



# **ST. ARNOLD AND THE LAITY**

by

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Dear Friend,

This short article tries to show that St. Arnold Janssen not only founded three religious missionary congregations to promote the missionary work of the Church but that he also involved the Laity, those Catholics who remained lay persons. Father Pio writes in his booklet entitled SVD-Laity Mission Partnership, 2008: “An unfulfilled dream in the lifetime of our founder, St. Arnold Janssen, was to found an institute of secular cooperators to help the missions – or simply lay mission helpers. Twice had this special concern been discussed during the very first SVD General Chapter (series of meetings) that took place at various times over a two year period (1884-1886). But in the final draft of the SVD Constitutions submitted for Episcopal approbation, the special section devoted to forming this lay institute was deleted ... with no recorded comments. One can only guess that the handful of capitulars (four) had dismissed the project to be too soon for prompt realization.” (p 27). Father Pio Estepa continues: “It may now be timely to recall his early dream ...” (page 28).

Now is the time for us both to recall the dream and to work diligently to realize it. St. Arnold surely promotes the project from his place in heaven. He leaves it up to us, however, his spiritual sons and daughters, to do something on earth about it.

What everyone: priest, religious, and lay Catholic can and should do is to pray for God’s blessing on the mission activity of the Church. Pope Benedict XVI in his message for Mission Sunday 2008 declares: “Prayer is the first missionary duty of each one of us.” St. Arnold taught us the same thing, namely, that prayer remains the most basic form of evoking, nourishing, and expressing mission solidarity. (SVD–Laity Mission Partnership, p 75). And the second duty is action, getting lay persons to proclaim the kingdom of God in their own places of living by their good example, that is, by their words and actions which please God.

The writer of the following article searched in the book entitled Father Arnold Janssen by Fritz Bornemann, 516 pages, translated from German into English by Father John Vogelgesang, printed in Rome 1975, to see if there are some examples of Father Arnold involving lay persons in the missionary work of the Church and the Society of the Divine Word, if not in an organized way, at least in an informal manner. We will define Laity for this article as all Catholics who are neither priests nor religious.

## **Involving the Laity**

Arnold Janssen, when still a young seminarian, perhaps fifteen years old, composed an Evening Prayer for the members of his family. It contained acts of adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and reparation; likewise acts of faith, hope and charity. The family prayed this Evening Prayer. When relatives, friends, and neighbors heard about it, they asked for a copy and they too prayed it. When Arnold Janssen was already a priest, the *Apostleship of Prayer*, an organization which encourages the laity to pray for the great intentions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, reached Germany from France. Father Arnold, at that time a young high school teacher, embraced this organization wholeheartedly. Father Arnold knew that a very special intention of the Sacred Heart is that his Father's kingdom be realized on earth. This is very clearly brought out in the Our Father, in which Jesus teaches us to pray "Your kingdom come."

A specialty of the organization is that its members make the Morning Offering, that is, that they offer all their thoughts, words, and actions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through Mother Mary for the coming of God's kingdom on earth. In his morning offering, Father Arnold also included the intention of gaining all possible indulgences he could gain that day and offering them for the suffering souls in purgatory. In connection with the Morning Offering, a decade of the Rosary is to be prayed for the intentions of our Holy Father.

Father Arnold enrolled his name in the organization and fulfilled the daily obligations. Not content with being a member, Father Arnold got other persons to sign up as members of the Apostleship of Prayer. He enrolled over 600 members. These names he forwarded to the central office. Because of his zeal, he was then appointed director of the Apostleship in his diocese. As director he had the right to enroll individuals, parishes, and religious communities as members. There were 26 groups enrolled when he took over. During the vacations of 1869, he visited 160 parishes in the diocese, another 50 parishes before the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, and another 60 after the war. When he sent in his report in June 1873 he could report that he had visited 300 parishes of the 350 of the diocese (p 24).

