper kept the community fed by going on begging trips.

Father Arnold received notice from the printing press that it could no longer print the "Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart." After consultation, Father Arnold decided to buy a small hand press, hire a master type setter and printer, and print the magazine there at Steyl. This he did. He used the savings he had from his teaching and the sale of his publications to pay for the press.

The other three founding members of the mission seminary, namely Father Bill and major seminarians Anzer and Reichart, started criticizing Father Arnold and wanted to depose him as superior. The three thought that the goal of the mission seminary was to form missionaries exclusively for proclaiming the gospel to non-believers in foreign lands. Father Arnold saw the missionaries as also promoting the missions through fostering devotions, for example to the Blessed Trinity, the Sacred Heart and the Holy Spirit; publishing religious writings; and promoting the sciences, especially the study of peoples, their beliefs and customs. Neither did the other three like the days of fasting and abstinence from meat imposed upon them by Father Arnold, who followed the Rule of the Third Order of St. Dominic.

A crisis developed. Father Arnold informed the Bishop. The Bishop summoned both Father Arnold and Father Bill. After hearing both sides, the Bishop maintained that Father Arnold was superior. He told Father Arnold, however, to formulate a set of rules as a guide for the community.

Father Arnold perceived that the struggle for power was not just against him but that the mission seminary faced destruction from within. Unity within the community must be present if any progress was to be made. To settle the matter among the founding members in prayerful atmosphere, Father Arnold invited an older saintly priest, a moral theologian, to give them a retreat. Seminarian Reichart notified Father Rector Arnold at the end of the retreat that he could never see eye to eye with him. The next day Father Arnold called a meeting of the four and said that since Seminarian Reichart could not see eye to eye with him, their relationship would be terminated. Reichart left. Sometime later he returned to get his belongings. Father Bill wanted to accompany him to the railway station, but Father Arnold

pointed out that he had a class to teach and that if he went he could consider himself no longer as a member of the mission seminary. He went and suffered the consequences. After the two had left, peace came to the community. The minor seminarians felt a sense of relief.

More and more boys and young men applied to become missionaries. By Divine Providence, God provided two deacons who had been studying to become priests to take the place of the two founding members who had left. These deacons were John Janssen, the brother of Father Arnold, and his classmate Herman Wegener. The German government closed the seminary where they were studying; so they joined Father Arnold. Father Arnold had paid the board, lodging, and books of his younger brother John through all the years of seminary formation. His classmate Herman had a good character and was talented. Father Arnold thanked the Lord putting the mission seminary on the solid foundation of unity and peace and for sending two to take the place of the two who had left. Now the mission seminary could go ahead in the task of forming future missionaries according to the plan of God, as Father Arnold perceived it.

The old inn, which had been remodeled, could no longer serve the needs of the mission seminary. A new building was needed to house more young men who were applying to become missionaries. Father Arnold mentioned in the "Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart" the need of a new building to house the boys and young men who applied to become missionaries; he asked for prayers and financial help. He contacted a master carpenter. Together they drew up the plans. Father Arnold gave priority to having a decent chapel in the proposed new building. When contributions reached 10,000 Marks, Father Rector Arnold Janssen set the date for the groundbreaking, August 17, 1776. The newly ordained Father Anzer, the companion of Father Arnold from the beginning, celebrated his First Mass on that day. After it, he dug the first spade of soil for the new building. Nearby stood a pile of 100,000 bricks and a pile of lumber for the new building. Volunteer workmen came. The chapel was to be two stories high and was to have the capacity of holding 100 persons. Generous persons like three weavers, a man and his two sisters, kept the construction going. They gave their savings and asked only the interest on the money as long as they lived.

Sisters exiled from Germany came and did the cooking for the priests, seminarians, and volunteer workmen. Brother Juniper went around on begging tours and got food supplies from the farmers.

The new building took more than a year to finish. It was blessed on September 8, 1877, the birthday of our Blessed Mother, two years after the founding of the mission seminary. Two days later a group of diocesan priests moved in for a Retreat. Their bishop had requested the use of the building and Father Arnold had granted the request.

The chapel received a separate blessing by a bishop from China. After the blessing and the Mass, at the request of Father Rector Arnold Janssen, the Bishop exposed the Blessed Sacrament for Forty Hours of Adoration, popular in those days. The members of the community took turns in adoring Jesus in the Host exposed in the monstrance.

In October the new school year opened with a total of 33 seminarians, 19 "old timers" and 14 new ones. Father Arnold planned a complete six year course for minor

seminarians before they would move on to the study of philosophy and theology.

Father Arnold had in mind a missionary society of both Priests and Brothers. He observed the volunteer workmen and noted that some would make good missionary Brothers. He invited a few and they gladly accepted. He began to form them. Others applied to become missionary Brothers.

The "Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart" had proven itself an ideal instrument for promoting the cause of the missions, second only to prayer. By means of it the publisher, Father Arnold, had kept in contact with his readers; the readers had in turn contributed financial help to the missions, and young men had applied to become missionaries. The circulation had reached to some 10,000 paying subscribers.

At this point in time, a Dutch publisher approached Father Arnold and proposed the idea of also publishing an illustrated family magazine. This publisher had a stock of wonderful pictures which he wanted to put to maximum use. He and his magazine in Dutch had great popularity and success. If he could get these pictures used in a pictorial magazine for German readers, his pictures, he envisioned, would delight and inspire thousands of people, more people than the 50,000 who subscribed to his Dutch magazine. At a modest price, he offered to lease the plates needed to reproduce the pictures.

Father Arnold asked the publisher for a few days to pray the matter over. In considering the proposal Father Arnold asked himself; "Would such a magazine fit into the purpose of the mission seminary?" He received the inspiration that the family is the seedbed of future missionaries. Even the children would "read the pictures." He prayed and consulted his trusted advisers and also the Bishop. They encouraged Father Arnold to go ahead and accept the offer. The first number of the magazine for German readers appeared on the Solemnity of the Epiphany, a missionary feast, in 1878.

## **China**

The young priests, like Anzer and John Janssen, were eager to go to China as missionaries. Urged by the Holy Spirit, Father Arnold prepared to go to Rome and request the Holy Father for a mission territory for his missionaries. He prepared well for his trip by writing up a report on the mission seminary and by obtaining the recommendation from the Papal Internuncio in Holland and also from the Bishop of the diocese. The Internuncio wrote: "I am well acquainted with Father Janssen and I can give him an unqualified recommendation with respect to his spirituality, his faithful adherence to the mind of the Church, and his dedication to its interests."

Father Arnold planned his trip carefully to utilize it to the full for the cause of the mission seminary. He stopped first in Paris at the Paris Foreign Mission Society, then at the Dominican house of Studies. He next made a brief stop at a convent of Perpetual Adoration to thank the Sisters for their prayers. He visited the headquarters of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyons. He made a stop at Turin, Italy, to see the editorial offices of a mission magazine.

In Rome he was able with the help of a Cardinal to schedule an interview with the Holy Father after three weeks. While waiting, Father Arnold visited the headquarters of various mission orders and congregations. He went around to the universities where priests studied to obtain higher degrees. He likewise made pilgrimages to a number of holy places, where he prayed for the success of his audience with our Holy Father, during which he aimed to obtain the Holy Father's blessing on the mission seminary and a mission in China for his missionaries. During the three weeks of waiting he made a summary of his report for the Holy Father and rehearsed it frequently so that he could speak in the best simple understandable Latin possible.

First of all in the interview, Father Arnold presented our Holy Father with some beautifully bound volumes of the "Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart" and the new pictorial family magazine entitled "City of God." After the Holy Father had flipped through a few volumes, Father Arnold pointed out an article with pictures of the Holy Father published when he was still a cardinal as possibly the next pope. The Holy Father looked with interest at the article and exclaimed: "And that was written before my election!" Then Father Arnold handed our Holy Father the six page report and offered to summarize it. Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII, held the longer report while Father Arnold summarized it: the main purpose of the mission seminary was to prepare missionaries for the foreign missions but his men would also engage in scientific and literary pursuits as a means of leading people to God, the author of truth and beauty. The Holy Father understood this broader perspective of mission. The Holy Father blessed the Founder and all his members. Father Arnold had met the Holy Father, made his report, and received a blessing. He did not receive a mission territory for his missionaries, for the Holy Father worked through the Office for the Evangelization of Peoples. Father Arnold visited the cardinal in charge of that office without success.

Having done all he could in Rome, Father Arnold hurried back to Steyl, Holland. On his way, however, he stopped in Brixen, part of Austria at that time, to visit a young assistant priest who had applied to become a missionary to China. He had been accepted. Joseph Freinademetz, the name of the young priest, upon previous arrangement had come down from his parish in the mountains to meet Father Arnold. The two met and talked and then went together to make a courtesy call on the Bishop of the diocese. Father Joseph had already obtained the Bishop's permission to join Father Arnold. When Father Arnold asked the Bishop if he could take Father Joseph, the Bishop answered: "As Bishop of this diocese, I say "No!" but as Bishop of the Catholic Church, I say 'Yes!' Take him and make a good missionary out of him."

Upon his arrival back in Steyl, Father Arnold received an enthusiastic welcome. He reported on his trip and his audience with our Holy Father and the blessing which he gave to the members of the Mission Seminary. They listened with attention. When he mentioned the coming of Father Joseph, they clapped. A few days later, Father Joseph arrived and was given a hearty welcome. He fit well into the community. In his first letter home he wrote: "The house is truly a house of prayer...I have never seen anything like it. The zeal, the diligence, the modesty of the students here is something quite new to me. In spite of their youth, they realize that the life on earth is to be taken seriously. That can come only from the fact that all of them want to be missionaries...."

Father Arnold felt caught, as in a carpenter's vice. His young priests were eager to go to

China; yet he could not obtain a mission territory in China. Then came the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, namely, to send the first missionaries to Monsignor Raimondi in Hong Kong. Monsignor had invited Father Arnold to send missionaries to him, but Father Arnold did not think Hong Kong was a suitable mission for his missionaries on a permanent basis, but perhaps they could go and work there until the Steyl mission seminary could obtain its own territory on the mainland. So Father Arnold appointed Father Anzer and Father Freinademetz for the China mission. What joy filled the hearts of the community and especially of these two young missionaries.

Father Arnold set the date of March 2, 1879, the first Sunday of Lent, for their departure. On the eve of the departure, the fifty seminarians marched in a torchlight procession to beneath the balcony on which the two missionaries stood. The seminarians serenaded the missionaries with songs and poems. The missionaries responded with a short farewell speech. A good number of the townsfolk had gathered to hear the parting words of these first two missionaries. To be the celebrant of the departure Mass in the morning Father Arnold had invited the priest who had been teaching Chinese to the young missionaries and he invited the Papal Nuncio to give the mission crosses in the afternoon. After the missionaries had received their mission crosses, Father Arnold accompanied them to the train station. Meanwhile the other members of the community spent the afternoon in taking turns adoring the Eucharistic King to implore his blessing on these first fruits of the Mission Seminary. Father Arnold encouraged the two departing missionaries, who might never set foot on European soil again, to visit their parents on their way to the ship leaving from a port of Italy.

While the two missionaries sailed to Hong Kong and began their mission work there, Father Arnold pursued his goal of obtaining a mission territory for his men on mainland China. He wrote many letters and saw a good number of officials. Finally a ray of light broke through the thick dark clouds; the Superior General of the Franciscans was willing to give over the poorest and least evangelized part of their vast Shantung mission in China. The mission territory, which was offered, had a population of between 9 - 12 million people with only 158 registered Catholics. Father Arnold made a trip to Rome to finalize the arrangement. Great joy filled the hearts of the two missionaries in Hong Kong upon receiving the good news.

While the seminarians pursued their studies and underwent their formation for the missionary priesthood, Father Arnold also prepared men to become missionary Brothers.

The first two missionary Brothers, Brother Bernard and Brother Martin, made their profession of chastity, poverty and obedience on April 30, 1882.

Father Arnold consulted the priests at the mission seminary and missionaries in China whether they too would like to bind themselves to God with the three vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience with a constitution that would spell out the vows for them. Most of them wanted.

Father Arnold called a meeting of the first four members, namely, himself, Anzer from a China, John Janssen, and Wegener. In their deliberations, these four agreed that they would

be a missionary society with the name Society of the Divine Word, named after the Ideal Missionary, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, sent by the Father into this world to save all peoples. They put down as the aim of the Society to promote a devotional life among people and to proclaim the gospel, especially to those who had not heard about Jesus. As secondary aim, the society was to cultivate the sciences and letters. They likewise spelled out the three vows as they were to be lived by the members of a missionary society. They chose Father Arnold as the superior of the Society. The four of them at the end of the deliberations made perpetual vows on this constitution. Father Joseph Freinademetz in China would be the fifth member to make his perpetual vows on this constitution.

## **Missionary Sisters**

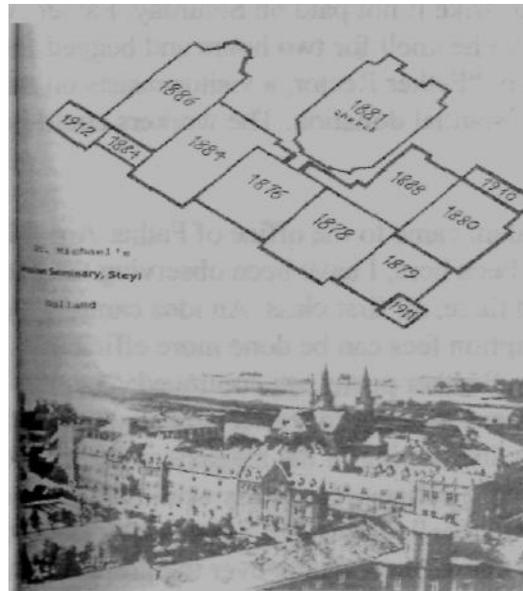
In the "Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart," Father Arnold had written from time to time in his articles the need of Sisters in the missions. Reading these inspiring accounts and the need for Sisters to work especially with the women and girls was a young lady named Helena Stollenwerk. For several years she had felt the grace of God impelling her to become a missionary to China. But how could she become a missionary to China when there was no convent of missionary Sisters in Germany. Through the light of the Holy Spirit she saw in Father Arnold, the founder of the mission seminary in Steyl, her hope of becoming a missionary Sister.

She approached her spiritual director, who in turn wrote to Father Arnold. Father Arnold scheduled an interview with her for March 19, the Solemnity of St. Joseph, the chaste spouse of our Blessed Mother. Helena arrived with her parents. Through the interview, Father Arnold discerned that she showed signs of a true vocation, for she had a good character and the right motivation. She participated daily in Holy Mass and did works of charity. Father Arnold told her frankly that he was not sure though that God wanted him to found a congregation of missionary Sisters. He had still to discern God's will in this matter. He told her that in the meantime she could join the Sisters of Divine Providence as a maid in the kitchen. She was willing if it meant a step forward to becoming a missionary Sister. Her parents and her spiritual director opposed the idea of her becoming a maid. In answer to a letter from her spiritual director, Father Arnold wrote that he had to be honest with her, namely, that he could not promise that he would found a congregation of missionary Sisters. She would meanwhile be with another maid in a religious atmosphere.

Finally her spiritual director left her free. She wrote that she was coming. Father Arnold answered: "From the bottom of heart I wish you joy and happiness in attaining your desired goal... Your hand is the hand of your heavenly Father and He will direct all things according to his will." She came after Christmas.

## **Growth**

As the number of seminarians kept increasing and number of postulants for becoming Brothers kept growing, additions to the existing buildings were put up. A spacious beautiful church was likewise constructed.



### **Mission Seminary, Steyl**

It was a double church, that is, a lower church and an upper church. It had twin towers, a beautiful structure facing the Muese River. The seminarians and Brothers had to have a model for fitting worship and their future work in the missions. A principle Arnold had learned from home was this: "The best for God and the simplest for self." That meant for him the best that could be afforded, not necessarily the most expensive or the flashiest or of the latest style.

When the seminarians had no classes, especially during vacations, the buildings were used for retreats. Sometimes as many as 200 men would come for a retreat. The seminarians would vacate their dormitories to accommodate the retreatants. Being young, the seminarians found some place to sleep. They likewise waited on the retreatants. Father Arnold himself preached some of the retreats. At breakfast on the closing day of a retreat, Father Arnold had a dozen rosaries placed by the plate of each retreatant. This was one of the ways by which Father promoted the holy rosary.

Each year Father Founder sent a few more missionaries to the China mission. How happy he had been in 1883 to send along with priests two Brothers.

With supporting the many seminarians and Brothers in formation, the constant building projects, and supporting the missionaries and their many projects in China, how did Father Arnold manage? Early in life he had learned to entrust all his financial matters to St. Joseph. Because of the constant prayers of Father Arnold and the members of the community through the contributions of benefactors and earnings from the printing press, St. Joseph always provided what was needed but no extra. At times Father Arnold had to pray more than usual that St. Joseph would hear him and help through good people. Here is an example. One time the money box was empty. The hired workmen working on the north wing threatened to strike if not paid on Saturday. Father Arnold proceeded to the statue of St. Joseph. There he

knelt for two hours and begged for help. Then the porter came and interrupted him: "Father Rector, a visitor insists on seeing you." The visitor gave Father Arnold a substantial donation. The workers could be paid and the construction continue.

