

ARNOLD JANSSEN'S GREAT ENTERPRISE.

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[Arnold Janssen was canonized in 2003.]

The Society of the Divine Word — S.V.D. for short, *Societas Verbi Divini* — the youngest of the religious congregations properly so called devoted to the Foreign Missions, has recently completed its first three score years and ten.(1875-1945) The way in which the Society acquired its title is something of a romance in itself. The letters S.V.D. do not correspond so much with the famous and familiar ones, O.P., as with the also fairly familiar initials, S.J., for the Verbum Divinum ('Divine Word') of the title does not stand for the Gospel but for Him who brought us the Gospel, Jesus Christ our Lord, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. This is how the title came into existence.

At Goch, a luckless Catholic frontier town of north-western Germany, which, after being pillaged regularly by contending armies ever since the Middle Ages, was wiped off the map altogether in the spring of 1945, there lived a hundred years ago a small farmer and his wife, Gerard (or Joannes) and Anna Janssen. They were peasants and neither of them had received any formal education worth speaking of, except the power to read, write and keep their modest accounts. But Gerard Janssen was a working farmer of a very unusual type, and heavens, how he worked — not only following the plough during the day, but plodding in the dark hours as a carter between Goch and Nijmegen. When storms or frost threatened his scanty, hard-earned crops, and so the lives of his eight children, he did not call upon the local good fairies to help him nor even invoke the saints. He lit a blessed candle, fell upon his knees, and cried to Heaven in a loud voice: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God," down to the conclusion of the great opening verses of Saint John. So deeply was he attached to this sublimest passage of the Gospels that he recited it every night after the long family prayers, and would often alarm the attendant crows and seagulls by bursting into it while he ploughed. He used to tell his children that it was "a strong prayer and had great power with God." One of them, Arnold, never forgot his father's devotion, and so the world-wide Society which he founded came by its title out of the heart of a common carter and ploughman.

If that is not heavenly romance, what is? When now in every continent and country the Fathers of the Society of the Divine Word take or renew their religious vows, they begin

by chanting, lighted candles in their hands just like Farmer Janssen long ago, “*In principio erat Verbum et Verbum erat apud Deum.* “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. . . .”

Another item about the forgotten carter of Goch may be mentioned before we come to his son, who reproduced *so much of him and stamped it on his own sons. He had an extraordinary devotion to the Holy Ghost* and heard Mass every Monday of his life in honour of the third Divine Person. He never tired of talking to his children about this devotion. “He described to us,” wrote his son William, later Brother Juniper among the Capuchins, “how the Holy Ghost brings peace to souls and families, fills the heart with joy in the service of God and moves it to every good deed, just as He blesses the fields and meadows. We children looked up to Father in wonderment when thus he taught and exhorted us to venerate the Holy Ghost.” Ever since its foundation devotion to the Holy Ghost has been one of the well-springs of the Society of the Divine Word’s missionary activities, a well which the patriarchal farmer of Goch gave to it, “and drank thereof himself and his children.” In all houses of the Society the third Monday of each month is specially consecrated to the worship of the Holy Ghost, and by a rare Papal privilege the priests on that day say the Mass *de Spiritu Sancto* ‘of the Holy Spirit’ with Gloria and Credo, all doubles and major doubles to the contrary notwithstanding.

Joannes’ wife, Anna, was his born helpmate, the *Mulier fortis*, the ‘valiant woman’, the ‘perfect wife.’ of Proverbs down to the last jot and tittle. On one occasion, her growing boys teased her by saying, “Mother, if you pray any longer you will pray yourself clean through Heaven!” She retorted: “If one has eight children like you to care for the only thing to be done is to pray.” Once, the whole family had to go to the fields very early in the morning, leaving Anna all alone to do the housework. At dinner, her husband remarked that he was sure she must have missed daily Mass for once, with all that work on her hands. “How can you talk like that, Father?” she replied. “Do you think I could have got through everything *without* going to Mass?” Is one wrong in finding something sublime, indeed a whole philosophy of the Christian life, in the answer of this simple peasant woman?