He also had prayer leaflet printed and distributed with prayer intentions for each decade of the Rosary that persons when praying the rosary would think of the needs of others. To compose the prayer leaflets, he himself had to think of the needs of others. This was before the general intercessions had been reintroduced at Mass and the Divine Office. He had printings of 10,000 copies; 12,000; 25,000; 50,000 of these intercessions printed and ever more. Besides, he wrote a booklet entitled "Association of the Apostleship of Prayer to Encourage Prayer of Petition to the Adorable Heart of our Savior Jesus Christ." On the covers he had beautiful pictures, front and back, namely the Sacred Heart on the front cover and the Immaculate Conception on the back cover. Over the years he had some 400,000 copies of this booklet printed.

Father Arnold likewise composed a Prayer Book of which he had at least 6,000 copies printed. He with another religious put together a First Friday Manual. About 60,000 copies in all, in various successive editions, rolled off the press.

He likewise assembled a St. Joseph Booklet, a 32 page collection of prayers to St. Joseph. Counting the various editions, the number of copies printed equaled about 14,000. (See Bornemann, pages 20-26).

Since the greatest and most powerful prayer is the holy sacrifice of the Mass, Father Janssen planned to have a daily Mass offered for the reunion of Catholics and Protestants at shrine of St. Boniface. Although he collected as much money as he could, he never reached the amount needed for a daily Mass. He used the amount collected though for Masses for reunion. And he did not stop his whole life from collecting to have Masses offered at the shrine of St. Boniface for this intention. Father Arnold viewed the separation of Christians as a cancer and a hindrance for mission activity in the foreign missions (p 28). Through his collecting of funds for Masses, he involved a number of lay persons in praying and having Masses offered for the home missions, namely the reunion of Christians. As mentioned above, he saw the unity of Christians as a necessary step for proclaiming the gospel to non-Christians in the foreign missions.

Father Arnold did his utmost to promote prayer, as was clearly manifested, for the great intentions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Church. We promote the missions most effectively, he was convinced, by getting people to pray fervently for them. For this purpose he also had a leaflet printed with a special intention for each decade of the rosary. During the Easter holidays and the Pentecost week, he hit the road to promote the rosary intentions (p 33f ). He had the insight that for such intentions to catch on with the people, they had to be specified, for example: that chastisements of God for sins be tempered or averted, for heretics and separated Christians, for Jews and Mohammedans, for pagans, Jews, Moslems, people of Africa; people of China, Japan, South Sea Islands, Australia; for the people of Poland and Russia; for the Protestants of Central Europe, of England, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, and America (p 42).

He likewise sent prayers around to the bishops that they would prescribe them to be prayed by the people (p 34f). Prayer Father Arnold considered the human response to the reality of God. Prayer was in his view God's command and man's privilege. Through the rosary, and by his own prayers for the great intentions of the Church, Father Arnold had developed a truly catholic outlook (p 35). He tried his best to get people through prayer for the needs of the people of the whole world to share this truly catholic outlook. Father Arnold had the insight that especially prayer for the mission and their people "widens the spiritual vision on all sides."

After teaching for twelve years he resigned as a teacher to devote himself more fully to promoting the kingdom of God. To have a place to stay and earn a living, he found a job with the Ursuline Nuns as chaplain. Since he still had time after fulfilling his duties, Father Janssen to promote the kingdom of God started in 1874 a mission magazine entitled "*The Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart.*" He wrote for the laity to get them interested in the foreign missions. In it he asked people to pray for missionaries and their people. Prayer he considered the best means of winning the grace of God for missionaries to proclaim the gospel effectively and for people to accept the word of God in faith. He also asked for financial help to build a mission seminary for forming future missionaries. He invited young men and young women to become missionaries (p 43f).

As a result of the appeal for money, donations started coming in. Most were smaller amounts. The Poor Clare Nuns, however, gave a donation of 9,000 Marks, a donation of a young lady who entered their convent. The Nuns felt they could keep that amount of money; so they gave it to Father Janssen for the mission seminary.