One day a Brother postulant came to the office of Father Arnold with an idea. He said: "During the time I have been here, I have been observing the printing press and the magazines being printed there, all first class. An idea came to me as to how the marketing and collecting of subscription fees can be done more efficiently." Father Arnold listened as Clem, the name of the Brother postulant, continued: "Let the Brothers go from door to door in the cities, towns, and villages to solicit subscriptions and then have a responsible person in the area do the distributing of the magazines and also the collecting of the yearly subscription fees. The office of the press would have to deal mostly only with these promoters." Father Arnold recalled how as a young priest he had gone around and sold his publications; he said that he would pray over the proposal and sent Clem to the priest in charge of the press to explain his idea. Father Arnold and this priest discussed the idea and decided to let Clem give his proposal a try. Before beginning his novitiate Clem had made 21 trips, spending some 400 days on the road. The number of subscriptions rose, and the spiritual life of Clem did not suffer harm but rather developed. So Father Arnold appointed more Brothers to this promotion work.

On the Assumption of our Blessed Mother into heaven, 1886, Father Arnold celebrated his Silver Jubilee as a Priest. He was 49 years old. An article in a Catholic magazine characterized him thus: He is a man of prayer, mortification and imperturbable trust in God... firm as a rock. He is the very personification of energy. Despite his frail body... he has hardened himself."

While in Vienna, Austria, carrying on negotiations for establishing the major seminary there, on October 3, 1887, Father Arnold consecrated himself totally to the Holy Spirit. Father Arnold established a house in Rome where selected priest could stay while pursuing higher studies in the Roman universities to prepare themselves for teaching in the major seminary. This house received the name of St. Raphael after the Archangel Raphael.

On September 15, 1889, Father Arnold sent the first group of missionaries to Argentina. This became the Society's second foreign mission.

After six years of negotiations with Church and government officials in Austria, Father Arnold was finally able to transfer the major seminarians from Steyl to Austria. (Steyl was overflowing with seminarians and there was no more land to build on.) To accomplish this, Father Arnold had to make nine trips by train, had to give up his German citizenship to become an Austrian citizen, had to buy property, and build a seminary building and church. He named the seminary St. Gabriel after the Archangel Gabriel.

The year 1889 had not yet ended. The Capuchins left their monastery in Steyl, Holland, to return to Germany. Father Arnold rented it for the Sisters-to-be. Father Arnold accompanied by two other priests on the eve of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception led the six maids, including Helena Stollenwerk and Hendrina Stenmanns (Hendrina was to be the second co-foundress of the Sisters.) in procession to their new home. On the Solemnity itself, Father

Founder, Arnold Janssen, declared the maids to be postulants. They were on their way to becoming Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit.

In 1890, five years after formulating the first Constitution of the Society of the Divine Word, Father Arnold called another meeting to discuss and revise it. In the first General Chapter (chapter = meeting) there were four members; this time six since the membership of the Society had increased. Anzer, now Bishop Anzer, came again from China. The group produced the Constitution of 1991.

On May 14, 1891, Father Arnold with his brothers and sisters buried their mother.

On July 17, 1891, Father Arnold sent missionaries to Togo, Africa, a German colony. Father Arnold told the German government that the Society should be allowed to have a mission seminary in Germany if it was to send missionaries to a German colony. The new minor missionary, Holy Cross, permitted by the German government, was blessed on October 24, 1892.

Father Arnold sent missionaries to Brazil in 1895.

In 1896, he accepted New Guinea, a German colony, as a Society mission.

On December 8, 1896, Father Arnold founded the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit of Perpetual Adoration. Whereas the active Sisters would work in the missions among the people, the adoration Sisters would like Mary, the sister of Martha, kneel at the feet of Jesus adoring the Lord and praying for the active Priests, Brothers, and Sisters.

During the night between All Saints Solemnity and All Souls Solemnity, 1897, tragedy struck the mission in China. The Big knives murdered Father Nies and Father Henle. The murder of these missionaries brought sadness to Father Arnold. They were his spiritual sons.

A problem arose as regards the Sisters. The Sister whom the adoration Sisters had elected as superior began to domineer over both groups of Sisters, Father Arnold asked Sister Maria, the superior of the active Sisters if she would like to join the adoration Sisters. She agreed to step down from being the superior general of the active Sisters to become a novice of the adoration Sisters. Peace was restored because both groups of Sisters loved Sister Maria. Father Arnold appointed Sister Mary Michael (She is considered to be the co-foundress of the adoration Sisters.) as superior of the adoration Sisters.

In 1900, February 3, Sister Maria died. Father Arnold declared her Co-Foundress of the Holy Spirit Sisters. In the same year, the Society of the Divine Word celebrated its Silver Jubilee. It also took over a mission in Chile.

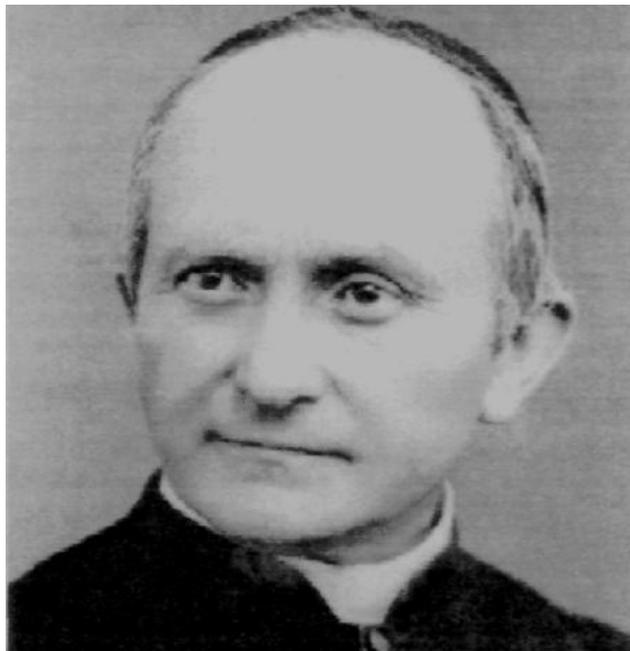
Brother Wendelin with the permission of Father Arnold had come to the United States in 1895 to sell magazines to the German immigrants. He had found a property which is now called Techny, Illinois. From Techny, the missionaries of Father Arnold went south and started work among the African American people in 1905.

In 1907, Father Arnold accepted a mission in Japan for his missionaries.

Likewise in 1907, the spiritual sons and daughters organized a special celebration, as was mentioned, for the seventieth birthday of their Founder, Father Arnold. He accepted the celebration gracefully giving thanks to God and joy to his spiritual sons and daughters.

Some of the last acts of Father Arnold were giving permission to open a mission seminary at Techy, Illinois, United States, and accepting the Philippines as a mission of the Society.

Father Arnold died on January 15, 1909. He was declared Blessed together with Joseph Freinademetz on Mission Sunday, 1975. Together they were declared Saints by Pope John Paul II on October 5, 2003.



**ST. ARNOLD JANSSEN**

## **2. COMMENTS ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF ST. ARNOLD**

(Note: There is some repetition from the Life of Father Arnold. The stress here, however, is how the event in his life affected his spirituality, his relation with God and with other persons.)

### **Child**

Arnold was born into a good Catholic family. The seeds of his spirituality were sown in him during his childhood years.

His parents with their children participated in Mass on Sunday. They prayed before and after meals. They prayed the rosary every evening from October to April when the work on the farm slackened a bit.

When a thunder storm raged, the father and mother would gather the children in the living room and light a candle. Then the father would pray the beginning of the Gospel of St. John: "In the beginning was the Word... And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

The father joined in a second Mass on Sunday to thank the Blessed Trinity for all the graces received during the past week. He also went to Mass on Monday to implore the blessing of the Holy Spirit on the week of work ahead.

When Arnold was still young, his mother would sometimes take him along when she went to visit a relative or friend in a neighboring town. If the church there had the stations of the cross, she would make the way of the cross with Arnold at her side.

Arnold and his brothers and sisters had to pay close attention to the sermon of the Sunday Mass, for their father would quiz them on it after the noon meal. Their allowance depended on how well they could answer his questions.

Arnold's mother prayed much also at home, especially ejaculatory prayers. Her boys would tease her: "Mother, you will pray yourself straight through heaven." She would answer, "Having you boys, one really needs to pray much."

The family subscribed to a mission magazine, from which on Sunday evening the father read aloud to the children stories about missionaries and their people. Arnold listened eagerly to these stories.

### **Seminarian (Student)**

At the age of about fifteen, Arnold composed an evening prayer for the family, as mentioned, which consisted of prayers of adoration, thanksgiving, contrition, and petitions for various persons and needs. He also had in his evening prayer acts of faith, hope, and love of God. The family used the evening prayer and gave a copy to relatives and friends. This evening prayer reflects his spirituality at the time.

Sometime in his youth, Arnold invented a way of keeping in contact with God. Every fifteen minutes, that is, every time the grandfather clock at home or the church tower clock chimed, he would repeat acts of faith, hope and charity. The prayer went something like this:

*God, eternal truth, I believe in You.*

*God, my strength and salvation, I trust in You.*

*God, infinite goodness, I love You with all my heart.*

The praying and exercising the virtues of faith in God, hope in God, and love of God as the years passed strengthened his relation with God.

At the university he boarded with a young man of good character, whom both he and his parents knew. He participated in daily Mass and applied himself diligently to his studies, mostly mathematics and the sciences. He avoided the beer parlor where a number of the students gathered to drink beer and chat during their free time. Through his study of math and the sciences, he appreciated ever more God's wonderful creation.

When Arnold won the prize in a math contest at the university, he used the prize money, as mentioned, to give a treat to his father. (His mother, although invited, could not come because of the condition of her health).

Upon his graduation, the University of Berlin offered him a teaching position with a good starting salary. He valued his priestly vocation too much to accept the offer. He rather entered the major seminary to complete his studies and formation for the priesthood.

Making the yearly pilgrimage to the shrine of our Blessed Mother revealed his love of and devotion to her.

### **Priest and Teacher**

Arnold valued the priesthood highly. He made a good preparation for his priestly ordination. He respected priests, prayed for them, and got others to pray for priests. Father Arnold prepared his lessons well, He loved his students and taught them for the love of Jesus. Doing one's duty, he knew, pleases God.

Father Arnold offered Holy Mass daily, visited the sick and brought them Holy Communion.

Father Arnold continued to cultivate his spiritual life through his daily Holy Mass and praying the divine office but also by other spiritual exercises, for example, making a daily meditation, examining his conscience, visiting Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, praying the rosary, and making the way of the cross. Every week he made a sacramental confession.

At times he spent much of the night in prayer.

In his Masses and divine office, Father Arnold followed the liturgical year with its various

celebrations of Sundays, feasts of our Lord, of our Blessed Mother, of St. Joseph, and the other saints; also with the various seasons such as Advent, Lent, and Easter.

An incident occurred which shows Father Arnold's great love of our Blessed Mother. He raised money for a statue of our Blessed Mother in the hall to give a proper atmosphere for religion classes. He stood his ground when a prejudiced member of the school board was against a statute of Our Lady.

During those years when Father Arnold was teaching, he helped his brother William to become a Capuchin Brother. He was also helping his youngest brother John to study for the priesthood by paying for his board and lodging plus his tuition and books. From his modest salary he even sent money to Bishop Comboni in Africa for the support of orphan children. He had used his first money, received as a teacher, to buy his mother a new coat.

### **Missionary**

As Father Arnold believed strongly in the power of prayer, he signed up as a member of the Apostleship of Prayer. In his zeal he also got some six hundred other persons to sign up and join in praying for the great intentions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Father Arnold during vacation days walked from parish to parish to set up units of the Apostleship. With much sacrifice, for example, having irregular or no meals and suffering rejection, he succeeded in establishing units of the Apostleship of Prayer in more than half of the three hundred and fifty parishes of the diocese. To promote the apostleship, he also wrote a booklet explaining its purpose. He also composed prayer books and pamphlets.

Father Arnold developed his own prayer motto by which he kept his life in focus. It was this: "May the darkness of sin and the night of unbelief vanish before the light of the Word and the Spirit of grace. And may the Heart of Jesus live in every heart!"

Realizing that the people of Germany were divided into Protestants and Catholics, Father Arnold prayed and worked for unity. He knew that Jesus had prayed at the Last Supper on Holy Thursday that all (his followers) might be one. To bring this about he collected money to have Masses offered at the shrine of St. Boniface, Apostle of Germany.

After twelve years of teaching, Father Arnold thought he could do more for the glory of God and the salvation of people if he spent all his time and energy in the apostolate; so he ask his Bishop for permission to resign from teaching.

He became chaplain of the Ursuline Sisters and their students. By offering Mass and teaching, he served them. Since he still had time, he started a mission magazine to which he gave the title "The Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart." The magazine promoted knowledge of and prayer for the missions. He placed a prayer to be prayed by the reader at the beginning and at the end of each issue of the magazine.

After much prayer and reflection, Father Arnold realized that God had prepared and selected him to start a mission seminary for preparing missionaries for the foreign missions. To make

sure that God had called him to start the mission seminary, he went around and visited the bishops in Germany and the other German speaking countries since he knew that Jesus entrusted the mission of the Church to the Apostles and their successors, the bishops. He explained the project to them and asked them to put their signature on a list as approving the project. He received the signature of thirty-three bishops. In going around and visiting the bishops, Father Arnold had suffered humiliation. One bishop expressed his opinion: "This Arnold Janssen is either a fool or a saint to want to start a mission seminary in these times."

When traveling and having finished his other prayers, Father Arnold made it a practice to see and praise God in nature.

Back in his room in the compound of the nuns, Father Arnold continued his life of prayer, penance, teaching, and writing.

At some stage of his life, Father Arnold joined the third order of St. Dominic. Third Order members prayed and did penance like the Dominican Priests, Brothers and Sisters, that is, they fasted a couple of days each week and abstained from meat a few days weekly. Father Arnold thought that as a member he could be a better priest.

## **Founder**

As the first act in founding the mission seminary Father Arnold consecrated himself on June 16, 1875, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, on the two hundredth anniversary of the appearance of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. He scheduled the blessing of the building for September 8, the birthday of our Blessed Mother thus placing the enterprise under the motherly care of Mary. In his sermon during the Mass, Father Arnold said that if anything came of the mission seminary it would be due to the grace of God and that if nothing came of it, it would be because they were not worthy of undertaking this enterprise.

Father Arnold entrusted all money matters to St. Joseph, who had provided for the Holy Family and always provided what was needed but no extra.

Father Arnold had not only to organize the studies of the seminarians but also and especially their spiritual formation, for example, morning prayers, holy Mass, noon and evening prayers. Included in the morning prayer was the morning offering of the Apostleship of Prayer.

He suffered much when the other three founding members tried to depose him from being superior. He told his brother William, now Brother Juniper, that he felt like being dragged through a hedge of thorn bushes. He suffered with Jesus.

Father Arnold made his buildings available for retreats, mostly for laymen, provided that the retreat did not interfere with the classes of the seminarians. Father Arnold himself preached a number of these retreats. To promote the rosary, he placed a dozen rosaries by the plate of each retreatant at the last meal of the retreat so that the retreatant could take them home and distribute them to the members of his family.

Father Arnold considered the printing press and the printed word as a sword with which to fight the battles of the Lord. As the years went by, the mission seminary published magazines, prayer books and leaflets, plus books about the spiritual life.

Father Arnold was devoted to the holy Angels. He named the first three mission seminaries, which he established, after the three archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. He honored and prayed to his guardian angel and to the angels of other persons. When he had a difficult relationship with some person, he would ask his angel and the angel of the other person to work on solving the problem. In faith he saw angels at Mass adoring the Lord.

1884 with the approval of the Pope, Father Arnold asked the priests teaching in the mission seminary and the missionaries in China if they wished to be religious. They wanted to. So Father Arnold drew up a constitution spelling out the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. He and his councilors discussed the draft and after making some changes approved it. Upon this constitution then Father Arnold and the priests of the mission seminary and the missionaries in China made their vows. The Brothers likewise from then on made their vows on this constitution.

Father Arnold gave his missionaries the name Society of the Divine Word because he saw in the Divine Word, the Son of God, the ideal missionary; for God the Father had sent his Son, the Divine Word, accompanied by the Holy Spirit, into the world as a missionary to save people, to bring them to heaven. Father Arnold's missionaries were to be companions of this Divine Word sent by the Father.

A very special event in the life of Father Arnold took place on October 3, 1887. On that day he consecrated himself totally to the Holy Spirit. He saw in the Holy Spirit the Person who worked the incarnation of the Divine Word in the womb of our Blessed Mother. He saw the Holy Spirit as the Person who lived in and guided Jesus as He grew up, who helped Jesus in his teaching, healing, and driving out devils. He saw the Holy Spirit as the Person who helped Jesus to suffer and die to save us and who raised Him from the dead. Father Arnold saw the Holy Spirit as the Person whom Jesus sent from the Father to the apostles, holy women, and other disciples on Pentecost to give them courage to go into the whole world to tell all people about Jesus. The next year, Father Arnold consecrated in a solemn manner the Society of the Divine Word to the Holy Spirit. And in 1889, he founded the Holy Spirit Sisters. Father Arnold's love of and devotion to the Holy Spirit increased as the years went by.