If Arnold inherited so much of his soul’s furniture from his father, he borrowed his powerful head from his mother. A splendid photograph taken of him shortly before his death in 1909 shows the same broad sweep of brow, piercing eyes, fine nose, and formidable chin as appear in his mother’s picture. Anyone looking at the photograph attentively would not need to be told that he stood in the presence of greatness, but a benign greatness, transfused by some inner radiance. There is a look in his eyes such as Raphael gave to his Sistine Madonna, but he is smiling, too, and that is more than Raphael was able to make his Madonna do. Serenity, perhaps, is the word which best describes all the features of this wonderful face, the serenity of a peace bought at the price of terrible suffering,

EARLY PREPARATION.

It would take too long to describe all the shifts and devices whereby Arnold, who like his brothers seemed predestined to the plough, achieved an education. He even worked his way to the University of Bonn, where, after two years' fierce application, he obtained a faculty to teach, in the highly organised and efficient State schools, mathematics, physics, mineralogy, botany, zoology, chemistry. So far, science had very definitely frowned upon his humble birth! But his attachment to it was more a matter of religion than of temperament. He took his degree in the year when *The Origin of Species* burst like an atomic bomb upon the drowsing world, and he foresaw a great decline of faith as a result of rampant evolutionism. Soon, the Haeckels, Buchners, Huxleys, Tyndalls, and other camp-followers of the great and sober Darwin would be gleefully announcing the final liquidation of Christianity. Arnold Janssen felt that Catholics, and especially priests, must be prepared to fight it out with those trumpeters of atheism on their own ground, and so he gave himself heart and soul to the sciences.

He won a prize of fifty thalers (about £10) for an essay in higher mathematics and characteristically "blew" this untold wealth by bringing his rustic old father to Bonn and giving him a great time. It was the biggest adventure of Farmer Janssen's life, and Magellan himself could not have been more excited by his voyage round the world. Afterwards, Arnold, then twenty-two, received an offer of a teaching post in Berlin at the handsome salary of eight hundred thalers a year. Here was fortune indeed, but he turned from it without a second thought because he had his mind set on being a priest.

He was ordained at the diocesan seminary of Munster on the feast of the Assumption, 1862, and then was sent to teach, mostly mathematics, at a local Catholic college of no great reputation. There he remained, the hidden and contented slave of the blackboard, for twelve solid years, though he could not prevent himself from dreaming apostolic dreams. At weekends, he functioned cheerfully as a heavily burdened curate in the parish church of Bocholt. It will be a consolation to some of us to know that this great man, in spite of the most earnest and persevering endeavours, could never learn to sing two consecutive notes correctly. Why does Holy Church assume that all her priests must be skylarks when she does not expect them to be fine painters, sculptors, poets, county cricketers, or any other thing dependent on inherited ability? The biggest concession that Arnold Janssen found himself ever able to make to the music in front of him was to raise or bow his head according as the notes went up or down. Otherwise, much the same sort of noises came from his lips, whatever the music. Once, in an emergency, he was persuaded to take the part of celebrant at a High Mass, but with such terrible result that he never received another invitation, and remained a perpetual 'sub-deacon' on those occasions. It does not much matter what sounds a sub-deacon emits.

ZEAL FOR SOULS.

In 1867 the Jesuit director of the Apostleship of Prayer for Germany and Austria, who knew Father Janssen and the metal of which he was forged, asked him to become the local promoter of the good work in the diocese of Munster, where it was practically unknown. He accepted with enthusiasm, and it may safely be said that never since the foundation of the Apostleship in 1844 has it known a more devoted or hard-working friend. No more holidays for Arnold Janssen after this call, for he spent them tramping the large diocese from end to end until hardly a parish within its confines remained without a branch of the Apostleship. The labour was a kind of novitiate for him, rendering his thoughts and aspirations world-wide, and his happy position with his boys no longer endurable. He begged to be released from the pleasant service of the sciences, and set out into the wilds, a penniless and lonely crusader, to try to undo the evil work of the Reformation. The Bishop of Paderborn encouraged him with words that have lost nothing of their point to-day: "If we had prayed as much for Protestant Germany as we have railed against it, it would have become Catholic long ago."

At Kempen, the native place of the man who composed or, at any rate, compiled the *Imitation of Christ*, some good nuns gave the homeless priest a roof over his head in return for his services as their chaplain. There, with a few hard-earned or borrowed thalers as his capital, he started a tiny eight-page religious magazine which he called the *Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, and devoted entirely to the promotion of prayer among Catholics for the conversion of their separated brethren and of the heathen in missionary lands. He was himself the only contributor to the magazine, and when it returned from the press, it was he who put the hundreds of copies in their wrappers and addressed them to his subscribers.