A certain Ms Schell wanted to give 1,000 Marks which she had inherited as house keeper of a childless couple, to a good cause. The Father Guardian of the Franciscans directed the amount to Father Janssen for the mission seminary. In gratitude for the donation Father Arnold wrote to Father Guardian: The good God has inspired the one to whom this letter is directed, and whose name and address are entirely unknown to me, to donate a 1,000 Marks for the mission seminary. I accept the sum with humble gratitude and promise to use it for the said purpose. Father Arnold appreciated the money, the good intention of the donor, and especially the goodness of God (p 55). He was always grateful to benefactors. When his three congregations were established, he had them continually pray for benefactors.

Father Janssen continued to try his best his best to win sympathy and support for his proposed missionary seminary. He appealed for prayers, funds, and co-workers. As a result, four months after his appeal, he had received enough funds, much of them from lay persons, to push ahead with his plan to establish a mission seminary (p 56f). He published the news in his magazine so that friends of his undertaking would have no misgivings of its stability (p 58 f).

Father Arnold and his brother, Brother Juniper, involved some families from the village including school children to decorate the village church and seminary with wreaths and in preparing the meal for the invited guests for the blessing of the seminary (p 71). Father Arnold involved the laity, even children, in folding the sheets of his magazine and stuffing the envelopes of his appeals. He involved lay volunteers as he had his mission seminary constructed part by part as space was needed.

An example of Father Arnold involving a layman in his project was Joseph Althoff, a lay employee who kept the house and yard in order, ran errands, took the mail to Kaldenkirchen, and did all the shopping. Joseph was in his late fifties and...quickly won the rector's confidence. He had a good head was farseeing, and also pious, plain, and simple. At first he was paid six Marks a month plus given free room and board. But his modest salary he returned in full to the seminary, in addition to the many donations he obtained for the mission house. He drew to the mission seminary the good will and gifts of the friends of the Redemptorists for whom he had once worked and who had been exiled from Germany (p 79). He left a few weeks after Bro Juniper returned to the Capuchins and still, however, made many a sizable donations to the mission seminary.

Since the house was so poor, a number of families and some individual women from the village helped to set it in order. During the first few months, two women from Venlo, Misses Wolters and Keybecks, were especially helpful (p 81). Since the number of boys and young men applying to become missionaries kept on increasing, the rector notified his readers in January 1876 issue of his magazine that a large extension to the building would be necessary for the new school year. Thus he wrote: "We will need a large amount of money." He suggested the possibility of donors sending larger sums to the seminary and reserving the right to interest on the money for

life. p 101 He planned thus to continue with what is called nowadays an annuity program. While construction of the extension was underway, donations continued to come in, an annuity of 4,500 Marks from the Schuemkes family and 4,000 Marks from three other benefactors. About the same amount came from a long list of friends of the missions (p 102).

A few bishops requested the use of the new building when finished to hold retreats for their priests. Father Arnold graciously granted the request. After the retreats for several groups of priests in the new building had been held, Father Arnold decided to schedule a retreat for laymen. Father Wildgruber, a Redemptorist, conducted the retreat for 23 laymen from September 24 -28 (p 104). The number of retreats and retreatants increased from year to year. The retreats were a service to German clergy and laity. Archbishop Melchers :said that they were an “effective means for creating good will for the seminary” (p 104). It is to be noted that these retreats were held when there were no classes, for example during vacations. If the seminarians were present they would vacate their dormitories, find a place to sleep, and serve the retreatants. Father Arnold got both priests and laymen to teach in the newly establish mission seminary. Most priests and lay teachers offered their services free. They received free board and lodging (p 106).

Rector Janssen looked about for volunteer workmen. They had to be men of faith, who would place themselves and their work at the service of the seminary for no other reward than the love of God. He spoke of them in his magazine as “servants” and “workmen.” But he accepted them with the idea in mind of eventually selecting some of them as aspirants to the Brotherhood, after he had personally tested them. He found industrious laymen who were content to work for room and board and a little spending money; actually they were lay helpers, though the term was not then in use (p 113). Each year from 1877 to 1881 about ten came to the seminary. On the average, they remained for only a few months or a year, a few for several years (p 113). By the end of 1881 the number of Brother postulants had reached 33, the number of workmen 60; thereafter the “volunteers decreased in number *but the number of Brother increased* (p 115).