Father Arnold had spent his life in praying much and promoting prayer, for he had the conviction that conversions are the result of the grace of God, which is won by prayer. So in 1896, Father Arnold called for volunteers from among the Sisters to become Holy Spirit Sisters of Perpetual Adoration so that they might adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament day and night to pray for the missionary Priests, Brothers, and Sisters active in the missions.

Father Arnold rejoiced when he saw how his spiritual sons and daughters honored God and pushed forward the kingdom of God. Ordinations, vow taking, mission sending ceremonies gave him special joy. He rejoiced at the taking over of new missions in various countries of the world and over the establishing of new mission seminaries in Europe. As a father he rejoiced

over the success of his spiritual sons and daughters and their people; he felt sad over their sufferings and frustrations.

During the last weeks of his life, Father suffered a stroke, which left him partly paralyzed. He accepted his sufferings patiently in the spirit of Job: "The Lord has given and Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." He resigned from being superior general. He offered Holy Mass when he could; otherwise he received Holy Communion. His last word was "Jesus!"

Father Arnold had loved Jesus wholeheartedly and had done his best to work with Jesus for bringing people to heaven.

### **3. THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE OF ST. ARNOLD**

St. Arnold Janssen had a rich devotional life, which was part of his spirituality.

Where did his devotional life spring from? It sprang from his faith. His faith enabled him to see a whole new world, the spiritual world of God, the angels and saints. He met God. God was real to St. Arnold. He talked with God. God gave him many good things; he thanked God. Experiencing the goodness of God, he loved God and became devoted to him, He met God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. He loved them as trinity; he loved them as three persons. He devoted himself to them. He appreciated the truth of the Incarnation. He related with Jesus in all the aspects of his life. Jesus became his model. All that Father Arnold did, he did with the inspiration and help of the Holy Spirit. He met our Blessed Mother. She showed herself a true mother to him and so he loved her and became devoted to her. He told other people about her and her goodness. He appreciated all the aspects of her life and meditated upon them as the liturgical year unfolded. He met his guardian angel and other angels. The angels protected him. He loved them and became devoted to them. He met many saints, especially St. Joseph. The saints were real persons to him. They showed forth goodness in their lives. He loved them, tried to imitate them and was devoted to them. He pitied the souls suffering in purgatory. He did all he could to help them pay the punishment due to their forgiven sins so that they could quickly go to heaven. They helped him by interceding for him. Thus his love for them grew and he became more and more devoted to them. He got others to help them.

St. Arnold was devoted to Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. He offered Holy Mass and received Holy Communion with great devotion. He made frequent short visits to Jesus in the tabernacle and a longer one in the afternoon. He spent time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament at night before going to bed. He organized days of adoration and a forty hours adoration.

St. Arnold practiced devotion to the Holy Spirit. The longer he lived, the stronger grew his devotion to the Holy Spirit. He continually sought the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in all his activities.

Father Arnold was devoted to the Mother of God and our mother. He frequently renewed his consecration to her by praying: "My Queen, my mother, remember that I am your very own. Defend and protect me as your personal possession." He and the community prayed the rosary

every evening in October. He celebrated her solemnities solemnly.

Father Arnold was very devoted to St. Joseph. He saw in St. Joseph a model and teacher of prayer, for he conversed familiarly with Jesus and Mary. He invoked St. Joseph, who died in the arms of Jesus and Mary, as patron of a happy death.

He made the heroic act of offering all the indulgences he could gain for the suffering souls in purgatory. He had Masses offered for the deceased members of the Society.

He was whole heartedly devoted to the holy Church founded by Jesus: to our Holy Father, bishops, priests, religious, all the baptized persons, and families. He prayed for them. He respected the teaching of the Church, the sacramental life of the Church, the moral teaching of the Church, and the prayer of the Church. He wanted with his whole heart to bring Christ to those who had not heard of Him, to bring them to faith in Jesus, to baptism, and into the sacramental life of the Church. He put much stress on intercessory prayer, especially for the great intentions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Father Arnold's devotions, as our Holy Father mentioned in the ceremony for his beatification, were organized and proceeded in an orderly manner. They originated from and led back to the holy Trinity. For example, he saw Mary as the daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, and the Immaculate Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

St. Arnold had his daily devotions, his weekly devotions, his monthly devotions, and his yearly devotions. These were not his devotional life but they helped him to exercise his devotional life as physical exercises are not health but do help a person to keep healthy.

A summary of Father Arnold's devotion exercises:

*Daily devotional exercises:*

- He offered Holy Mass daily.
- He prayed the Divine Office every day.
- He communicated with God every 15 minutes.
- He meditated on spiritual persons and realities every morning.
- He made shorter visits to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament during the day when he was home and not traveling.
- He prayed a noon prayer.
- He made a ten minute visit to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in the afternoon.
- He prayed an Evening Prayer.
- He prayed before going to bed.

*Weekly devotional exercises:*

He dedicated each day to some spiritual person or persons:

- Sunday to the Blessed Trinity,
- Monday to the Holy Spirit,
- Tuesday to the Guardian Angels,
- Wednesday to St. Joseph,

Thursday to Jesus in Blessed Sacrament,  
Friday to the Sacred Heart and his Passion,  
Saturday to our Blessed Mother.

*Monthly Devotions:*

He dedicated certain months to certain spiritual persons and practiced a special devotion to them during these months:

He dedicated January to the Infant Jesus,  
March to St. Joseph,  
May to our Blessed Mother,  
June to the Sacred Heart and Holy Spirit,  
July to the Precious Blood, the content of the Sacred Heart,  
September to the Angels, especially to the Guardian Angels,  
October to our Lady of the holy rosary,  
November to interceding for the suffering souls in purgatory.

First Fridays and third Mondays of each month were special. Mass and prayers in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus were offered on the First Friday; Mass and prayers in honor of the Holy Spirit on the third Monday.

*Yearly devotional exercises:*

He followed the devotional exercises of the liturgical year, for example of Advent, Lent, Easter.  
He honored the saints of the liturgical calendar.  
He had a novena in preparation for Christmas and a novena in preparation for Pentecost.  
He had a yearly Retreat of nearly a week and a day of recollection every couple of months.

These devotions kept the fire of his devotional life alive. They provided fuel for it.

In summary: Arnold Janssen was a man completely devoted to God. He believed in God. He trusted in God. He loved God with his whole heart. He tried to live in the presence of God. He promoted the honor of God among people. In faith he saw each person as an image of God. He respected every person, baptized persons as having the holy Triune God living in them, non-Christians as potential temples of God.

He prayed to God. He tried to discern the will of God and to carry it out. If he became convinced that God wanted him to do something, he put every effort into carrying out the will of God.

**MAY THE HOLY TRIUNE GOD LIVE IN OUR HEARTS!**

# **ST JOSEPH FREINADEMETZ SVD**

## **Ideal Missionary**

This is a condensed version of the book written for the Arnold Janssen SVD - Secretariat by Peter Michael, SVD, and Stanley Plutz, SVD.

### **Childhood and Youth**

"It's a boy!" the midwife shouted out of the window to Mattias. "Anna Maria is all right." This was the fourth child of Mattias and Anna Maria. The couple lived on a little farm on the side of the mountain in a tiny hamlet called Oies. On the stony-sloping-divided-field six cows and four sheep grazed. In the barn rested four sows.

It was April 15, 1852. The godparents carried the newborn baby to the village of Abtei, to the church of St. Leonard, twenty minutes down the mountain that very afternoon of his birth. The priest baptized him Joseph (In the local language Uyop).

The people of the region practiced their Catholic religion. The family, for example, prayed the Angelus three times a day as the bell from the church tower rang out.

On November 22, the six year old boy eagerly joined his elder sister and two elder brothers in going to school. After Mass, the assistant priest began teaching his nine boys and six girls in first grade. He taught in the local dialect called Ladin, a kind of Latin.

Feeding on porridge of barley or oats, beans, potatoes or bread with some meat added on Sundays and holidays, the youngster grew up physically healthy, although not robust. He had a keen mind and good character anchored in Catholic moral principles.

After the four years of schooling offered in his home village, Joseph's father apprenticed the boy to the local tailor, a good and enterprising man. The tailor, Mr. Thaler, noticed the boy was not entirely happy, although he did his work diligently. He asked the boy what was wrong. Joseph answered that he wanted to study to become a priest.

Mr. Thaler knew from the parish priest that to become a priest one had to study in Brixen, a city, eleven hours away on foot. The tailor asked the parents' permission to take their boy there. On arrival, the tailor took Uyop to a lady whom he knew from home and introduced the boy to her, told her the boy would like to study, and asked if he could stay with her. She said he could stay if he did some chores but added that she could not feed him. Next the tailor took the boy to the school. Uyop would have to learn German, for the language of higher education was German. Arrangements were made with the head of school for Uyop to be a working student, that is, he could study free of charge in exchange for doing some work. There was still the problem of

food. The tailor took Uyop to a prominent lady in the town. He rang the bell. When the lady appeared, the tailor kissed her hand. "Mrs. Bader, I brought you a lad from Abtei. To make a long story short, this young man is set on becoming a priest - perhaps even a bishop," he said with a twinkle in his eyes and the lady smiled modestly, but he needs at least one square meal a day." The lady looked sympathetically at Uyop, who felt a bit embarrassed. The boy kissed her hand and the two left. "She will see that you do not starve," the tailor assured the boy. Then they went to another big house and repeated the same request. Having settled everything for the boy's immediate future, the good tailor started on his eleven hour hike back to Abtei. Uyop was left in Brixen.

### **The Student and Seminarian**

Upon his return to the boys' parents, what did Mr. Francis Thaler receive? A big "Thank you"? No, but a scorching scolding from the mother: "How could you leave our little Uyop in the big city of Brixen so far from home!" She had thought that he would take the lad there and make some arrangements for the future and bring him back. The father was more understanding and calmed the anxiety of the mother by promising to visit Uyop and bring him some food and clothes. After two weeks the papa fulfilled his promise and visited the boy. Finding him in good health and happy now that he saw the possibility of becoming a priest, the father took the good news back to the anxious mother.

Two years passed rapidly and the lad from the mountains finished the course with honors. He could speak, read, and write German. That step having been made, he took the entrance exam for the secondary course of eight years in the Royal and Imperial Austrian Secondary School of Brixen. He passed. He moved now to the Cassianeum, a minor seminary with about forty seminarians. He lived in the seminary but studied in the secondary school.

How was he able to pay for his board, lodging and tuition? God in his goodness provided him with a scholarship as a member of the cathedral choir. The Lord had given him a good singing voice and a good ear for music. Although long hours of practice took up much time, enough time remained for studying. The singing for him served as a kind of recreation, for he enjoyed singing.

All feast days, especially Christmas and Easter were celebrated with religious fervor but also with beautiful decorations, exact ceremonies, and professional singing in the cathedral. The huge majestic pipe organ, the big chandeliers, the Bishop in fine-looking vestments gave Joseph a sample of the heavenly worship. And to think that he was part of it!

Many an hour Joseph sat studying in his room in the seminary. He also took part in games and programs. He took time for personal prayer besides participating in the community Mass and prayers. He never experienced, as others did, a crisis in his vocation. He appreciated his vocation to the priesthood because of all that God was doing for him in helping him to become a priest.

In the seminary one of the professors was very enthusiastic about the missions. He kept up a correspondence with some of the thirty-two Austrian missionaries in Africa. He posted some of the letters, which he received, on the bulletin board, their letters relating at times hair-raising

adventures. The young Joseph was deeply touched, and a wish to become a missionary was already in the incubator stage.

Joseph graduated at the top of his class. Ten of his class went on to the diocesan major seminary of Bishop Gasser, a bishop truly inspired by the Holy Spirit. Joseph had to endure hardships in the seminary besides his studies. For example, there was no heating in the building during winter. How did he, being so poor, pay for his board and lodging, and for his tuition? He made the dean's list of those having the highest grades, and stayed on it throughout his years in the major seminary; thus he had a scholarship.

While in the seminary, Joseph joined a club in which the members practiced preaching on their own initiative in their native language, Ladin, besides what they did in class. They corrected each other and made suggestions for the improvement of their sermons.

### **The Priest**

Joseph applied for ordination and was ordained a priest on July 25, 1875. He walked home then and had his First Mass. All the village folk joined him. On September 8, the birthday of our Blessed Mother, he preached about her in his parish church.

During his two months vacation, his mother walked each morning with her priest son to participate in his Mass in the parish church. His dad joined when he could. After his vacation, Father Joseph went to his assignment, St. Martin Parish, about eight miles from his home.

At St. Martin's, as the assistant priest, he offered Mass devoutly, preached long interesting sermons on Sundays, heard confessions, and went on sick calls. St. Martin, being a larger parish than St. Leonard, had a school of eight grades. A layman taught grades 1 - 4, Father Joseph taught grades 5 - 8. He loved his pupils and they loved him.

In the diocesan paper Father Joseph read an article about a Mission Seminary that Father Arnold Janssen had started in Steyl, Holland. The article struck him. He felt that God called him to become a missionary. After he had served two years as an assistant priest, he went to the Bishop and ask permission to become a missionary to the Chinese people in China. When he had received permission, he wrote to Father Arnold Janssen. Father Arnold answered that he would be going to Rome and on his way back would visit him. They met in Brixen and together went to the Bishop to pay a courtesy call. Father Arnold asked the Bishop if he could take Father Joseph and prepare him for the China mission. The Bishop said in reply; "As bishop of Brixen, I am inclined to say no; but as bishop of the Catholic Church, I say yes. Take him and make a good missionary out of him."

Father Arnold accepted Father Joseph and asked him to report to the Mission Seminary after he had said good bye to his parents, brothers and sisters, the people of his home parish, and to the people of St. Martin. On his way to the Mission Seminary in Steyl, Holland, he looked at the scenery from the train window. Nothing could match the beauty of the Alps, his home region.

Father Arnold, the other priests, and the seminarians welcomed Father Joseph with genuine affection. He soon felt at home. In a letter home he expressed his feelings about the Mission Seminary:

Truly this is the house of God. A spirit of piety and fear of God reign here more than in the seminary at Brixen. The priests, workers, and the students have zeal, simplicity, and diligence. The students are serious because all want to be missionaries. I thank the Lord. I have begun to study Chinese.

The Mission Seminary did not have a mission territory yet. Several months passed. Father Joseph was becoming impatient. Father Arnold was negotiating for a mission in China without result. Then Father Arnold thought of the invitation of Monsignor Raimondi, superior of the Hong Kong mission, who had encouraged Father Arnold to found a mission house. Father Arnold thought that although Hong Kong would not be a good permanent mission for his men, they could start in Hong Kong and then move to the mainland when he could obtain a mission territory for his missionaries.

### **The Missionary**

How happy Father Joseph felt when Father Arnold appointed him and Father John Anzer for China. They were to leave on the first Sunday of Lent. They had special Mass in the morning. After lunch the Apostolic Nuncio gave them their mission cross. Father Arnold went with them to the train station.

They stopped in Rome to pay their respects to our Holy Father and to ask his blessing. Since our Holy Father knew the Founder, he graciously received the first two missionaries of the new mission house. The two missionaries took a ship from Italy and passed through the Suez Canal. On April 20, their ship docked in the Hong Kong harbor. Some seminarians met them and conducted them to the residence of Monsignor Raimondi. Father Joseph found the same Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament there in China as was in Europe, which proved a great consolation. He wrote home and expressed his joy, "At last I am in China!"

The Monsignor assigned Father John to the seminary and Father Joseph to assist an energetic missionary on the mainland of China. The central station of this missionary was fishermen's village of some 200 persons. There the people spoke a Chinese dialect. Since the name Freinademetz was too hard for the people to pronounce, it became Fu. Priest was Shenfu. So Father Joseph Freinademetz became Fu Shenfu. After the experienced missionary gave Fu Shenfu a short introduction, he took off to visit the other villages of his parish. Fu Shenfu set to work learning the language with the help of an elderly man, a teacher. Most of the people in the area were not Christians. The food was poor, namely, bread or rice and fish, and not much of them. Most of the people had malaria, which Fu Shenfu soon got from the mosquitoes. Fu Shenfu wrote to his benefactor the tailor, "I entrust my parents to the Lord's care... I have a small house with a window; most Chinese houses have no window." Soon he was able to hear confessions in the local dialect. From the beginning he had been able to offer Mass since the Mass was in Latin.

Father Luigi, the parish priest of the mission, then sent Fu Shenfu to the neighboring islands, wherever a Catholic community existed. The Catholics welcomed him as a priest and put up with his faulty Chinese. Every two months, Fu Shenfu made the trip to Hong Kong to visit his companion, Father John. They exchanged experiences, the latest world news, and the happenings at Steyl. He opened his mail and read letters from home, that is, from his parents, Mr. Thaler, his classmates, and his benefactors. On one of these occasions, a letter from Father Arnold contained the good news that the Superior General of the Franciscans in Rome was willing to give over part of their vast Shantung mission to Father Janssen and his missionaries and that Father John Anzer should go there to make arrangements with the Bishop. Father Joseph should continue helping in the Hong Kong area until further notice. And then when notified, he should bring the supplies, which they had bought from Europe to their new mission in Shantung.

