



## Editorial

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### Arnold Janssen Spirituality Animation Team:

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AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD,  
AND THE WORD WAS GOD

## In the beginning . . .

The prologue of St. John was the favorite bible passage of St. Arnold Janssen, SVD. It reads: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it... And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth." (Jn. 1: 1-9;14). Arnold's life was guided by this beginning, when the Divine Word became a human being and as a light that was never overcome by darkness. Thus in his prayer he asked that May the darkness of sin and the night of unbelief vanish before the Light of the Word and the Spirit of Grace and that the heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all. Arnold Janssen contribution for the realization of his prayer was the founding a missionary congregation that would work to spread the Word of God and the coming of His Kingdom.

The beginning of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) was realized in Steyl, Holland. If one goes to Style, Holland, to the SVD motherhouse, he or she may not believe that the place started as an old inn, and, during the opening of the new mission house, most of the utensils were borrowed (not to mention the simply prepared food). It was indeed a simple beginning for the congregation founded by St. Arnold Janssen on September 8, 1875. Now the Divine Word Missionaries have more than 6000 priests and Brothers stationed in 70 countries working in the various ministries of the Church through Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation, Bible Apostolate, Communications, and

Mission Animation. In addition, St. Arnold founded two religious congregations for women. They are the Holy Spirit Sisters (SSpS) and the Holy Spirit Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (SSpSAP).

This year, there is also a beginning happening in SVD Hong Kong Macau district. This year, a new team called the SVD Arnold Janssen Spiritual Animation Team is formed in the district. Its task is to study, reflect, and share the spirituality of the SVD specially that of its founder together with the founding generation. The team's animation work is aimed for its own members and also for other people. One of the methods of this animation is by publishing a newsletter. It is a beginning that hopefully will successfully spread the spirituality of SVD and its founding generation. The team hopes that this spirituality may help in the realization of the founder's prayer that the heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all people. The team carries the same faith, hope and courage of St. Arnold Janssen every time he embarked on a new endeavor. And with trust in God and the prayers and support of the people, this "beginning" will reap its fruit.

Rev. Alfredo Rollon, SVD



Evening prayer closed with the Prologue of the Gospel of John:  
"In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God."



## About St. Arnold Janssen

## Saint Arnold Janssen's Childhood and Youth

St Arnold Janssen was born on November 5th, 1837 in the German town of Goch – very close to the border with the Netherlands. St Arnold had a hectic life while growing up. He had ten other brothers and sisters! Can you even imagine that? St Arnold was the second of 11 children; however, three of them died at a very young age. His family lived in Germany.

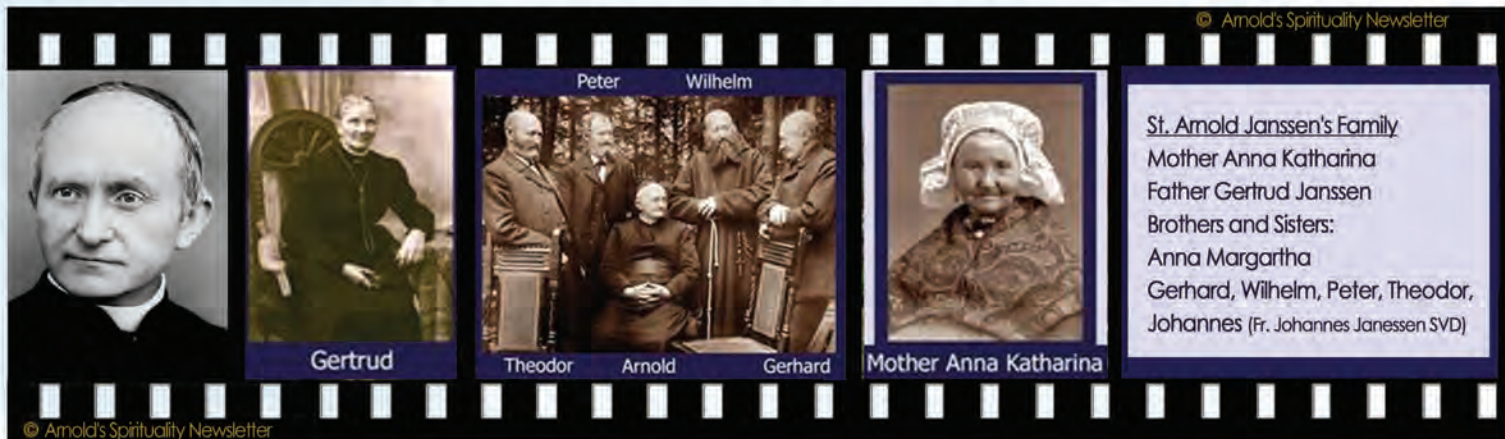
St. Arnold was raised by devoted Catholic parents who taught him to consider the worldwide missionary needs of the Church. The family's prayer, which would come to guide St. Arnold in his life's work, included a nightly rosary followed by the Prologue of St. John's Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." St. Arnold's parents practised the words of St. Paul who said: Pray always; and so Arnold was brought up and formed in the spirit of prayer. That could be the reason why while he was young he had felt a bond with God. So it is not surprising that even as a high school student of about 13 or 14 years he composed a long evening prayer which was not only prayed in his own family, but in other families as well.