In the early days of the Mission Seminary, an order of Sister worked in the kitchen and laundry. Some young ladies volunteered as maids with the hope that Father Arnold Janssen would eventually found a congregation of missionary Sisters. They worked as maids with the Sisters in the kitchen (p 222f).

The original magazine, namely “The Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart” published by Father Arnold had proved a great help in wining friends and benefactors to establish the mission seminary. When Father Arnold In 1877 received an offer of plates for reproducing photos from the publisher of a Dutch weekly pictorial family magazine, he showed interest (p 117). Before accepting the offer, however, he asked the question: “Is such a magazine compatible with the missionary program of the seminary?” As an answer he received the insight that a family magazine could bring the mission idea to circles otherwise not easy to reach. It could be a religious weekly promotion of the missions among the laity. Even the children could “read” the pictures.

Fr Arnold accepted the offer and planned that the magazine should be entertaining. It would print stories, bits of current news, the history of the war, items of general interest, anything, as he said,

“calculated to help the reader spend a leisure hour in a pleasant profitable way and learn something at the same time.” It should impart knowledge of the wonders of nature and likewise be a source of spiritual inspiration and religious instruction.” Since the purpose of the magazine would be to report about the kingdom of God, he would name the magazine Stadt Gottes, that is, City of God, which would include the city of nature, the city of the Church, and the city of heaven. Soon Father Arnold hit the road getting writers. He contacted, for example, one writer who had written 200 books for youngsters. He also sought the services of other successful writers (pp 117-120).

Father Arnold, as rector of the mission seminary, had to provide the material support of the large community also for the China mission. He appealed to priests and the laity for support. Both responded. He always prayed for, as mentioned, and had prayers offered for benefactors. The first edition of the St. Michael Almanac (a calendar with much other interesting information besides the date of the year, month and day) came off the press in the summer of 1879. It also contained popular articles about the missions. Ernest Kolbe, a layman, convert, from Berlin, conceived the idea (p 157).

A Brother Postulant in 1883 approached Father Arnold with an idea for the distribution of the magazines published by Steyl: “Brothers ... would go from door to door in cities and villages to solicit subscriptions among potential Catholic readers. Then they would approach some reliable person in each village or section of the city, and ask whether he would be willing to distribute the magazine to other subscribers in the neighborhood every month, collect the fees and forward them to Steyl. The Steyl office would deal directly with these distributors, not with the subscribers.” (p 157).

Father Arnold himself “had gone out to look for subscribers and promoters of his prayer leaflets and the Sacred Heart Messenger, whom he called distributors. He had sent Mr. Craghs, one of the volunteer workers, to travel in Holland and Germany. What was new in the Lanze plan was that the Brothers would do this, and would make personal visits to promoters to maintain close ties between them and Steyl (p 158). Thus the Brothers with the approval and blessing of Father Arnold worked with the laity for the cause of the missions. The lay distributors “were good mission-minded people who sought to promote the mission cause by serving the subscribers to the magazines. They persevered for years at a task that was often difficult, even thankless and unrecognized, but one that greatly contributed to the Church’s missionary work.” (p 160).

In 1880 Father Arnold had begun to reach out to the laity by means of the Mission Press by going into not only publishing magazines for the laity but also by publishing books for them to read. Its 1885 catalogue of the Mission Press listed a dozen brochures from 16 to almost 100 pages and as many books, some with 150 pages, others with 300 and even one or the other 500 pages. These included historical narratives, ascetical literature and devotional works. From 1885 on, 15 to 20 new titles were added each year (p 161).

On July 18, the feast of a local saint, St. Arnold, the patronal feast of Father Arnold, the community held a torchlight procession in honor of the rector. The whole community took part and even people from the village (p 162).