Monsignor Raimondi to prepare Father Joseph for his pioneer work in the Shantung mission, assigned him to the island of Lantau with a population of about 10,000 people with no mission station. The young missionary was to travel from village to village and preach the good news of Christ becoming man to save mankind. Upon arriving Fu Shenfu made a survey of the whole island, which he covered in a week. Often it was hard to find a place to sleep. In one village, he felt much joy when a 71 yr. old man put his home at the missionary's disposal. In another village a tumult broke out when he entered, and some stones whizzed past his head as he was leaving. His guardian angel shielded his head from getting hit.

On July 25, the fifth anniversary of his ordination, he preached a sermon in Chinese. What a relief when he found out that the people understood him. The Monsignor told him that when he delivered his first sermon in Chinese, the people thought that he was preaching in Portuguese.

Every two months he continued to return to Monsignor's residence to make his Confession, receive his mail, and meet other missionaries. Since they were Italian, he had no problem in conversing with them. They treated him well so that he went back to his island refreshed. In one of the letters which he received from Steyl was the question: Should the seminarians start learning Chinese. From his experience he gave this answer: "They should learn the characters and acquire a reading knowledge but not learn the pronunciation." He explained that the pronunciation is best learned in China, but he said that a basic course in singing would help prepare the seminarians for learning the pronunciation since Chinese is a tonal language. A change in tone changes the meaning, even if the character is the same.

Having had a good training under Father Luigi, Fu Shenfu on his own island tried to put into practice what he had been taught. Thus he insisted on the catechumens undergoing a thorough course of instructions before they could receive baptism; they had to know their religion. He also insisted on the congregation coming together for community prayer under the leadership of the catechist when the priest could not be present. As Father Luigi visited every community, so he made it a practice to visit every community, even the smallest. In visiting these communities, he had to walk, wade through creeks and rivers, contend with centipedes, snakes, and armies of mosquitoes. Upon visiting a sick person, he was shocked to find the sick person lying on straw on the floor like the animals back home.

During the first two years in China, Fu Shenfu's assessment of the Chinese character was quite

negative. The non-Christians seemed concerned only with food and money. But the people who received the gift of faith gradually changed his opinion. They could compare favorably with the good people back home.

Missionary life, contrary to the belief of some people, was not romantic. The missionary suffered from the indifference of the non-Christians. At times, he felt alone, always a foreigner. Joys, however, came with conversions, baptisms, sick calls, confessions, and preaching. His mission cross with Jesus crucified on it gave him the strength and courage to go on.

## **South Shantung**

The year was 1882. Father Joseph received more knowledge about the South Shantung mission, which the Steyl missionaries would take over. It was the most neglected part of the mission. It had a population of between 9-12 million people with only 158 registered Catholics. Most of these Catholics lived in a town called Puoli and its surrounding villages. After thanking Father Luigi for teaching him to be a real missionary and Monsignor Raimondi for his hospitality and the opportunity to do real mission work, Father Joseph boarded a ship for Shanghai with the supplies brought along from Europe. He changed ship there for one bound for the mouth of the Yellow River, five hundred miles away. Then up the Yellow River in a Chinese junk for 21 days. Seasick most of the time, cramped in a small space, pestered by swarms of mosquitoes, he finally arrived at the capital of Shantung, a total of 40 days on the water from Hong Kong to Tsinan, where both the bishop and the governor resided.

Father Joseph stayed with the Bishop for eight months to study Chinese. The Mandarin Chinese of north China was spoken in Shantung, not the Chinese of Hong Kong. So Father Joseph had practically to start over. Although the characters were the same, the sounds, the tones, were very different. He enjoyed his stay with the Bishop once he had recovered from the trip on the water. The Bishop and almost all the priests came from Italy, and Father Joseph, as mentioned, knew Italian well.

One day the Bishop called Father Joseph in for a talk. What began as a friendly conversation turned serious. The Bishop wanted to make Father Joseph the superior of the South Shantung mission. Father Joseph got down on his knees and begged the Bishop to make his companion, Father Anzer, the superior. He would not get up until the Bishop gave in.

In January 1882, Father Anzer had gone ahead to see the situation of their new mission of South Shantung. Father Joseph followed in April again bringing the supplies. A Franciscan Brother hired a number of men to bring the boxes in wheelbarrows to Puoli, quite a distance. Father Joseph walked with the wheelbarrow men.

When Father Joseph and the men arrived, Father Anzer and a few Catholics welcomed him. For his room, Father Anzer took him to the woodshed where he was staying. All that had to be done was to put up a straw mat as a divider, and immediately there were two rooms. Father Joseph did not mind poor living conditions for himself, but when he saw the miserable condition of the chapel, the house of the Lord, he was sad.

Father Anzer soon left for the outlying areas. Father Joseph was happy when two new missionaries, sent by Father Arnold, arrived. While they stayed at the main station studying Chinese, he could visit the villages around Puoli. He went with a catechist trained by the Franciscans, whom he had brought along from North Shantung.

When going around to the villages in the area, he would rent a house through the catechist for few days. The adults and elder children worked in the fields during the day. Mostly the little children were left in the village. They would come to see the friendly foreign missionary with the long nose and blue eyes. He would show them his watch with the second hand going around inside the glass. They could hear the tick as he held it to their ear. He showed them his pen with which he could write. When the elders came home in the evening, the children told them about the friendly stranger and what he had shown them. They too were curious and wanted to see. The watch proved especially helpful. Father would explain that just as the watch had a maker, so all the beautiful and useful things around, for example, plants and animal, had a Maker, who was intelligent and all powerful. He, as a missionary, had come to tell them about Him. The catechist would help Fu Shenfu in giving a further instruction. Some persons expressed their desire to become Christians. Fu Shenfu accepted them and enrolled them as catechumens. (Catechumens are those with a desire for baptism and are thus under instruction in the Catholic Faith.)

At the end of October, Fu Shenfu went back to Puoli for a visit. One of the two new missionaries who were studying Chinese and constructing a new chapel, expressed his desire to accompany Father Joseph on his next mission trip. They set out, one on a horse and the other on a donkey. In one village the horse got frightened because of the fire crackers and threw Fu Shenfu and started off dragging Fu Shenfu with his foot caught in the stirrup. He was dragged and slightly hurt before he got his foot free. So for a week he limped.

Riehm was the new missionary who accompanied Fu Shenfu. He knew something about carpentry. That is why Father Arnold had sent him. By Christmas the new chapel stood ready. Fu Shenfu celebrated the three Christmas Masses at the main station of Puoli. Most of the Catholics of the area came for the midnight Mass, some from quite a distance. Father Joseph heard their confessions before Mass. Then followed the midnight Mass which was celebrated with much solemnity; it took two hours. The people seemed to understand the sermon of Fu Shenfu. To the surprise of Father Joseph and the two new missionaries, almost all the people stayed for the morning Masses. They built a fire and sat around it and sang Christmas hymns. Fu Shenfu, however, tried to get a little sleep before the morning Masses.

Then in the morning, he offered two more Christmas Masses. The people participated with true Christmas joy, even after having stayed awake most of the night. The Child Jesus, his dear Mother, and St. Joseph gave Fu Shenfu new hope for the China mission. The missionaries had a delicious Christmas dinner, nothing fancy, but a little more than the usual fare. Chicken soup and chicken meat tasted good. In the afternoon Fu Shenfu rested a little while, then prayed before the Child Jesus lying in the manger, as set up by Rev. Riehm, not yet ordained a priest, and his helpers. After that he wrote home to his parents, brothers, and sisters; also to Father Arnold, and to the tailor who helped him get started on his way to the priesthood. The evening meal again proved a joy because of the company and the food prepared with special care by their

cook. After supper they sat around for a short time telling stories while drinking a little rice wine. Father Joseph went to bed early since the next day he would set out for his new assignment, which he had received by mail from Father Anzer.

Father Anzer had recently visited the far eastern part of their vast territory and had seen the possibility of doing fruitful missionary work there. Thus Father Joseph and his catechist set out following a one wheel cart pulled by an ox. A hired man led the ox. On the cart were the Mass supplies, bedding, cooking utensils, and so forth. On the way they met no Christian and saw no chapel. Each night the travelers tried to find an inn, where they could eat and sleep, as well as have the ox fed and watered. Finally on the tenth day they arrived at Ishui, a city in the Prefecture of Ichowfu. South Shantung consisted of three prefectures, namely Yenchowfu, Tsaochowfu, and Ichowfu.

Father Joseph chose the city of Ishui as a center from which to work out to the surrounding towns and villages. After renting a house, a hut, he offered Holy Mass in it for the conversion of the people of that city and of the whole Prefecture of Ichowfu. He met the mandarin and other city officials, also the catechumens enrolled by Father Anzer. Then he bought a horse for carrying his Mass kit, beddings, and few other necessary items and set out for the next town. He would offer Mass with his catechist in an inn or rented house. It took a month to visit the towns and villages in the area. Then for a week while he stayed at the main station, he gathered the catechumens for morning prayers and Holy Mass and again for evening prayers and instructions. The children received instructions during the day.

The next round of visiting the people in the towns and villages took Fu Shenfu east and the third round took him south. In one town the mandarin chose to be an enemy of Fu Shenfu and the Catholic Church. He declared openly: "Either the Christians or I go."

For Easter, Father Joseph journeyed back to the main station of Puoli. He wanted to make his Confession, report to Father Anzer, and talk things over regarding the mission work. He needed to be with fellow missionaries again for awhile. There in Puoli, he helped prepare the catechumens there for their baptism on Holy Saturday. He took time for personal prayer. It was a chance for him to read his mail from home and to answer letters. In a letter to Father Arnold, he asked permission to renew the vow of obedience which he had made before setting out for the mission of China. Father Arnold wrote back that it would be better for him to wait until the constitution came with the three vows explained.

Fu Shenfu went back to Ishui after Easter. Like the people, Fu Shenfu lived in a one room house when in Ishui. He usually had to go out and walk in a field or on a path less used to pray his divine office, for people kept coming and going. Through the grace of God the number of catechumens doubled over the next five months.

An interesting incident happened at this time. A village representative came to Fu Shenfu with a request and a promise. He said : "Seventy of us are falsely accused of stealing wood. If you plead our case with the mandarin, we will become Christians." Fu Shenfu went to the mandarin and pleaded their case. The mandarin did not punish them. Later when the mandarin found out that they really did steal the wood, he let his anger out on Fu Shenfu. The wood stealers,

however, kept their promise to become catechumens and persevered.

The number of catechumens now reached 400. None had as yet received baptism, for Father Freinademetz insisted on at least six months of instruction and testing before baptizing anyone. He and Father Anzer had worked out this policy.

Father Anzer sent Father Joseph a message that he should come again to the main station at Puoli for a short time. The rainy season had set in, making traveling very difficult. Rivers had become swollen and fields flooded. Since there were few or no bridges, the rivers had to be crossed by raft, ferry, or boat.

His desire to visit a community of Catholics on the way almost cost him and his catechist their lives. This is what happened. By tying their horses to the back of the boat and letting them swim behind, they got the horses also to the other side. Having reached the other bank, they got out of the boat and untied the ropes of the horses from the boat and let them scramble up the bank. Then they mounted again and continued on their journey. On the way, all of sudden, Fu Shenfu's horse fell into an unseen deep water hole. With reflect action Father caught a branch of a tree just above him and hung on allowing the horse to swim to solid ground. His catechist had fallen off his horse into the water too and was drowning. Providentially the villagers nearby ran up and saved the catechist. Then they helped Father still clinging to the branch, to get to solid ground. When his horse fell into the hole, Father had been praying his divine office. He had grabbed a branch and let the book go. He thought he had lost his book of prayer, which would have been a great loss for him. His Guardian Angel, however, had been alert, for Father found the book in the wide sleeve of his jacket. His sorrow over the supposed loss turned to joy over finding it.

Both Father Joseph and his catechist were wet, cold, and shivering. The good villagers lent them clothes to wear until their own dried near the fire. There they providentially met a baptized Catholic from Peking, who had not seen a priest for fifteen years. He could now confess his sins, participate in Holy Mass and receive Holy Communion after fifteen years.

Back in Ishui after a short stay at Puoli, the Lord kept blessing the work of Fu Shenfu and his catechist. The catechumens soon increased from 400 to 1,000. Because these catechumens lived in fifty different villages, it took Fu Shenfu and his catechist now two months to visit them all. Fu Shenfu treasured this mission work of traveling, proclaiming the good news of Jesus, instructing the catechumens, and especially of offering the holy Sacrifice of the Mass in their midst and for them. He rejoiced that he was a real missionary doing real pioneer mission work. He dressed as a Chinese and ate Chinese food, usually muomuo, that is steamed bread, with doufu, a tasteless cheese made of soybeans.

Soon Fu Shenfu had to employ more catechists. When people applied for becoming Christians, he would send a catechist ahead to the community to study the conditions. If conditions seemed favorable, he would visit the people and leave a catechist with them.

His most valuable catechist over the years was Wang, who had a good education, having studied for ten years. He had been a Taoist monk. Through the help of the missionaries in Manchuria, he

received the gift of faith and became a Catholic. He had an explosive temper, though; that was his main fault. He knew, however, how to deal with authorities, for he had learned the customary ceremonies and the practice of diplomacy. Father employed him not only as a catechist for the people but also as his secretary and adviser.

Mission work was not easy. Such was the situation in the mission that in one district the mandarin would show favor to Father, his catechists, and the catechumens while in another the mandarin hated foreigners, including missionaries, and likewise catechists and catechumens.

Father von Anzer dressed as a mandarin when he visited a mandarin. This was accepted by Chinese authorities; missionaries held the rank of mandarin. Fu Shenfu, however could not bring himself to parade as a mandarin. He dressed as an ordinary Chinese, even when visiting a mandarin, but tried to be polite and practice Christian charity.

#### **Administrator** (middle of 1884 - middle of 1886)

Father Arnold Janssen, invited Father Anzer to attend an important meeting at the mother house at Steyl, Holland, to produce a constitution for the members of the mission seminary and the missionaries in China. Father Arnold had consulted the members at home and in China and they were in favor of having a constitution with the three vows spelled out. Father Arnold wrote to Father Freinademetz to take the place of Father Anzer as superior of the mission during the absence of the latter. Father Founder also wrote to the missionaries to show Father Freinademetz respect and obedience during the absence of Father Anzer.

Before leaving the Ishui mission, Fu Shenfu introduced Father Buecker, his replacement, to the main officials, the catechists, and catechumens, plus to the mission work. A kind of humorous, although embarrassing incident, occurred when Father Joseph introduced the new missionary to the mandarin. The experienced missionary had taken pains to instruct the new one how to bow when introduced and had practiced with him. When Father Buecker did not bow at the proper moment, Father Joseph poked him in the ribs with his elbow. So quickly did Father Buecker react that he and mandarin bumped heads.

Having turned over the flock to the new missionary, Father Joseph set out for Puoli, the seat of the administration. What did the administration involve? He had to take care of the Christians in Puoli and surrounding area; the minor seminarians; the orphans, boys and girls, in two separate orphanages; the Brothers, and the employees in the kitchen, workshop and printing press; and besides he had to supervise all that went on. He had to prepare a class of catechumens for baptism and was supposed to start a school for training catechists. The food was poor and money scarce. The missionaries would also come with their problems, spiritual and financial. Persecution of Christians and missionaries kept on in certain parts of the mission. Court cases would be referred to him. He experienced great joy though when Christians and even catechumens persevered in spite of persecution. He wrote in a letter, "The Chinese actually stand at the peak of the nations. What they lack is Christianity."

Upon opening the catechist school, Fu Shenfu had to do most of the teaching until others could

gradually take over. Wang, the catechist, again proved very valuable as a teacher. The new missionaries studying Chinese at the main station could not help much because their Chinese was not yet good enough to teach the student catechists. In regard to the student catechists, the missionaries had sent their beginner catechists to the school. Fu Shenfu had also included a couple of the older orphans with a good conduct record; these showed themselves eager to study and become catechists.

The desire and need to visit the missionaries and their people grew in Fu Shenfu. As soon as he had gotten things so organized that the station in Puoli could function for awhile without him, he set out. On the Solemnity of St. Joseph, March 19, 1885, in one of the stations, where the missionary had prepared the catechumens sufficiently, he baptized 49 catechumens. What a joy! He went on to Ishui where he had been working. There he baptized 125 catechumens, whom his successor had continued to instruct. Fu Shenfu had the privilege of baptizing these first fruits of their missionary efforts in South Shantung. He told the missionaries that from then on they themselves should baptize those found ready, that is, those who had learned their prayers, the catechism, and who showed promise of persevering as Catholics.