From his childhood, St. Arnold Janssen's desire had been to become a priest; however he did not like to become a priest who would spend all his life working in a parish; he wanted to be a priest and a teacher and his favourite subjects were mathematics and natural sciences.

After reading about St. Arnold's childhood, it reminds me of my own childhood. As a Roman Catholic growing up in China, Catholicism has been the faith of my family for several generations. In our family, my father and mother played an active role in making sure that my siblings and I received a proper religious education. As a result, we were well grounded in the Catholic faith from early childhood. However, believe or not, it was not until 1978, when I was eight years old, that I met a priest for the first time in my life. He had just been released from prison. The Chinese word for priest is "Shen Fu," which means "a spiritual father," or literally "a father of deity." When my mom took me to see "Shen Fu" I was so excited since I didn't think a priest would be a human person. I imagined that we were going to meet someone who came from heaven or another planet. I was shocked and disappointed once I met the priest. The reason I was so shocked was that "Shen Fu" was a person as well, just an ordinary man.

Very fortunately, after a few years we became very good friends. Many times he shared with me what was going on when he was in the jail. I felt so sad and sorry for him; meanwhile, I was really touched by his deep and strong faith. In terms of this influence, from my childhood, my desire was to become a priest; however, like St. Arnold, I did not like to become a priest who would spend all his life working in a parish; I wanted to be a missionary. That is why I am an SVD now.

Rev. John Zhang, SVD





## MAY THE HOLY TRIUNE GOD LIVE IN OUR HEART AND IN THE HEARTS OF ALL PEOPLE

In this very first sharing of Saint Arnold Spirituality, I would like to share the centre and the foundation of St. Arnold Janssen spirituality which is the Blessed Trinity. Love for the Blessed Trinity formed the foundation of St. Arnold's whole life. It became the heart of his innermost being and the goal of his mission. Therefore his mission: *Vivat Deus Unus Et Trinus In Cordibus Nostris*, May the Holy Triune God live in our heart and in the hearts of all, became the motto of the Society of Divine Word Missionaries. From St. Arnold's point of view the purpose of this goal is to help all men achieve the fullness of being by sharing and participating in the life of the Blessed Trinity, by being lovingly united with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and with all people in them.

### The Blessed Trinity in the life of St. Arnold

Devotion to Blessed Trinity had influenced St. Arnold since his childhood. His father, Gerard Janssen was a person who showed great veneration and devotion to the Blessed Trinity. On Sundays, his father would attend a second Mass on Sunday to thank God, the Holy Trinity, for the blessings he had received in the previous week. On his deathbed he made all his sons promise to continue this custom. St. Arnold Janssen life and personal growth was deeply influenced by this custom and devotion to Blessed Trinity. In his letter to his mother when he was a university student, he wrote, "United in the happy embrace of Holy Trinity in heaven, we will sing songs of joy and thanksgiving." And in his notebook where he recorded his retreat before deaconate he resolved: Holy Mass on Sundays shall always be offered up to praise the Most Blessed Trinity for creation, redemption and the call to a consecrated life. St. Arnold Janssen likes to refer to the three Thrones of the Trinity: the Heavenly Throne, the Eucharistic Throne and the Mystical Throne, which is the indwelling of Holy Spirit in the hearts of men. He always urges his religious to make their hearts like an altar from which rises an unceasing sacrifice of thanksgiving to Holy Triune God. He wrote, "Gratitude must be the foundation particularly of the soul which practices interior prayer". In his last letter as the founder to all his children of three international religious congregations, he prays, "May the Holy Triune God admit you ever more intimately into the bosom of His divine love." And to the Blessed Trinity he consecrates the three powers of his soul and encourages all men to do so by saying, "Let us consecrate our memories to the Father, so that through his grace they may be occupied not with temporal things, not with creatures but with the Creator. Let us consecrate our understanding to the only-begotten Son who is Wisdom Eternal so that he may enlighten it. Let us consecrate our will to the Holy Spirit who is the Love of the Father and the Son so that He may put our affections in order and sanctify them by love."

### The Blessed Trinity in the Society of Divine Word Missionary's life

Our Founder's great devotion to Blessed Trinity is the foundation of our spirituality. The life of communion of love of God the Holy Trinity becomes the essence of our calling to take part in the communion of Holy Triune God and to share with others the experience of love of the Holy Triune God. Our community is always composed of people from various

countries, with different backgrounds and cultures. The differences are not obstacles. Indeed, it becomes the unifying ingredient of our uniqueness and a marvelous grace given to our Society, the Divine Word Missionaries. The difference also is our strength; it gives a powerful witness to the world. That does not mean that our loving communion is far from conflicts. We accept our weaknesses and uniqueness and in everything we learn to enrich each other, to be compassionate, to support each other and to accept each other. The spirit of openness strengthens the bounds of our communion.