Father Arnold kept in continuous contact with the laity through his magazine “The Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart.” He would report to his readers on happenings at home and in the missions. Fr. Arnold and his brother John co-authored a booklet for the young lay men and women, young single adults, about the choice of a vocation, mainly marriage or the celibate life. It dealt with such topics as the choice of a partner, getting to know one another before marriage and preparation for marriage, and marriage. Father Arnold had studied the moral theologians of the past very carefully regarding marriage and reproduced their teaching faithfully. He failed, however, to take into consideration the teaching of good modern moral theologians. The first edition of 5,000 copies quickly sold. The Vicar General of the Muenster Diocese, after having initially given permission for its printing but after receiving some feedback, objected to the book as being too demanding of married couples. Father Arnold withdrew copies from the stores and did not have a second printing. He had, however, put up a vigorous defense of his teaching before doing so (pp 175-178).

Father Medits introduced Father Arnold to Miss Magalene Leitner, a lay person, a visionary, a member of the confraternity of the Holy Spirit which Father Medits had organized in the Vincentian church in Vienna and had received papal approbation for in 1882. At first Father Medits passed on messages from her for Father Janssen, supposedly from God. Then in 1884 Father Arnold became acquainted with her and had conversations with her. He respected her and listened to her but did not always follow her advice. As Father Bornemann says, he dealt with her as one of his advisers. He himself made the final decision in matters of importance. The value of this relationship for this article is that Father Arnold listened to a lay person and discussed matters with her (pp185-194).

Because of the many seminarians in Steyl and the several additions to the existing buildings plus the beautiful large two story church, there was no more room for expansion. Father Arnold had to look for a new site. He discerned that God wanted him to go to Austria and open a second seminary there. To accomplish this project he had to write to and see many officials, both Church and Government. Thus In 1883 Father Arnold wrote a letter to the Emperor Franz Joseph, Emperor of the Austrian Hungarian Empire, requesting permission to establish a mission seminary in Austria. He was subsequently included in two general audiences with the Emperor. The Emperor signed a memorandum concerning opening a mission seminary (school) to the Minister of Education. Father Arnold had then to deal with the Vienna ministry of education (p 199 -209). Having met with opposition in the ministry of education, Father Arnold wrote another personal memorandum to the Emperor asking for the Emperor’s patronage and begged him to intervene directly with the Secretary of Home Affairs, the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, and the administration of Lower Austria.

Taking a new approach, Father Arnold no longer sought permission for a private school, that is, for a seminary, but for admission of the Society of the Divine Word into Austria. This was the result of a long talk with Baron von Braun. The Emperor signed the petition. The minister of education received Father Arnold graciously and assured him that he was favorably disposed for the admission of the Society of the Divine Word into Austria. Father Arnold asked Father Medits to run an ad for property in several papers. Many offers came in. Father Medits had Mrs. Biber, a shrewd widow, who belonged to his group, screen the offers (p 202).

On Oct 27, 1888, it was announced as official that the Society received permission to build in Maria Enzersdorf (a place) and work in Austria. Father Arnold ordered the Te Deum to be sung and a glass of beer served to each member of the community at Steyl (p 207f).

Father Arnold had constant negotiations with government officials. After Bismarck had resigned as chancellor, Father Janssen received an invitation from the German minister of Education stating that he would like to discuss missionary work in the German colonies with the Superior General, that was, with Father Arnold Janssen. He accepted the invitation. In their meeting Father Arnold Janssen said to the Minister of Education that if the government wished missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word to work in the German colonies, it should give permission to establish a mission seminary in Germany to form German youth to become missionaries.