Upon his return to headquarters, Father Joseph opened a letter from Father Arnold mentioning the possibility of recalling him to Europe to be the rector of the new mission seminary to be opened in Austria. Fu Shenfu was very upset, for he wanted nothing more than to remain a missionary to the Chinese in China. He wrote in answer that he would consider being recalled to Europe as a punishment for not being a good missionary. Father Arnold respected the wishes of Father Joseph and allowed him to continue his good work in China.

A lady catechist told of an incident which happened when she was a girl about ten years old. Her father had invited Fu Shenfu to come to their village. In the evening Fu Shenfu heard the people's confession but he noticed that John Li had failed to come. Upon inquiry he learned that John had given up being a Christian. The lady catechist continues her story:

Fu Shenfu seemed terribly grieved and said: "Once a Catholic, always a Catholic." He asked me and other children to guide him to John Li's house. John was already in bed. Fu Shenfu called out: "John, come to the chapel and make your confession." John replied, "Please don't bother about me. I don't want to be a Catholic anymore." Fu Shenfu said to the children, "Little ones, let us kneel down and pray the rosary for this man." We prayed the joyful mysteries. Again the invitation to John. Again the refusal. We prayed the sorrowful mysteries. Again the invitation. Again the refusal. We began praying the glorious mysteries. Before we could finish the second decade, John surrendered, went to the chapel with Fu Shenfu, made his confession, and remained a good Catholic the rest of his life.

Father Arnold sent five new missionaries. Father Joseph traveled five hours to meet and welcome them. Back in Puoli a telegram awaited Father Joseph: "Anzer, Bishop." Father Joseph communicated the good news to the missionaries. He sent his congratulations to the new bishop and asked him to return soon.

The Bishop brought with him copies of the constitution, which had been worked out. Father Arnold permitted Father Joseph to make his perpetual vows according to this constitution.

Father Joseph was fifth to make his perpetual vows; before him were the four who had drafted the constitution, namely, Father Arnold Janssen, Father Anzer (now bishop), Father Wegener, and Father John Janssen, the brother of Father Arnold.

### **August 1886 – March 1888** **Traveling Missionary Again - South**

The Bishop assigned Father Joseph to the south, a beautiful area with some fifty villages. An interesting incident occurred there, which took Fu Shenfu far south to the boundary of South Shantung. The people of a certain village belonged to a sect. A few of sect members began to realize that the sect was a false religion. They wanted the truth. They spent evenings praying to the spirits to lead them to the truth. In a trance the leader heard the instruction: "Go northeast and you will find what you are looking for." The leader and few companions traveled until they found catechumens who told them about the Lord of Heaven and Jesus Christ. With the encouragement of Fu Shenfu, a catechist went with them. Father Joseph after consulting the Bishop, since the village was outside of his assigned territory, went to the former sect members, now catechumens and instructed them further. He marveled at the wonderful workings of the Holy Spirit.

Father Joseph suffered from the changing moods of the Bishop. The Bishop could treat him as his best friend and in a change of mood as his worst enemy. In one of his good moods, the Bishop asked Father Joseph to compose some prayers to the Holy Spirit, which task Father Joseph gladly performed. He composed prayers in Chinese for the Chinese.

Fu Shenfu carried a heavy cross of the persecution of some missionaries, their catechists, Christians, and catechumens. He had to go through hated court cases to obtain the rights of the Christians. One ray of sunshine penetrated the dark clouds, namely, he found some boys who wanted to become priests. These he sent to Puoli.

The Bishop grew angry with Father Joseph, who tried to mediate between some missionaries and the Bishop. After his anger cooled down, the Bishop requested Father Joseph to compose a book of rules for catechists and another for Catholic lay leaders, and then to write the report about the mission required by the Church authorities in Rome.

These tasks finished, Father Joseph went to the station to which the Bishop had assigned him. There he opened a school during the winter months. Twenty children came. Fu Shenfu built a chapel there big enough for 200 persons. Through his efforts and those of two zealous catechists, in a period of time Fu Shenfu had 1,000 catechumens spread over thirty villages.

Then came trouble. A village chief, named Hou, became a catechumen. He soon interested ten other families. Neighboring villages also became interested in the religion of the Lord of Heaven. The mandarin of the district capital had Hou arrested. The family of Hou sent a message to Fu Shenfu thirty miles away. Since Fu Shenfu could not leave immediately, he sent a catechist ahead with his card to arrange a meeting with the mandarin. The clever evil-intentioned mandarin moved the trial ahead to be held before Fu Shenfu arrived. Upon arrival, Fu Shenfu

learned that Hou was charged with hiding a secret sect. He had received 600 lashes on his body and 100 punches in the face. Fu Shenfu got the mandarin to promise to release Hou. The mandarin released Hou but immediately had him arrested again. Then a mob attacked the catechist and the teacher, companions of Fu Shenfu, and then Fu Shenfu himself, in the inn where they were staying. Some pulled out his hair and others twisted his arms. The victims were then dragged out into the courtyard of the inn and thrown to the ground. Someone took a handful of filth from the public toilet and lathered Shenfu's face with it. They pulled him along the main street and through the main gate out of the city. Noting one of his companions nearby, Fu Shenfu told him to make an act of contrition and gave him absolution. Fu Shenfu offered himself to the Suffering Savior for the mission and prayed for strength. About a mile out of town, Fu Shenfu was flung to the ground and would have been beaten more, had not the leader cried: "Enough." From his position on the ground, Fu Shenfu addressed the mob, "This is the first time we meet. I never harmed you and yet this is your welcome. I do not hate you. The religion I preach, you do not know; otherwise you would be as enthusiastic for it as you are now against it." It seemed some listened and were touched, for one by one they left until only he and his two companions were left alone.

They looked at each other and saw the torn clothing, swollen and bloody faces smeared with mud and manure, hatless heads and bare feet. What did they do? They began to laugh, for the others looked so funny. These men of God had not lost their sense of humor. They found some water and washed off some of the dirt from their face and clothes. Their driver arrived with the cart. The upper part was partly destroyed. Their money and most of their belongings were gone. Of their Mass equipment only the chalice remained. They left the village and wandered through the night losing their way more than once and arrived at dawn in another village where the Christians had gathered for morning prayers.

They joined in the morning prayers. Afterwards the poor but generous Christians fed them and gave them some decent clothing. The village carpenter and blacksmith did what they could to repair the cart.

The news of the attack spread quickly, and the Christians of the area feared a persecution. Father Joseph reported the incident to the Bishop and urged him to go the higher officials lest the enemies become more bold and destroy the work of the missionaries.

Sometime later, Fu Shenfu went to the main station of Puoli to spend the Holy Week and Easter there. After Easter, the Bishop assigned to him an assistant priest. The two started back to Fu Shenfu's mission on the "martyrs' wagon," as it was now called. (The wagon had been also half destroyed previously when used by the Father Anzer.) The two stopped at an inn for the night. Fu Shenfu used the opportunity to proclaim the good news to the people gathered in the inn that evening.

Since there was no provision for an assistant priest at the station, Father Joseph gave his room to the young priest while he himself slept in the chapel. The two priests celebrated Pentecost in a solemn manner. Fu Shenfu formed and trained a choir and practiced with the members. He let the new priest be the celebrant of the Mass while he himself directed the choir and sang.

About this time, Fu Shenfu suffered one of his greatest disappointments. A catechist began taking on legal cases for a high fee and engaged in selling opium. Since he had a pleasing personality, he won people to himself. Fu Shenfu had no choice but to dismiss him. This former catechist in revenge turned four communities against Fu Shenfu.

**Administrator for 2<sup>nd</sup> time**  
**August 1890 - June 1891**

The Bishop summoned Father Joseph to Puoli. Although it was raining almost continuously and the roads and paths were flooded, Father Joseph in obedience set out as soon as possible by horse sloshing through mud and water. At times he had to walk and lead the horse. In his prudence he paid some boys of the locality to go ahead and discover with their bamboo poles the deep holes. One night he arrived at an inn at midnight. There was a place to lie down but no food. He had probably not eaten all day. It took him three days to reach Puoli. His shoes had given out. Barefoot, he immediately on arrival reported to the Bishop.

The Bishop set out for Europe for a second meeting of the officials of the Society to revise the Constitution and to take up other important matters. Father Joseph was again in charge of the China mission. The statistics he compiled for the meeting were these:

18	Priests - 16 European & 2 Chinese
5	Brothers
100	Catechists
1,200	Children in 54 small schools
300	Orphans
2,700	Baptized Catholics
8,000	Catechumens

Fu Shenfu rejoiced over the progress of the mission, brought about by the grace of God and work of the missionaries. The Bishop had called all the missionaries together at the main station before he left. To these Father Joseph had given several spiritual conferences before they returned to their mission stations. Then he had fallen sick with malaria. Having recovered, he entrusted the care of the main station to one of the missionaries while he headed south to give a week-long retreat to a group of the new Christians. The schedule included three talks a day, besides morning and evening prayers plus a devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. In his talks he concentrated on the Sacrament of Confession since this group of newly baptized had not yet been admitted to the reception of Holy Communion. After the preparation, he heard the confessions of the 140 retreatants. Then after giving several other retreats in other stations, he returned to Puoli.

The Bishop had arranged while in Germany the transfer of the South Shantung mission to the German protectorate. The missionaries were given German passports in place of their French passports. Father Joseph received notice that the German consul was coming to solve some of the problems in the mission, especially regarding hostile mandarins.

The consul with Father Joseph went to Yenchowfu, the birthplace of Confucius, and the headquarters of the scholars of Confucius. They stayed at an inn; so far no missionary had been able to stay in the city. Realizing the situation, the Chinese officials sent soldiers to guard the inn. A mob of some 10,000 people gathered at the gate of the courtyard of the inn and were ready to attack. The soldiers and officials, it seems, were not exactly opposed to the mob. The sub-prefect was carried in a litter into the courtyard. The consul, a brave fellow, went out into middle of the courtyard to meet the sub-prefect. As the leaders of the mob kept pounding on the gate, the consul with drawn revolver shouted: "I will shoot the first six attackers, then die. You will then have to deal with the German government!" The mob leader, it seems, got a signal from the sub-prefect, who realized the consequence of violence.

Father Joseph stayed four days in Yenchowfu and studied the situation. He offered Mass each day in the inn. He learned that the people did not resent the missionaries, but the scholars of Confucius did. Back in Puoli he wrote to the Bishop: "The Bishop has to exert pressure through the German consul on the Chinese officials in Peking and on the officials in Yenchowfu to let the missionaries open a mission in the city."

Fu Shenfu headed south again to help his former assistant to prepare 500 new catechumens for baptism. He was glad to help. In another town, the missionary had built a church. Fu Shenfu, as head of the mission, was invited to bless it. For the blessing they were three priests. Besides the Christians a very large crowd of non-Christians had come. At first Fu Shenfu rejoiced but when he noticed that the crowd had turned hostile, he feared that they would destroy the church. One of the missionaries suggested that each of them go through the crowd in a different direction. In doing so, they risked martyrdom. The crowd, however, allowed them to pass unmolested. People followed after each of the priests. Thus the crowd was divided into three groups. Each missionary preached to his group for about three hours. Surprisingly people listened and then began to leave in small parties. Thus the church was saved.

In his next report to Father Superior General, Arnold Janssen, and to the authorities in Rome, Father Joseph could mention that the schools had increased from 54 to 112 and that the Holy Childhood Association helped maintain two orphanages.

### **In Tsining and Environs (end of '91- middle of '94)**

When Bishop returned in June, 1891, he assigned Father Joseph to Tsining, where he intended to transfer his residence, the seminary, and the catechist school. Tsining was the largest city of South Shantung. Fu Shenfu went there and, after visiting the chief mandarins, bought two acres of property with some houses on it. He received the seminarians and the students of the catechist school. After they got settled, the Bishop requested Father Joseph to make an official visitation in his stead of an area in the south of the mission.

Fu Shenfu remained eight weeks in the south. In several mission stations, he conducted the examination of the catechumens presented by the missionary for baptism. This he did as thoroughly as possible. They had to know their catechism. Then he gave them a spiritual recollection, at the end of which the catechumens received baptism. On the day of the baptism,

Fu Shenfu, the missionary in charge of the station, and the newly baptized rejoiced greatly.

In his report to the Bishop, he mentioned that more missionaries were needed, one for each of the main stations since in some places the missionary had to travel for seven hours to his next big station. Secondly, financial help was needed to send poor but good candidates to the catechist school.

Father Joseph was back in Tsining for Holy Week. With the missionaries there he celebrated Holy Week solemnly. Then the Bishop scheduled a retreat for the missionaries in preparation for Pentecost, at the end of which they renewed their consecration to the Holy Spirit. Father Joseph very much appreciated this opportunity for a retreat. Then the Bishop placed Father Joseph in charge of preparing for a meeting of all the missionaries of South Shantung.

At the meeting, Father Joseph advocated the development of an elementary school system in the mission. Beside teaching religion, he favored the study of Chinese literature for the intellectual formation of the pupils. He stressed character formation too. From these schools Father Joseph argued could come future seminarians and catechists.

The Bishop had given Father Joseph an assistant priest in Tsining in the person of Hsia Shenfu, whom Fu Shenfu had known already as a seminarian. Hsia would have liked to be a member of the Society of the Divine Word, but the Society wanted to build up the local clergy and therefore did not accept the Chinese priests as members at that time. Hsia did good work in the country side while not neglecting the city folk. In December, the Bishop requested Father Joseph to take his place in being the official visitator of five districts to the north and to the west. Going from station to station, visiting the missionaries and talking with them, meeting the catechists, Christians, and catechumens; Father Joseph did his best to encourage, correct, advise, as needed. During his visitation he noticed two extremes in the methods used by some of the missionaries, that is, either to stay a long time in one station or to rush hastily from one station to another. The ideal, which he proposed, was to spend about four days in a station and then move on to the next. In his report to the Bishop, he also mentioned that the missionary should form leaders from among the people so that even if neither the missionary nor the catechist were present the people would gather for prayer.

### **Director of the Catechist Courses (1893 & 1894)**

Another priest had conducted the first course for catechists in Tsining, but then the Bishop requested Father Joseph to organize the next course and see to it that a course be given each year. Father Joseph wrote to the district superiors to send their candidates for a 5-6 month course. The course eventually had fifty participants. Fu Shenfu had a hard time providing accommodations and food for all of them. In the beginning the burden of teaching fell mostly on Fu Shenfu. He would have from 2-4 hours of classes a day. Some better formed catechists helped fill in the other hours with meaningful activities. He wrote in a letter: "In my fifteen years in China, I have never been so overloaded with work." He encouraged himself by the thought that through these future catechists he would be reaching thousands of people. He stressed in the formation of the catechists that they develop a devotion to the Holy Spirit who would teach through them and

would enable their listeners to understand their teaching.

It is interesting to note that Fu Shenfu arranged the novel Fabiola of Cardinal Wiseman into the form of a drama and translated it into Chinese. The student catechists enjoyed presenting the drama, and large audiences attended their presentation.

When the catechists assisting Fu Shenfu with the catechist school showed themselves capable of conducting the course, he absented himself about half of the time to do what he considered real mission work, that is, proclaiming the gospel to non-Christians, bringing them to faith, preparing them for Baptism, for Confession, and for Holy Communion.

In a certain area lived seventy families of catechumens. An old man, a Catholic, had emigrated from North Shantung and had sown the seed of the faith. The mandarin, however, opposed the Catholic religion. Hostility grew between the non-Christians and the Christians. The former burned the chapel and beat up the catechumens. Twenty-two were injured seriously, seven of whom eventually died. Fu Shenfu declared them martyrs. Fu Shenfu could not allow the Christians and catechumens to suffer and die because of prejudice and hatred. The matter went to the Bishop who referred it to the German consul. In the meantime many of these catechumens fled to Fu Shenfu in Tsining. He received these refugees as his children and with the help of St. Joseph provided for them. After six months the Christians were assured of their rights by the authorities and could return home.

Father Limbrock was sent to Europe to collect money for the mission. While there, he had the courage to report the Bishop's faults to the assistant of Father Superior General. These faults were hindering the work of the mission, for example, his drinking, his outbursts of temper, scolding the missionaries in public; his interest in the number of converts rather than the quality of their faith and religious practice; and his inclination to show off by parading as a great mandarin.

Upon receiving a correction, the Bishop asked Father Joseph to defend him. Father Joseph, however, told the Bishop he could not defend him since the accusations were true. The Bishop got angry and stripped Father Joseph of all authority. The downcast spirits of Father Joseph revived, however, when a letter arrived from Father Superior General, Arnold Janssen. In the letter he asked Father Joseph to prepare for perpetual vows the eight missionaries who had come to China after him and Father Anzer. Father Joseph immediately wrote to each of them and suggested some concrete ways of preparing themselves for this important step in their life. Then they were to come together for a retreat before August 28, the date set for pronouncing their perpetual vows. Father Joseph in the meantime prepared meditations and conferences which he would give during the retreat. The Bishop could not interfere since the order had come from the Superior General.

The Bishop assigned Father Joseph to the eastern end of the mission. Fu Shenfu did not mind his exile but rather welcomed it, for he could follow up on what he had begun ten years earlier. When the accusations against the Bishop reached the authorities in Rome and he was asked to answer some questions, he made the long trip to beg Father Joseph to defend him and put in a good word for him with the Church authorities in Rome. Father Joseph thought that the Bishop

was repentant and hoped that he would change for the better; so he wrote to the Church authorities in Rome and mentioned some of the good characteristics of the Bishop.