Therefore a great devotion to the Holy Triune God is shown in our devotional custom. Each week of the following days is dedicated to the Divine Person of Trinity: Monday to the Holy Spirit; Thursday to the Eternal Son; Friday to the Father Most High who on this day handed over His only Son for us. Sunday is dedicated to thanksgiving to Holy Trinity for the grace of creation, redemption and sanctification.

A question might be raised: Why the name of our society is not related to Holy Triune God? In the light of Trinitarian spirituality, St. Arnold wanted to emphasize that the name of our society: the Society of the Divine Word (*Societas Verbi Divini*), show God as communicating and revealing God. God speaks the Word that fully contains and reveals His whole being. Speaking this Divine Word, the Father fully gives all that He is, so that the Second Person, the Word Spoken, is as much God as the Father except that He is God spoken forth by the Father and His whole being comes from the Father and is wholly responding in a word of love to the Father. It is a mutual love so equally total in self-giving that this love too is as much God, as either Father or the Word, or the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Love. Therefore St. Arnold Janssen stressed that the power and the strength of the Word of God is linked to the power of the Spirit. St. Arnold saw that Divine Word sent the Spirit precisely to make the Father's word an effective, dynamic word, uniting every people in the Divine Word and through Him to the Father.

### Holy Triune God signifies our calling and mission

The motto: "May the Holy Triune God live in our hearts and in the heart of all" signifies our calling and our mission. This is a calling to bring all people to share in the communion of Holy Triune God. Through the Word of God we preach, we reveal and show that God the Father invites all people to be his children in Christ, the Son. United with Christ, the Son by the power of Holy Spirit we are united with the Father and participate in His relationship of Son to the Father in Spirit. This sharing in the communion of love in Holy Triune God helps to achieve our being as human. We are fully human when we recognize and realize that we are created by God the Father, redeemed by Christ the Son and sanctified by the presence of Holy Spirit in us. Aware of this great love of the Holy Triune God in us, we light our missionary zeal to share with other people through our witness to the word of God so that many people will come to unite themselves in the communion of love and life of the Holy Trinity.

Rev. Reginaldus Amleni, SVD





## Witnesses of SVD Fathers

# W

hen the Golden Anniversary of my priestly ordination was celebrated on December 8th at the Hong Kong Cathedral, my thoughts went back more than 50 years. I remember a cold winter day in Bavaria (Germany) in 1947, when I was about 13 years old. My dream was to become a driver of a big steam locomotive, like the ones I saw passing our place every day. Then one day my parish priest came to our religion class and asked, "Who of you wants to become an SVD Missionary?" I know, it was not I; it was the Lord who encouraged me to raise my hand and to say "I do." I had no idea who or what the SVD was, but I was sure that I did the right thing and a few days later, I was on my way to the Minor Seminary – and last week, I celebrated the Golden Anniversary of my priestly ordination. After a short time of parish work in Munich, Germany and language study in Liverpool, England, I left for the Philippines in August 1962 and spent 22 wonderful years there. In 1984, another call brought me to Hong Kong, when I believed that the Lord was calling me again. Looking back all those years since the first call in 1947, my ordination in 1960, my arrival in the Philippines in 1962 and my transfer to Hong Kong in 1984 until today – all I can say is that it was the Lord's doing from the beginning to the end. All I had to do, was to follow his call: COME AND FOLLOW ME!

Rev. Helmut Peter, SVD



# M

any missionaries, when they go back to their own countries, can hear people asking them: "Please, tell us the most dangerous and most funny story from your mission life".

I came to Taiwan in 2001. In the beginning I considered this country as a very safe place. Although people living in Taiwan are used to several typhoons and earthquakes every year, not until 2009 did I experience a real danger caused by a natural disaster. In April of that year I moved from a city parish in Taipei to our 50-year old SVD mission in Ali Mountains in southern Taiwan. After four months there, we saw vast damage caused by typhoon Morakot. People slowly started to rebuild their houses and roads. The SVD also helped our parishioners to restore their normal life. But it is not only during natural disasters that I experience the support of the SVD. Our mountain parish is made up of seven villages. In order to be more available and closer to our parishioners, my parish priest, Daisuke Shintate and I live in different villages. This situation helps me to appreciate the value of SVD community life. I try to go down to our Taiwan South District House in Chiayi City regularly. I enjoy praying, sharing meals and soccer matches in our Arnoldus Family. It helps me to undertake energetically my pastoral task in our parish.

May God bless our mission work and all our friends and benefactors!

Rev. Piotr Budkiewicz, SVD



### Personal Prayer for Missionary Vocation

Jesus, you said to your first disciples, "Come follow me," and they became your apostles to the world. Guide me as I try these days to discern more clearly your call in my life.

Enlighten my inner being that I may know myself better and have the courage to respond to you whole heartedly. Support my steps along this path toward a possible future as a religious missionary. Help me to pray and to listen attentively to your response.

Amen.