Permission having been given, the question was where to build. It was decided to build in Salesia. The Huch family played a part in establishing the mission seminary there. The story of the Huch family can capture one's imagination. In short it goes as follows: The Huch family admired Father Arnold and became his friends and benefactors. The family, Mr., Mrs. and son, became so enthusiastic about Father Arnold and his missionary endeavor that they want to become members of the Arnold Janssen spiritual family, Mr. as a priest and missionary, Mrs. as a Sister, and their son as a seminarian. Father Arnold tried to discourage them from entering the mission seminary at Steyl, but they insisted. They lasted for two weeks in the mission seminary and then took up again their regular family life. The family still helped financially to build seminary in Silesia, Mrs. through writing promotional material, Mr. by advertizing and getting offers for property, sorting out the offers, and narrowing them down to two. The family provided half the money needed for the property. Mr. Huch accompanied Father Arnold to visit several persons prominent in church and civic affairs to win friends and benefactors for the new foundation (pp 262ff).

The foundation in Silesia, Germany, fittingly received the name of Holy Cross Mission Seminary, for its foundation had caused Father Arnold much suffering. But it also had the effect of fulfilling a dream Father Arnold had cherished since 1874, namely of having men and women (not only religious but lay as well) in Germany live and pray for the universal Church (p 273).

In June 1901, the Almanac was published in English. By the next year, it already had 10,000 subscribers. Through its almanac and other publications, Techny, Illinois, the foundation of the Society in the United States, became well known to American Catholics. Numerous prayer leaflets and pamphlets in English to propagate the missionary idea came off the mission press there. In 1906 a family magazine called "The Christian Family" was published. It was somewhat similar to the magazine published in German named the (Stadt Gottes). Thus though the Techny publications the foreign missions were made the object of people's prayers and interest." (p 326).

Regarding the starting a second Mission Seminary in Prussia, Father Janssen thought that perhaps an announcement might be inserted in the Sacred Heart Messenger requesting readers to be on the lookout for favorable locations for a mission seminary. Thus in the Sacred Heart Messenger and the Stadt Gottes appeared a "Request to Our Friends" which read: We would be grateful if anyone were to call our attention to good offers for a mission seminary. The request

also appeared in the St. Michael's Almanac. In this way Father Arnold involved the laity in his quest. Hundreds of offers poured into the Steyl post office (p 326f). The project, however, did not push through.

In starting St. Wendel Mission Seminary in the Saar region of Germany, Francis Glauber, a hospital attendant, and Dr. Klein were involved (pp 332-333).

Father Arnold favored appointing Father Giese as director of the teachers' training center in Vienna at the request of the Catholic School Association and its board of directors. He saw the appointment of Father Giese as entering into an "important type of work that will prepare us to establish and conduct more efficiently teacher training centers in the missions." (p 354).

Father Arnold met with King Leopold of Belgium for an hour about sending missionaries to the Belgian Congo and had lengthy negotiations with Belgian government officials. There was not much success (p 366 -373).

Instead of taking over a mission in Belgian Congo, the Society began its missionary work among the African Americans in the South of the United States. The following is part of the story (p 373). Mr. Bremner, a wealthy Catholic of Chicago, showed concern for spiritual welfare of the African-American workers on his plantation in Merigold, Mississippi. He approached Archbishop Quigley of Chicago. The Archbishop saw this as a task for the Divine Word Missionaries. The Archbishop went with Mr. Bemner to visit Father Peil, the superior of the Divine Word Missionaries at Techny, Illinois. Father Peil made a detailed report to Father Superior General. Fr. Arnold brought the matter up to his council: "Obviously, a missionary apostolate among the black is a crying need of the Church in America ... We are legitimi requisiti (legitimately called). The archbishop of Chicago has sent Mr. Bremner to us...I should not like to take upon myself the responsibility for having hindered the project, especially since Fr. Peil is willing to accept this new mission. Kindly let me know what you think,' he wrote to his consulters." (p 375).

Father Superior General wrote to Father Heich: "We should be encouraged when we see the large number of Protestant Negroes, and when we recall how the idea came to Mr. Bremner to do something about the situation on his plantation, and how he came to us. We should also draw strength from his belief that we can make good Catholics out of his workers. Finally, we must not forget that he is willing to make great financial sacrifices to realize his aim. In all of this, it seems to me, we can discern the guiding hand of Divine Providence which we must not ignore." (p 376).