The Bishop then appointed Father Joseph as rector of the seminary. There were nine major seminarians. Being rector meant doing all the teaching and giving all the spiritual conferences. He prepared those about to be ordained priests by explaining the Holy Mass in detail. These conferences were later collected and published as very inspiring book entitled The Most Holy Sacrifice of the New Covenant.

When Father Joseph received material help from those back home in Europe, he wrote a letter of thanks. To one lady who sent him a beautiful vestment, he wrote that like St. Martin, who clothed a beggar, she clothed him with a beautiful vestment for the Mass on Sundays and Feast Days.

### **Administrator the Third Time (August 1897 - May 1898)**

When the Bishop went to Europe for the third General Chapter (meeting), Father Joseph was again in charge of the mission. From the headquarters in Tsining he made frequent trips to Yenchowfu some six hours away where the seminarians studying philosophy now stayed and where construction was in progress.

On the morning of All Saints Day, a note arrived from Father Stenz: "Fathers Nies and Henle murdered!" Immediately Father Joseph rushed to the scene. Seeing the bodies of the two missionaries, who were like brothers to him, tears filled his eyes. Father Nies had fifteen stab wounds and Father Henle nine. Father Joseph demanded that a thorough investigation of the murders be made. He had the bodies placed in coffins and sent to Taika, where the Society had purchased property for a cemetery.

What had happened? The organization of Big Knives, also called the Boxers, violently opposed to foreigners, had attack the mission around 11:00 P.M. Father Stenz had given his room to the two visiting missionaries and was sleeping in the porter's house. Hearing the shouting and gunfire, he rushed over to see what happened. He anointed the two priests, one seemingly dead and the other dying.

Father Joseph sent two telegrams, one to Father Arnold and the other to the German Ambassador in Peking. The burial took place only after two weeks when the missionaries, twenty of them, had gathered.

Upon the urging of the missionaries, Father Joseph set out for Peking to see the German Ambassador. Upon arrival he learned that the German government had ordered its Far East Fleet to occupy Tsingtao, an ideal harbor and naval base. Although not approving what the German government had done, Father Joseph accepted the situation as it was. He set out therefore for Tsingtao. While there he offered a Mass for the German soldiers, which was well attended. He also negotiated with the German officials to buy some property in Tsingtao.

Meanwhile, the Bishop, still in Germany, worked for the annexation of Tsingtao and the territory between Tsingtao and South Shantung to the South Shantung mission. This new territory would mean more work for the missionaries but also the chance to preach the Good News to more non-Christians.



**FU SHENFU**

### **Opening up of the new Territories in the East (end of 1898 - end of 1899)**

About this time, Father Joseph fell seriously sick. His larynx was so inflamed that he could hardly speak. Then too he began spitting blood. He made a retreat and then consulted a doctor. The doctor gave him six months to live. The Bishop, being back and hearing of the physical condition of Father Joseph, sent him to Japan for a rest. He rested for almost month and then returned to South Shantung. The Bishop assigned Father Joseph to the newly annexed territory.

There were very few Catholics in the new territory. The people resented the German occupation. They beat Father Stenz and a catechist bloody. They robbed the few Christians and killed four of them. The other Christians took refuge in the mission.

When conditions had settled down, Fu Shenfu continued going from station to station throughout the new territory. Four Chinese, so called sages, formed a militia to wipe out the Church. They went from village to village to force Christians to renounce their faith. Those who refused were driven from their homes and no one was allowed to shelter them. On Monday of Holy Week, March 27, Fu Shenfu, on his way to see the mandarin, stopped at the home of a Christian. Soon a crowd of some 200 men gathered around the house. The mob leader ordered Fu Shenfu to get out of their village. Not to cause the Christians trouble, Fu Shenfu left. About 80 men on horseback pursued him. How he wished he had a fast horse. They caught up with him and beat him up.

Soon after this time, two instructors of the Big Knives arrived. They conducted an intense

drilling of recruits. Conditions grew more difficult for the missionaries and their Christians.



Shandong is another translation of the Chinese characters for Shantung.

#### **Administrator of the Mission during the Jubilee Year (1900)**

Steyl during this time was preparing for the Silver Jubilee of St. Michael Mission Seminary (1875 - 1900). Father Arnold invited Father Joseph, who graciously declined the invitation. He could not leave his flock in time of persecution. The Bishop, however, left for Europe to see officials of the German government and to participate in the Silver Jubilee celebrations.

The statistics which Father Joseph sent on request to the mother house in Steyl, Holland, were as follows:

35	European priests
11	Chinese priests
9	SVD Brothers
370	Men catechists
90	Women catechists
15,000	Baptized Christians
37,000	Catechumens.

In Germany the Bishop sought reparation for the missionaries, that is, for loss of life and damage to property. He succeeded in receiving some compensation. He could get nothing though, either from the German government or the Chinese government, for the relatives of martyred Christians and catechumens.

News arrived that the Big Knives had occupied Peking, They aimed to kill all foreigners. The governor of Shantung wrote to Father Freinademetz that all missionaries should go to port cities, for he could not protect them. The missionaries gathered in Tsining. The governor provided an armed escort for the missionaries, thus forcing them to leave.

After about fifteen miles, the soldiers called for a rest. Father Joseph talked with his missionaries: "I will never have peace of conscience if, as superior of the mission, I abandon it. Yet I cannot let the lives of the missionaries be endangered." They agreed not to oppose his staying. Father Joseph invited Brother Ulrich to join him in the last cart. When the escort of about 30 soldiers took the lead and started out again, Father Joseph and Brother Ulrich turned around and headed for Puoli.

In Puoli the situation was tense and in much disorder. Almost a thousand refugees had crowded into the mission's not large compound. What a situation with a thousand people crowded together with nothing to do and every moment fearing an attack! The four Chinese priests and the Christians rejoiced at the return of Fu Shenfu. Having consulted with the priests and with their help, Fu Shenfu tried to restore order by organizing activities. Thus the camp had a whole day of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, another day devoted to the Holy Rosary, and a third day spent in making the Way of the Cross. The five priests during these days heard the peoples' confessions, they prepared and baptized 150 catechumens, and through inspirational talks readied the people for possible martyrdom.

The mandarin of Puoli kept threatening the refugees to leave or he would send in his troops. The refugees determined to defend themselves. As the mandarin became more threatening, it became clear that it would be best for Father Freinademetz and Brother Ulrich to leave because if it became known that two foreigners were there, the mandarin would have an excuse to attack.

They left there for an area where the mandarin was favorable to the missionaries and where the missionaries had not evacuated. They arrived after three and a half days. They had passed through bandit and Big Knife territory. Once they had been followed by a band of Big Knives. How their hearts had pounded and they perspired! They had asked our Blessed Mother's special protection by fervently praying the rosary. Missionaries in other mission areas, they learned later, had been hacked to death by such bands of Big Knives.

Father Arnold, his Priests, Sisters, Brothers, and the seminarians in Europe were earnestly praying for the missionaries in China. While in the peaceful area, Fu Shenfu wrote to the missionaries, now safe in Tsingtao, to provide for the orphans on their way from Puoli, even to sell their horses, if necessary. While there in that safe territory, Father Joseph celebrated his Silver Jubilee as a priest. Father Joseph reflected on all the graces which God had given him during those twenty-five years as a priest and missionary.

### **Again in Puoli (Aug. 7 - Dec. 1900)**

Fu Shenfu had been waiting anxiously for news from Puoli. Finally a messenger arrived with bad news: "The orphans sent to Tsingtao had been robbed and had returned. The houses of the Christians in the vicinity of Puoli had been robbed and burned. Dissension had broken out in the camp." Fu Shenfu decided to return to Puoli in spite of the danger. Brother Ulrich again joined him.

The first night a friendly inn keeper welcomed them. But the troops in town heard of the presence of the two foreigners and were all too eager to carry out the imperial edict to kill all

foreigners. Warned by the owner of the inn, they escaped through the back door and went on foot so as not to draw attention. During the next night in another inn, a villain recognized them, reported them to the headman of the village, and repeatedly demanded that they be executed. About an hour after midnight, shouting broke out in the street: "Kill the foreign devils. Kill the foreign devils." They barely escaped with their lives. Luckily, they always dressed as Chinese; thus it was more difficult to recognize them as foreigners. The two missionaries plodded along for ten hours in the oppressive heat of the dog days of summer without food or drink. At long last they reached a Christian community, where the people offered them drink and food. Although their mouths felt like they were full of cotton, Fu Shenfu offered Holy Mass before drinking and eating. (In those days, a Catholic had to be fasting from food and drink since midnight before receiving Holy Communion.)

The Christians put a push cart at their disposal for the remainder of the journey. In it the two missionaries could sit or even lie down in a curled up position. Before passing through any village, the men pushing the cart covered the two with a mat. Upon arrival at Puoli the two missionaries expressed their gratitude for the ride.

In Puoli, they found that the number of refugees had increased to 1,200. To feed all those people proved a gigantic task since some non-Christians had taken over the farm and fields of the mission. Then a change took place. The soldiers of the mandarin no longer bothered the Christians. The mission got their fields back and the people sowed wheat. Fruits from the fruit trees belonging to the mission also helped to provide food.

Why the change in attitude of the mandarin? News came that foreign troops had seized some cities, as was learned later, and were marching toward Peking. Order was restored in the mission compound. The two opposing factions began working together. Brother Ulrich remarked later how surprised he was that the good and kind Father Joseph could act quite forcefully. To feed the people in the meantime until the harvest, Father Joseph appealed for help to the missionaries in Tsingtao and to merchants whom he knew in Tsining; both groups responded and sent cash and goods.

When the foreign troops occupied Peking, conditions slowly improved. Some Christians left the mission station and returned at least to their land, if their house no longer stood. Yet the danger from the Big Knives still continued in South Shantung, which was at a distance from Peking. In response to an appeal from Father Freinademetz, the governor sent 20 guns and 2,000 soldiers and 2,000 ounces of silver to help the Christians defend themselves in case of attack.

During this time, Li Shenfu, one of the Chinese priests, died. His death caused great grief to Fu Shenfu. Li Shenfu was a good priest from a family who had shown themselves heroes; for his father, mother, two sisters, and niece had suffered martyrdom.

The Bishop arrived in Tsingtao on October 15. His arrival brought relief to Father Joseph as well as a letter from Father Arnold. In the letter Father Arnold wrote: "You defied almost certain death to be with your oppressed Christians. You certainly believed that this was the special will of God and an extraordinary impulse of the Holy Spirit. That I am willing to admit. Therefore I congratulate you wholeheartedly on what you have done...."

## **Years as Provincial Superior (1900-1908)**

Father Arnold Janssen, superior general, appointed Father Joseph provincial superior, that is, he had to look after the religious life of the SVD missionaries and the interests of the Society. The Bishop was to continue caring for the administration of the mission, to look after the interests of the Church and the people. Anzer up to now had been both bishop and provincial. The combining of the two offices had not worked out well. For the office of provincial had been somewhat neglected. Father Arnold had written to Father Joseph: "I urge you in the name of holy obedience to accept this dignity. It is God's will; most assuredly He will assist you that good may result... Try to forget the unpleasant experiences you had with the Bishop over the years. He was an instrument in God's hands for your perfection... You enjoy the love and respect of your confreres and superiors...."

As provincial superior, Father Joseph set about establishing a central house where the missionaries could come for spiritual renewal as well as for rest and recreation. Father General and his council agreed that such a central house was needed and offered to pay for the purchase of a property for such a house.

In a conference during one of the first gatherings of a group of missionaries in Taika, the place where the central house had been built, Father Joseph explained the purpose of this central station, namely, for the physical buildup, brotherly unity, and spiritual renewal of the missionaries. He explained further: "We missionaries, in our individual stations, are surrounded and contaminated by the pagan atmosphere, we get tired and worn out by overwork, courage is lost then, and sadness sets in. Sadness kills many a man." Thus the missionaries needed once a year to re-create themselves.

Although neither Father Arnold nor Father Joseph took a yearly vacation or a weekly day off, they knew that not all were like them and that their men needed spiritual renewal, community life, rest and recreation to maintain a solid spiritual life with strong motivation for missionary work. Good physical and mental health can help a missionary maintain and make progress in his spiritual life and missionary work.

At the advice of Father Arnold, Father Joseph went to Shanghai to learn how the Jesuits managed the office of provincial. While there, he contacted an experienced Jesuit retreat master and invited him to come and give a retreat to missionaries of South Shantung. With the permission of his superiors the retreat master accepted. Father Joseph divided the missionaries into two groups, one for a retreat in July and the other in August. The retreats helped the missionaries revive their spiritual life.

From the time Father Joseph was appointed provincial, Father Arnold sent the missionaries directly to him and not to the Bishop. As Father Provincial, he had the task of arranging for their study of the Chinese language and of introducing these newcomers to the life and customs of the Chinese before presenting them to the Bishop for an assignment to an older experienced priest in a parish. Father Provincial had full responsibility for the Brothers in regard to their religious life and their work.

Over the years the conduct of the Bishop grew worse. For the good of the mission, the retreat master urged Father Provincial and his council to report him to Father General and to the Church authorities in Rome. The Bishop had friends in Rome to defend him. Finally, however, he received a summons to come to Rome to answer the accusations.

### **Administrator for the 5<sup>th</sup> Time (Oct. 1903 - Oct. 1904)**

On November 25, a telegram arrived from Rome: "Bishop Anzer died of a stroke." Immediately Father Joseph communicated the news by telegram to the other missionaries in South Shantung and followed up with a letter organizing the offering of Masses for the deceased head of the mission. "Credit," stated Father Joseph, "has to be given to the deceased Bishop for founding and governing the mission with dedication for twenty years."

During the time between Bishop Anzer's death and the appointment of a new bishop, prayers to the Holy Spirit were offered in South Shantung and in all the foundations of Father Arnold for the right man to be the new bishop.

Father Arnold and the missionaries had Father Joseph as their first choice and Father Heninghaus as their second choice in the voting for a new bishop. The latter, however, was appointed. Why? The German government had insisted that the new bishop be a German citizen. Father Joseph was an Austrian citizen. Father Joseph was happy with the appointment of Father Heninghaus since he was a good priest and would make a good bishop. The two of them would make a good team. On the advice of Father Arnold, Father Heninghaus received his episcopal ordination in Yenchoufu, China.

An historic event took place during the Chinese New Year celebrations in 1905 when Fu Shenfu was in charge of the mission. (The new Bishop must have gone to Europe for a short visit after his episcopal ordination.) Father Joseph wrote to Father Arnold, "The Holy One of China, the successor and descendant of Confucius, with the high officials of Yenchoufu, came to the mission for a festive banquet... With more prayers, missionaries, and money, the Chinese could be converted."

Shortly after the mission had a new bishop, Father Arnold wrote to Father Joseph: "Do you want Sisters?" "Yes," Father Joseph wrote back, "simple, humble ones, also an able superior." (Father Arnold Janssen, it must be noted, also founded two congregations of missionary Sisters, one active and one contemplative.) Father Arnold sent six Sisters to China to be in the care of Father Joseph. Seeing the good example and wonderful work of the Sisters, Father Joseph after a short time requested more. Father Arnold sent six more.

Father Joseph in cooperation with the Bishop built and opened a Chinese Middle School for the whole mission. From that school the Bishop and Fu Shenfu hoped to get a sufficient number of seminarians, catechists, and teachers for the mission.

As provincial superior, Fu Shenfu spent much of his time going around and visiting the missionaries and helping them. He could serve the people he realized by helping the

missionaries.

### **Administrator for the 6<sup>th</sup> Time (June 1907 - Jan. 1908)**

When the new Bishop made a trip to Europe, Father Joseph found himself in charge of the mission again. On one of his trips visiting the missionaries, his horse and wagon with him aboard fell into the river. After getting the horse and wagon out of the water, in spite of his wet clothes, he went on with his journey, only to suffer kidney and heart pains, which forced him to take to bed upon his arrival at the station. Likewise his legs became swollen. Having recovered from these ailments, he continued visiting the missionaries and their people. If a station to which he was traveling was well equipped and he did not have to take supplies with him, Fu Shenfu rode a horse and left the wagon behind. This proved quicker. But at times he could hardly stay on the horse because of physical weakness. But he managed somehow by the strength supplied by God and his own strong will power.

The missionaries had a pleasant interlude in their life on November 5, 1907. A number of them got together to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of their Founder, Father Arnold Janssen. They celebrated in China while the confreres and Sisters in Europe celebrated with Father Arnold in Steyl. In a letter wishing Father Arnold a happy birthday, Father Joseph expressed his sentiments, "No man except perhaps Don Bosco has done so much for the Church."

A typhus epidemic had broken out in the mission. Father Provincial ordered the schools to be closed and fumigated. Still the disease spread. The Sisters in Yenchoufu fell sick and two died. They had contracted the disease in ministering to those sick of typhus. Fu Shenfu likewise ministered to the sick, especially by hearing their confessions, bringing them Holy Communion, and giving them the holy anointing. He also saw to it that they were cared for in regard to their physical needs.

While conducting the final examinations of the catechists in the catechetical school at Tsining, Fu Shenfu felt the symptoms of typhus. In his talk to the catechists, he mentioned the great examination that all of us will have to face. After finishing the examinations he went to his room and locked the door, so miserable did he feel. Letters had to be written and reports made. So in his room, in spite of his weakness and wretched feeling, he worked on his reports and correspondence.

After Mass on Sunday, Brother Ulrich arrived from Taikia and took Father Joseph along back. News had reached him of Father's condition. Having been helped up into the cart by Brother Ulrich, Father Joseph pointed upward and thus signified that the next trip would be upward to heaven.

In Taikia, in a sealed letter to be opened after his death, Father Freinademetz appointed Father Vilsterman to take his place as provincial. He begged forgiveness of the confreres for any offense he may have given them. His concern still went out to the sick in Yenchoufu and he asked that they be given every possible attention. Father Joseph received Holy Communion if he felt too sick to offer Holy Mass. He went several times to confession. Thus spiritually fortified, he faced

death calmly and with courage. "How beautiful," he exclaimed, "to be a Catholic. I tried my best. God is merciful!"

Father Joseph Freinademetz, Fu Shenfu, died on January 28, 1908. He was fifty-six years old. Echoing the feeling of all, a Christian remarked, "I feel as if I lost my father and mother." Father Superior General, Arnold Janssen, wrote to Bishop Henninghaus: "Now he will be our heavenly intercessor at the throne of the Almighty."

**MAY THE DARKNESS OF SIN  
AND THE NIGHT OF UNBELIEF  
VANISH BEFORE THE LIGHT OF THE WORD  
AND THE SPIRIT OF GRACE.  
AND MAY THE HEART OF JESUS  
LIVE IN EVERY HEART! AMEN.**

(A prayer motto given by St. Arnold to his missionaries.)

# CO-FOUNDRESSES

**(Mother Maria, Mother Josepha, Mother Mary Michael)**

Introduction: *In* carrying our God's plan, Father Arnold Janssen founded not only a missionary society of men but also two missionary congregations of women. In founding the two congregations of Sisters Father Arnold Janssen had the best co-foundresses that a Founder could have.

The story of his founding of the two congregations of Sisters goes like this. Father Arnold was convinced by Bishop Comboni, an Italian missionary in central Africa, that the missions needed Sisters. Thus in the next issue of his magazine, the "Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart," Father wrote about this need of Sisters in the missions, especially to work with the women and girls.

Although he wrote about the need of Sisters in the mission, the idea of himself founding such a missionary congregation of Sisters never entered his mind.

## Helena

In the year 1882, however, seven years after founding the mission seminary for training young men to be missionaries, Father Arnold received a letter from a young lady begging him to help her become a missionary to China. She wrote that she had heard that he founded a missionary seminary for men and was sending missionaries to China. She explained that she had been searching for a congregation of missionary Sisters in Germany but found none.

In response to her letter, he invited her to visit him in Steyl, Holland, where the mission seminary was located. She came with her parents. Father Arnold talked with her privately and became convinced that she showed positive signs of having a missionary vocation.

The young lady's name was Helena Stollenwerk. She was born in 1852, fifteen years after Father Arnold. Her father had been a widower with a number of children from his then deceased wife. Her mother was a young lady when she married her father.

As a child, Helena joined the Holy Childhood Association. She contributed her monthly dues. Twice she was chosen to name the Chinese orphan baby for whom she and her companions sent money to China. She eagerly read the publication of the Association, which contained accounts of missionaries and their people. She wanted to be a missionary to the Chinese people.

As a young girl she pastured her father's cows. When she was older, she worked in the inn of her father. If two men quarreled, she calmed them down. Several young men tried to court her; but to keep herself ready for being a missionary to China, she made with the consent of her confessor a private vow of chastity.

When she told her confessor that she felt that God called her to become a missionary to the Chinese people, her confessor said that she should forget about China and forbade her to read the accounts about missionaries and their experiences. She obeyed for ten years.

Then she began to look for a missionary congregation of Sisters in Germany but found none. She had heard, as mentioned, that Father Arnold Janssen had founded a mission seminary and was sending missionaries to China. Such was her story until her interview. As in her letter, she asked him to help her become a missionary to the Chinese people.

Father Arnold told Helena frankly that he did not know if God wanted him to found a congregation of missionary Sisters and that he would pray to discern God's will in this matter. In the meantime, all he could offer her was to be a maid in the kitchen of the mission house where the Sisters of Divine Providence did the cooking for the priests, Brothers, and seminarians. He also informed her that another maid was already helping the Sisters. Helena saw in this offer of Father Arnold to become a maid as a first step to becoming a missionary Sister. Her parents, however, were not pleased with the idea of Helena becoming a maid. When she returned home and told her confessor about becoming a maid, he opposed the idea. Her confessor wrote to Father Arnold that Helena had the vocation to be a religious Sister, not a maid. Father Arnold answered the letter of her confessor and explained that it would be dishonest of him to promise something he was not certain of. He was not certain that God wanted him to found a congregation of missionary Sisters. He explained further that Helena was free to join any religious community of Sisters but if she wanted only the mission seminary she would have another maid as her companion. They would live in a religious atmosphere and he would help them to develop their spiritual life. The result of the correspondence between Helena's confessor and Father Arnold was that the confessor left Helena free to decide what she wanted to do. Helena wrote that she would enter on December 30. Father Arnold answered: "Your hand is in the hand of the heavenly Father and He will direct all things according to his holy will." Helena came and became a maid.

### **Hendrina**

In early 1884, Hendrina Stenmanns applied to Father Arnold to join the maids and help with the formation of the seminarians, future missionaries, by working in the kitchen. She saw working for the seminarians as helping in the mission work of the Church.

Here is the story of Hendrina. Hendrina's father was a tailor. As a child, instead of eating a freshly baked roll given her by her mother, Hendrina would take it to a poor sick elderly man in the village. As she grew older, she ministered to the poor sick persons in the village. In school Hendrina was intelligent and studied diligently. She loved to read. She learned her catechism well.

Her mother fell sick after the birth of her seventh child. On her death bed she made Hendrina, her eldest child, promise to take care of her brothers and sisters. Hendrina promised and fulfilled her promise.

She worked at the loom in making silk umbrellas to increase the income of her father. When a

young apprentice of her father wanted to enter the mission seminary, she helped him financially. Later, this young man, already a seminarian, invited her to visit the mission seminary. There she met the maids and wanted to join them. In the meantime her brothers and sisters had grown up.

She wrote to Father Arnold and requested to become a maid: "I desire nothing more than with the grace of God to be the least and offer myself for the work of evangelization." She mentioned that she belonged to the Third Order of St. Francis and was thus leading a religious life as a lay person. Father Arnold wrote that she should make a formal application. In her application she wrote that she could not apply earlier because of her promise to her mother. She was thirty-two years old and in good health. Her father, she wrote, had given his consent. As a note she mentioned that she had a special devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Father Arnold inquired about her from her parish priest, who recommended her in glowing terms as a pious young lady who participated daily in Holy Mass. With the coming of Hendrina, the maids numbered four. Another had come in the meantime. The room which they occupied next to the room of the Sisters became quite crowded. The crowded room had its inconveniences but also its advantages, for there was no heat in the room in winter.

### **The Maids**

Father Arnold asked the maids to make a daily schedule for themselves. Work occupied most of their day, for the kitchen provided food for some three hundred persons: priests, Brothers, seminarians, and workmen. The maids participated in daily Mass and had a short period of spiritual reading. They prayed the rosary while working. They also prayed the quarter-hour prayer of Father Arnold, often without pausing in their work. Father Arnold had them include short periods of recreation in their schedule. But at times because of the urgency of the work, they had to sacrifice their recreation time. Except for the times of recreation, they observed silence the whole day. Helena and Hendrina took turns in being the superior of the maids.

The Sisters of Divine Providence, impressed with the good spirit of the maids, several times invited them to join their order of Sisters. The maids, however, resisted the temptation and trusted that God through Father Arnold would found a religious missionary congregation of Sisters.

After a few years, the Brothers, who had increased in number, took over the kitchen. The Sisters of Divine Providence with the gratitude and blessing of Father Arnold returned to their mother house. To accommodate the maids, Father Arnold had a house on the property vacated. The seminarians called the house the convent of the three linden trees since three linden trees stood as sentinels by the house. The maids received the task now of doing the laundry for the members of the mission seminary community, no small job.

The maids perceived their moving into their own house as a step forward in becoming a religious missionary congregation. In God's plan this perception would prove true. Soon the maids numbered six.

At this time, developments were taking place also with regard to the priests. The founding

fathers met. Father Arnold had drawn up a constitution spelling out the three vows of chastity, poverty and obedience for the Priests and Brothers. He and three other priests discussed this constitution over the period of several months. After making some changes, the four approved it. On this constitution, the priests made their vows. During their sessions, the four priests also discussed the founding of a religious missionary congregation of Sisters. Since the other three members of the panel also saw the need of Sisters in the missions, as did Father Arnold, they approved of the project. The maids would be the first members of the new congregation. After the meetings were finished and the project approved, the task of founding a religious missionary congregation of Sisters fell on the shoulders of Father Arnold. He hesitated to begin because, as he confided to a priest friend, he had so much work in being the superior of the priests, Brothers, and seminarians plus the missionaries in China that he could hardly manage to take care of his present duties. Besides, continual building was going on to house the increasing number of seminarians. A big beautiful church was needed for the proper forming of the seminarians that they could worship Jesus properly and build churches fit for worship in the missions. The maids likewise would need a bigger building if more young ladies were to be accepted. But Father Arnold with the daily expenses plus the building going on and the projects of the missionaries in China had little money. God, as it were, pushed the project of founding a congregation of Sisters ahead by making a nearby Capuchin monastery available. The Capuchins moved out when they were allowed to go back to their home country. Father Arnold reached an agreement with the Capuchin superior to rent the building.

Thus Father Arnold and another priest on the eve of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, 1889, led the six maids in procession to the rented monastery building. The maids now had spacious quarters and would be able to take in new applicants. The hearts of the maids overflowed with gratitude and joy. They had another proof that God was hearing their prayers and visibly helping them through Father Arnold to realize their dream. Father Arnold declared the maids now to be postulants. Thus the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, 1889, is celebrated as the foundation day of the Sisters.

Father Arnold kept the readers of his magazine informed about all the important happenings, for example, a new mission being taken over, another mission seminary being established, the activities of the missionaries in China, as well as the going forward in the establishment of the Sisters' congregation.

### **Adolfine**

God again cleared the way for Father Arnold to help the postulants become missionary Sisters. The Sisters of a nearby convent who had fled the Kulturkampf returned to Germany. Father Arnold bought the convent, and the postulants transferred from the Capuchin monastery to a real Sisters' convent. Soon Father Arnold began giving the postulants conferences three times a week during which he explained the spiritual and religious life. The sixteenth postulant to enter was Adolfine Tonnies.

Adolfine is mentioned here because she would have a significant role in the development of the Sisters. She was the niece of Father Herman Wegener, one of the four pillars of the Society of

the Divine Word. She came from the large family of Father Herman's sister. As a child she liked to play teacher. She did become a teacher and taught for ten years in a section of Germany with only a few Catholics. She taught all the classes in a one room school. She likewise assisted the parish priest by taking care the altar and sacristy. She played the organ during Mass. Her room was next to the church and she spent time in adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, especially in the evening.

During vacation one year while making a retreat, Adolfine discerned that God was calling her to the religious life. When she told her uncle, Father Herman, he informed her about the new religious missionary congregation being founded. She became interested. When she informed her mother about her desire to become a religious, her mother refused to give her permission to join. Adolfine went to her uncle, who persuaded his sister to let Adolfine enter the convent. With the recommendation of her uncle, Father Arnold readily accepted her.

To become an established religious congregation, a constitution was needed. Father Arnold set to work. He collected the constitutions of a number of religious Sisters' congregations and from them made the rough draft of a constitution for his own Sisters. He had a copy printed for each postulant so that she could study it and make suggestions to improve it. He had a special copy made for Helena, the superior at that time, with a blank page facing each printed page for her comments.

The postulants prayed that a good constitution would result from Father Arnold's and their efforts. After several drafts, Father Arnold made a clean copy and presented it to the Bishop for his approval. The Bishop gave permission to start the novitiate on that constitution.

To be the novice directress and to introduce the novices into the religious life, Father Founder contacted a Sister of an established religious order. She died, however, just before the date which was set to begin the novitiate. Instead of arranging for another Sister to be novice directress, Father Arnold decided to introduce the novices into the religious life himself. He named the new religious missionary congregation "Missionary Sisters, Servants of the Holy Spirit." They were to honor in a special way the Holy Spirit.

Thus on January 17, 1892, the first 16 postulants began their novitiate. They received the religious habit of a beautiful pastel blue color. Helena received the name Maria, Hendrina the name Josepha, and Adolfine the name Mary Michael. For three months Father Arnold did his best to explain the three vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience as spelled out in the constitution. The novices listened with attention. He asked them questions and they asked him questions. He practiced with them the devout praying of morning and evening prayers, also the recitation of the little office of our Blessed Mother.

After three months Father Arnold appointed Sister Maria as assistant novice directress of the older novices and Sister Mary Michael of the younger novices. Sister Josepha was given charge of the postulants.

What a glorious day March 12, 1894, turned out to be, for the novices made their profession of vows. Sisters Maria and Josepha and a few others had waited many years to become religious

missionary Sisters. Now they were truly professed Sisters, Servants of the Holy Spirit. What joy filled their hearts! How grateful they were to God!

To prepare the Sisters for the missions, Father Arnold started a teachers training college. Some Sisters were selected to become qualified teachers; others were to take some courses in some practical arts. The teachers for the school were Father Arnold himself, a certified teacher, a few other priests, and Sisters, such as Sister Mary Michael, who were teachers before they joined the Sisters. Father Arnold explained to the Sisters, especially to Sister Maria and Sister Joseph, the superiors, his reason for establishing a teachers' training college. He said that in the missions teachers were respected and would more readily be accepted by the people.

Sister Maria served as the superior of the community and Sister Joseph as her assistant. They formed a perfect team. They thought and felt alike, and acted in harmony. Sister Maria under the direction and in cooperation with Father Arnold cared, in particular, for the spiritual life of the Sisters while Sister Josepha managed the house work and other work, such as doing the laundry for the members of the mission house and folding sheets of paper for the mission press publications. At first they referred all decisions to Father Arnold, who gradually led them to make their own decisions in less important matters.

Father Arnold and Sister Maria communicated ordinarily by letter. She would ask permission, for example, to have adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on a Sunday or feast day. He would grant the permission and maybe limit the time. Sister Maria always sought to do the will of Father Arnold, for she considered doing what Father Arnold directed as pleasing to Jesus.

Sister Josepha continued as directress of the postulants. She could console but also correct, as need demanded. She listened to what Father Arnold told the postulants in conferences and reinforced what he said to them. She also gave talks to them. She used practical examples, in one of her talks, for instance, to encourage the postulants to pick up things lying on the floor, she used a story. She said that a young man had two girl friends. He did not know which one to choose as his wife; so he devised a test. He laid a broom on the path where one of them and he agreed to meet. She stepped over the broom. He tried the test with the second one, who picked up the broom. He chose the one who picked up the broom. In another talk to the postulants, who had heard about the martyrs and were fired up to become martyrs, she said: "It is easier to lay your neck on the block of wood and have it chopped off than to fulfill faithfully your duty day after day for many years.

## **Mission**

In prayer Father Arnold discerned that the time had come to send Sisters to the missions. He chose Argentina as the first mission for the Sisters; China proved too dangerous at the time. The German migrants to Argentina lacked spiritual care and were even in danger of losing their faith. The girls and women needed Sisters to teach them religion and some skills. Father Arnold had sent priests and Brothers there some years earlier. Father Arnold worked closely with Sister Maria, Josepha, and the other members of the council of Sisters in selecting missionaries for Argentina and in appointing one of them as superior.

The selection was made easier by Father Arnold having insisted that a record of an ongoing evaluation of each Sister be kept. These records were studied and used in making the choice of Sisters and especially of the superior for the mission.

Father Arnold had been corresponding with the priest in charge of the Argentinian mission to make sure that the Sisters would have a proper house to live in.

The next group of Sisters, Father Arnold and Sister Maria with her council sent to Togo in Africa. Included in the group selected was Sister Mary Michael. Father Arnold, however, cancelled her appointment to Africa and kept her at the mother convent in Steyl.

Just as Father Arnold was making the buildings of the mission seminary available for men's retreats, so he in cooperation with the Sisters made the building of the Sisters available for women's retreats. The Sisters had to make many sacrifices to accommodate the retreatants. Father Arnold, however, motivated them to make the sacrifices for the spiritual good of these women and young ladies. These retreatants went home not only with a greater love for Jesus but with more mission awareness. Some became benefactors of the missionaries, helping by prayer and financial aid. Some of the young ladies eventually joined the Sisters.