Father Heick encountered opposition from the white men when he wanted to open a school for the black children. They even threatened to kill him (p 376). Thus this first attempt failed.

Father Arnold was in favor of a second attempt in a different location. He wrote to Father Heick: "Pray particularly to the Holy Spirit to grant you prudence, courage, patience and great confidence. Armed with these virtues, you can confidently face the future, undisturbed by the many difficulties that may arise now or later, and for which you must be prepared. Prudence will direct you to be friendly but discreet towards the whites as well as the blacks. And particularly

towards the priests you will meet. Do not become angry when they cause difficulties for you. In fact, you should almost take it for granted that they will. Every apostolic man will know how to fight his way through such problems as they arise. God will come to your assistance in good time, no matter how difficult the beginning may seem to be.” (Letter of January 17, 1906). The second beginning was made at Vicksburg where there were seventy-five African-American Catholics. The general council agreed with the Founder for making this second attempt (p 377). The above excerpt of Father Arnold’s letter shows his attitude towards lay persons, even indifferent and hostile ones. This second missionary attempt succeeded.

We move on now to the beginning of the mission to the Japanese. Father Arnold wrote the following message for his council members to begin a discussion about taking a mission in Japan: “I am haunted by the thought that Divine Providence is calling us to Japan. And for this reason has given us many of the graces we have received. There is, for instance, our study of the natural sciences. We have cultivated them with greater seriousness than any other Society has. It seems to me that this was providential in regard to Japan, but for other missions as well...From everything the Bishop has said about the Japanese, it would seem that they have a special interest in deeper and more serious studies – in philosophy, for instance, and the natural sciences. And through the study of modern languages like German, French and English, they hope to be able to compete in the great marketplaces of the world. What must be done is this. In good secondary schools and colleges the Catholic Church must produce not only well-informed men, but truly learned men – men who able to take their place alongside the other learned men of the land and have a beneficial effect on the character of their people to the advantage of religion ...” (p 381f).

The following memorandum to Archbishop Krementz of Germany reveals Father Arnold’s attitude to involving the laity, in fact the whole Catholic population, in the missionary work of the Church: “Besides, France can so far boast of a much stronger representation in the missions than Germany and we shall still have to exert a good deal of effort if we are to match that country. Yet it is fitting that we should. Germany has a much larger Catholic population than France. Our Catholics have a deep faith and they live their faith. Therefore we must emulate France’s missionary effort... A Church which fails to show a decisive missionary spirit will also fail to bear witness before unbelievers to the value of immortal souls and her own divine mission to bring into her fold all the nations of the world... So let us continue along the mission trail, especially since the Supreme Shepherd has admonished and encouraged all of us to do so.” (p 443).

The preceding information gives a slight idea of how much our Founder wanted to involve lay Catholics in the missionary work of the Church. He was too busy, however, with shepherding his three foundations, namely, the Divine Word Missionaries, the Missionary Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters of Perpetual Adoration to organize the lay Catholics. He has left this task up to his spiritual sons and daughters. The Holy Spirit Mission Sisters have made progress in establishing a lay organization in the spirit of our Founder, called Associates. They have a unit of lay persons connected with each of their convents. These meet regularly. The servant leaders of the Holy Spirit Congregation have invited delegates of their associates to participate in their last several general chapters by giving them a couple of days to discuss their affairs.

The Holy Spirit Sisters of Perpetual Adoration have their lay groups associated with each convent. The one in Quezon City, Philippines, is called the League of Adorers.”

It is said that the Associates of the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters have been working toward the goal of establishing an umbrella organization of lay mission helpers composed of lay Catholics associated with the three foundations of St. Arnold. It is envisioned as a fourth foundation belonging to the spiritual family of St. Arnold: namely, the SVD, the SSpS, the SSpSAP, and a fourth group, as it were, of lay persons. May God bless us and them!

Composed by the Arnold Janssen SVD – Secretariat

Imprimi Potest

Rev. James Pawlicki, SVD  
Provincial Superior