Each time Father Arnold returned from a trip to the new major seminary in Austria or from a trip to Rome, Sister Maria would have a welcoming sign out for him. He would offer Mass at the Sisters' convent on one of the first days after his return and at breakfast share the latest news about developments in the Arnold Janssen spiritual family. Since he always made it a point to request the prayers of the Sisters before undertaking a trip, he thought it only proper that he should keep them informed about the results of their prayers.

Sister Maria was given a second term as superior of the Holy Spirit Sisters. She would have preferred to be a simple Sister and not the superior. She, however, accepted the reelection as the will of God. She expressed her attitude in these memorable words: "To God the honor, to the Sisters the benefit, and to me the burden." Sister Josepha was again her faithful assistant. Now the time had come in God's plan for Father Arnold to found the Adoration Sisters. The missionaries needed prayers. All activity, especially the work for the conversion of those who did not yet believe in Christ, needed grace. And grace is won by prayer and sacrifice. So Father Arnold asked for volunteers from the Holy Spirit Sisters to become adoration Sisters. They would be cloistered and kneel in turns before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament to adore him and to pray for the missionary Priests, Brothers, and Sisters, plus the people whom they served.

Sister Mary Michael was among the volunteers. Father Arnold chose the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception to start the community of Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters. The year was 1896, seven years after the foundation of the Holy Spirit Sisters. As the color of the habit for the Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters, Father Arnold selected a pastel pink.

God allowed Father Arnold, Sister Maria, and Sister Josepha to suffer much during the first year of the Adoration Sisters. It happened like this. The Adoration Sisters were allowed to vote for their superior and they elected Sister Seraphim, who came from a noble family living in a castle in the vicinity. Sister Mary Michael was elected as her assistant.

Sister Seraphim, it seems, was a domineering character and had delusions of having visions. She seemingly looked down on Sister Maria and her Sisters and gave them orders, as if she were superior of both the active and contemplative Sisters.

Father Arnold soon realized that a mistake had been made in having Sister Seraphim as the superior of the Adoration Sisters. He consulted the Bishop who cautioned him to proceed carefully since the Sisters had elected Sister Seraphim. Then a year after the foundation day, he appointed Sister Mary Michael as superior.

The relationship between the Holy Spirit Sisters and the Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters had suffered because of the conduct of Sister Seraphim. To help heal the relationship between the two groups, Father Arnold asked Sister Maria if she would like to join the Adoration Sisters. All the Sisters of both groups loved Sister Maria. Sometime later, after Father Arnold had asked her again, she consulted her confessor. In the repeated question of Father Arnold, she discerned that God wanted her to step down from being superior of the Holy Spirit Sisters and join the Adoration Sisters. She made the transfer on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception 1898. She again became a novice.

After Sister Maria joined the Adoration Sisters, the relationship between the two groups began to improve. Sister Mary Michael allowed Sister Maria to receive letters and visits from the Holy Spirit Sisters, and Sister Josepha, the new superior of the Holy Spirit Sisters allowed the Holy Spirit Sisters to consult Sister Maria. (Note: In beatifying Sister Maria on May 7, 1995, our Holy Father mentioned explicitly the humility of Sister Maria in stepping down from being superior general to becoming a novice again.)

Sister Josepha and Sister Mary Michael got along well. Sister Maria served as a bond binding the two groups in charity.

During her second year of novitiate with the Adoration Sisters, Sister Maria fell sick. She continued the community life of adoration and work as long as she could. The doctor was puzzled at her condition. When Sister Mary Michael informed Father Arnold that Sister Maria was sick, he did not take the news very seriously because she had never been sick before. He was in Austria at the time. And when Sister Mary Michael ask permission for Sister Maria to make her profession of vows as a Holy Spirit Adoration Sister, he readily gave permission; she had made a novitiate with the Holy Spirit Sisters and now more than a year of novitiate with the Adoration Sisters.

A few days after making her profession, she died. It was February 3, 1900. It seems she died of cerebral meningitis. Upon learning of her death, Father Arnold wrote a letter praising Sister Maria for her virtuous life, especially her humility of stepping down from being superior general to becoming a novice. He declared her to be Co-Foundress of the Holy Spirit Sisters.

### **The Following Years**

During the years that Sister Josepha was superior general of the Holy Spirit Sisters, she worked

closely with Father Arnold. She with her council working with Father Arnold sent some fifty Sisters to the missions. Sister Josepha frequently exhorted her Sisters to practice sisterly charity and to honor the Holy Spirit. Applicants continued coming. A new convent had to be built to accommodate the Sisters.

In 1903, Sister Josepha suffered from frequent colds. She had difficulty in breathing at times. She had asthma and then dropsy. Her body grew so heavy with the accumulation of fluids that four Sisters were needed to move her. The fluids that filled her body would break the skin and ooze out. She bore her suffering with great patience and without complaint, centering her attention on the crucifix. To one Sister who asked if in her sufferings she thought of Jesus in his sufferings, she replied that if she did not she would not be able to bear her sufferings.

Father Arnold anointed her and prayed at her bedside. He appreciated her very much and all that she and Sister Maria had done to help him establish the Holy Spirit Sisters. Sister Joseph graciously received the Sisters who came to visit her and gave them little remembrances. She asked on one occasion that she be moved near to the window so that she could wave at the novices gathered below.

Sister Josepha died on May 20, 1903, and was buried beside Sister Maria. Father Arnold declared her also as Co-Foundress of the Holy Spirit Sisters.

Father Arnold lived until January 15, 1909.

Sister Mary Michael lived on for many years after the death of the Founder. She is considered the Co-Foundress of the Holy Spirit Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. She fostered the development of the congregation always in the spirit of Father Arnold. She did the things as she thought God and Father Arnold wanted them done. She introduced adoration before the Blessed Sacrament exposed in a monstrance. She introduced the singing the divine office as the liturgy has it. Previously the Sisters prayed the Little Office of our Blessed Mother or the Office of the Holy Spirit. Now they follow the Church year, not only as regards holy Mass but likewise in regard to the divine office. She established the Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters as an independent congregation, independent both of the Divine Word Missionaries and the Holy Spirit Sisters as regards administration. She and her Sisters, however, maintained their loyalty to Father Arnold Janssen as their founder and to their duty of praying and sacrificing for the other two congregations of the Arnold Janssen spiritual family. She established convents of Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters in Europe, and in the United States, for example in Philadelphia and St. Louis, also in the Philippines, and even one in Shanghai, China. Sister Mary Michael passed to her Spouse Jesus on February 25, 1934, to join Father Arnold, Sister Maria, and Sister Josepha in heaven.

Yes, indeed, in the persons of Sister Maria, Sister Josepha, and Sister Mary Michael, Father Arnold had the best co-foundresses of Sisters that any founder ever had. All four, that is, founder and co-foundresses, came from the same country. They grew up in good families. They practiced a similar devotional life. They were unselfish and sought only to please God and help people. The Sisters learned the special features of the spirituality of Father Arnold. They esteemed his spirituality. They practiced it. They taught it to others.

As some Divine Word missionary remarked: We cannot understand our spirituality without knowing the co-foundresses and how they put our Founder's spirituality into practice.

Note:

Pope John Paul II, on May 7, 1995, declared Mother Maria "Blessed."

The Beatification of Mother Josepha took place on June 29, 2008.

The process for the beatification of Mother Mary Michael has not yet been introduced.

**"TO GOD THE HONOR,  
TO THE SISTERS THE BENEFIT,  
TO ME THE BURDEN"**

**Blessed Maria Virgo**



**MOTHER MARIA**



**MOTHER JOSEPHA**



**MOTHER MARY MICHAEL**

## **DIVINE WORD POLISH MARTYRS**

Introduction: A martyr dies as a witness to his belief in Jesus and his Church.

Pope John Paul II declared these heroic Divine Word Missionaries, three Priests and one Brother, "Blessed," together with 104 others in Warsaw, on June 13, 1999.

The Nazis martyred these four Divine Word Missionaries in concentration camps during the Second World War. The names of these confreres, who died for Christ and whom our Holy Father beatified, are Louis Mzyk, Stanislaus Kubista, Aloysius Liguda, and Gregory Frachowiak. Their martyrdom was a consequence of their decision to follow Jesus according to the charism of our Founder, St. Arnold Janssen. They received their training in mission seminaries, which St. Arnold founded.

Why did the Nazis arrest and murder them? Because they did not fit into the Nazi new world order. Because they were Polish citizens and representatives of the Catholic Church.

### **Blessed Louis Mzyk (1905 -1940)**

Novice Master

He was one of nine children. After meeting an SVD, who came to his parish to give a retreat, he dreamed of becoming a missionary. At the age of 13, he entered the minor seminary. His father, who was sickly, died while Louis was studying there. Since his family was poor, during summer vacation Louis worked in the same mine where his father had been working. His brother William later said, "With his work he not only provided for his studies but also helped his mother." His superiors recognizing his talents sent him to Rome for his theological studies. There Louis received priestly ordination on October 30, 1932. Pope Pius XI received him and classmates in an audience; this meeting the Holy Father made a deep impression of Father Louis. He remained in Rome long enough to obtain a doctorate in dogmatic theology. Father Louis had hoped to receive an appointment to China or Japan. His superiors, however, assigned him to Poland. After several months of assisting a novice master in Austria, he received the appointment to be the first novice master of the newly established Polish Province.

As novice master, he showed evidence of his holiness. The novices were impressed with his simplicity and humility. His very presence promoted harmony in the community. He had the gift of introducing the novices to the religious missionary life. The novices liked him and enjoyed his presence.

When the Gestapo began to round up priests in the area, they arrested Father Louis and transported him to a concentration camp. A priest who was imprisoned together with Father Louis testified to manner of his death. He said one guard in the camp took a dislike to Father Louis and seemed to derive pleasure in persecuting him. He would go out of his way to insult and attack him. On February 20, 1940, this guard came to the barracks drunk. He met three prisoners, among whom was Father Louis. He sent the other two away and began shouting at Father Louis, beating him, and kicking him. He then threw him down a flight of stairs, dragged

him to the gate, and shot him twice in the head. Fr. Louis was 35.

### **Blessed Stanislaus Kubista (1898-1940)**

Mission Animator and Communicator

Stanislaus was born to a poor family. He was the fifth of nine children. He grew up in a religious atmosphere. Since an SVD Brother, who sold our magazines, frequently visited the Kubista home, Stanislaus became familiar with a missionary, even as a young boy. At the age of 14, already fascinated by the missionary ideal, he entered the minor seminary. World War I interrupted his studies, for he was drafted into the army. Immediately after the war he returned to the seminary. He professed his perpetual vows in 1926 and received priestly ordination in 1927. His formators and peers recognized him as gentle, modest, faithful, calm, a young man ready for any sacrifice.

Stanislaus gave for his choices of a mission assignment the following: China, Philippines, and New Guinea. His superiors, however, assigned him to Poland. He accepted this assignment as the will of God for him. From the start he showed great industry and initiative. He did his duties as treasurer and also went into editing and publishing. He had the insight that the future of the Church and Society depended on modern communications.

Following in our Founder's footsteps, Fr. Kubista urged the superiors of the Society in Poland to have its own printing press. Receiving permission, he set one up. This enabled the Society in Poland quickly to become known as a religious missionary congregation. He edited these magazines: "Family Treasure," "St. Joseph Magazine," and "The Little Missionary." He also put out a small calendar for children and a larger one for families. Because he wrote numerous articles for these magazines, he became quite influential in bringing missionary concerns to the general public. He likewise wrote a mission drama, entitled "The Cross and the Sun," about the Incas Indians in Peru for which he drew the scenes and had the costumes made.

His communications activities came to an abrupt halt with the outbreak of the war. The police placed him under house arrest while they dismantled the press and hauled away the equipment and paper. After two months they put him in a concentration camp and subjected him to a life of brutal treatment and forced labor. Even in these circumstances he exhibited gentleness, modesty, serenity, and concern for others, as testified by the survivors who knew him.

Since his arrival at the concentration camp, Father had been sick with pneumonia and diarrhea. He had grown weaker every day; yet he was forced to do a full load of work, which included shoveling snow for long hours while exposed to the cold wind. On one of the last evenings of his life, another priest covered him with a blanket. Fr. Stanislaus whispered to him, "This cannot go on much longer. I am so weak. May God's will be done." Although it was prohibited, the priest heard his confession.

On a very cold morning a Gestapo man entered the barracks. He looked at the sick and exhausted prisoner and told him: "You have no reason to live anymore." Then he began stomping on Fr. Kubista's throat and chest. "We heard the breaking of bones and the last choked

rattling," another prisoner later on said. Father Stanislaus was 42 years old.

### **Blessed Aloysius Liguda (1898-1942)**

Educator and Spiritual Director

Aloysius was the sixth of seven children. His family was deeply religious. He entered the nearby minor seminary at the age of 15. World War I interrupted his education since he was called to military service. He saw action in Flanders and France, and by the end of the war he held the rank of sergeant. He went back to the seminary and finished his formation and studies. He received priestly ordination in 1927 and was assigned to Poland.

His prefect had written about him: "His intellectual ability is great. He could be a good teacher." To prepare himself for teaching, he pursued further studies in Polish literature and contemporary history at a university. His two years of obligatory practice teaching he did in the minor seminary. The students appreciated his teaching, which he himself thoroughly enjoyed. His students remembered him as a good, kind, and well-prepared teacher. One of them wrote, "He used to bring joy, a smile, and tranquility to every class."

In addition to his full load of teaching, Fr. Liguda received frequent invitations to give spiritual conferences. He likewise served as confessor for several religious communities. He was known and appreciated as a retreat master and spiritual director. He had published a collection of Sunday sermons, entitled "Listen, Daughter," which he had given to his students at a girls' secondary school. It became a best seller. Two other books followed, namely, "Bread and Salt" and "Forward and Higher." His personality and intellectual preparation helped him to communicate well with young people. His published conferences and homilies continued to have an influence among young people long after his death.

Fr. Aloysius had a remarkable sensitivity for justice and was well known for defending others, who were in desperate situations. After Nazis arrested him and put him in the concentration camp, he continued his defense of others, which brought upon him beatings and other sadistic punishments.

In the concentration camp in addition to the beatings he experienced forced labor and hunger. His presence supported the other prisoners. His spirit of tranquility and his sense of humor help many to endure the brutality of the camp. Even in the most trying situations, he found words of encouragement or shared a joke with others. He remained faithful to his religious missionary vocation in the midst of torture and disdain of human dignity until his three years of martyrdom ended with his being drowned with nine other prisoners.

### **Blessed Gregory Frackowiak (1911-1943)**

Receptionist and Bookbinder

One of twelve children, Gregory grew up in a religious family. At the age of 18 he joined the

Society of the Divine Word. From the beginning he showed joy in being a missionary Brother. He worked both as a receptionist and as a professional book binder in the printing press. The people of the area remembered him as someone with special sensitivity towards the poor. Many poor came to him for food. He welcomed them with a kind word. Some called him 'the friend of the poor.' The students of the minor seminary enjoyed his presence and sought his advice.

When the mission seminary became an internment camp for Priests, the Brothers were forced to leave. For a while Gregory lived with relatives. There in his hometown, he served as sacristan and taught catechism to the children. When the Gestapo arrested the pastor, Brother organized an entire day and night of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. He then gave Holy Communion to those present and thus consumed the remaining hosts in order to protect them against sacrilege, that is, against being desecrated.

Eventually Brother Gregory found a job in a printing press in a small town not far from his home. Like many others he received and passed on some anti-Nazi material. Fr. Paul Kiczka, SVD, his spiritual director, advised him not to receive and pass on these pamphlets, and so he stopped. A year later the Gestapo found out about this activity, namely, the distribution of anti-Nazi material, and arrested a number of persons. Brother knew that he was among those wanted. Secretly he visited Fr. Kiczka, who advised him to hide. But Brother Gregory had another idea. He knew that among those arrested were men who had wives and children. Wouldn't these, he reasoned, be saved if he took upon himself the whole responsibility for this anti-Nazi activity? "May I accept the responsibility for them?" he asked his spiritual director. Fr. Kiczka responded, "If you have the courage and strength. It would mean sacrificing your life." Gregory made his confession and received Holy Communion. After his thanksgiving, he shook hands with his confrere and said, "Till we meet again - but not on this earth." He went home where he was arrested the following day. He "confessed" his crime, and immediately afterwards some of the other suspects were freed.

A few hours before his death, he wrote a letter to his relatives, "I am writing to you for the last time in this world. By the time that you receive this letter, I will no longer be among the living. Today on Wednesday (May 5, 1943) at 6:15 P.M., I will be executed. Please pray for me. It is already one o'clock, and at two o'clock the priest will bring me Jesus. Don't cry, but pray for my soul. I leave it up to you whether you want to communicate to my mother the manner of my death, I am completely at peace. I greet all of you and I will wait for you in God's presence. Please greet all the Missionary Brothers in Bruckow. After the war bring my cassock there. God bless you! Remain faithful Catholics. Forgive any faults of mine. I'm sorry for my poor mother. May God protect you! Till we see each other in heaven." Brother Gregory was beheaded. He was 31 years old.