Janssen's feet never travelled very far, but from the day of his ordination, his heart began to go the rounds of the world. Even as a child, he had been taught to think in terms of human beings rather than of nations or races. During the Irish Famine, his father had added an *Our Father* to the already 'terribly long night-prayers' of the family for the starving people. When Arnold's brother William led the prayers he used sometimes to try to dodge this extra straw on the camel's back, but never succeeded, because his father would at once notice the omission and say: "Willie, the *Pater Noster* for Ireland, please." The elder Janssen's favourite light reading in spare moments had been the *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith* — another straw, if you like, not on the camel's back but in the wind, the Pentecostal wind which was to blow with such mighty power in Arnold's soul.

The *Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart* began its humble existence in the worst days of the Kulturkampf, that much more violent if less insidious onslaught on the Church in Germany than the later one which took its inspiration from the lurid pages of *Mein Kampf*. All the teaching Orders and Congregations, the Jesuits, 'in the usual way', in the vanguard, were banished from the country and their property confiscated. The Archbishops of Cologne and Trier and the Cardinal Archbishop of Breslau were cast into the common gaols, as were an equal number of Bishops, including the Bishop of

Munster, and scores of secular priests, until the number of orphaned parishes, deprived of Mass and sacraments, had reached a thousand.

A CHALLENGE.

It was in this, their darkest hour, when religion at home seemed on the brink of destruction, that Arnold Janssen issued a strange challenge to the Catholics of Germany. He summoned them to forget their own sorrows and to think of China, *the great land of the hopes and sorrows of Jesus.*” He had no money, no influence, no health, no administrative experience, nothing at all, in fact, except a large fund of faith, hope and charity. He knew his own limitations better than any of his critics and he did not at all envision himself as the founder of a great new missionary movement in Germany, but only as its humble advocate and promoter through the pages of his little magazine. He had to do his begging at a time when the spare thalers of priests and people alike were being steadily collected as fines by the minions of the Iron Chancellor, Bismarck. It was only when he failed to persuade others, with much better qualifications to found the seminary that he decided in a spirit of utter self-abnegation to take the burden on his own feeble shoulders, braving the smiling and frowns which he knew would be his portion.

His first appeal to the young priests and prospective priests of Germany, whom the Falk Laws had debarred from exercising their functions at home, met with no response whatever. He begged them for the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Redeemer of all men, be they black or white, yellow or red of skin, to remove the reproach of their Fatherland, which alone of the nations with a large Catholic population did next to nothing for the foreign missions. Even England, where Catholics were so few and so poor, had already its Mill Hill Missionaries. True the German Church was passing through its Gethsemane, but surely, the way to win the pity of God upon its desolation was the old, tried, never-failing way of sacrifice. Let them cast their bread upon the waters, upon the Seven Seas of the world, and seek the salvation of Germany in Paraguay, Japan and Sinkiang (the Xinjiang province of China). The appeal, repeated again and again, seemed as if spoken into the void, for not a single priest or student came forward.

A FOOL FOR A SAINT.

It looked as if the plough of his fathers had caught up with poor dreaming Janssen, for here he was, month after month, ploughing the sands. Meantime he prayed, *and how he prayed!* “From the garden of my parents’ house,” wrote a witness, “we could look into Father Janssen’s room. Whenever he forgot to pull down the blinds after lighting his lamp, we could easily see what he was doing. Thus, it often happened that our father said to us: ‘Children, come into the garden — I want to show you how a saint prays.’ Then we would see Father Janssen kneeling in his room like the statue of a saint, motionless and absorbed in God. He would remain in this attitude for hours on end.” He

peddled his dreams through much of Germany and then on into Luxembourg and Belgium, with little result except kind words from harassed prelates who recognised his goodness but rather doubted his sanity. Charging windmills might be considered a safe and harmless occupation compared with this crazy idea of starting a brand new seminary for the conversion of the heathen in the midst of the Kulturkampf.

As Archbishop Melchers of Cologne said with some asperity when he heard of the scheme, there were heathens enough right under his nose on the banks of the Rhine if he wanted to try his hand as an apostle. Janssen approached this brave and venerable prelate, one of the stalwarts of the Catholic resistance, shortly after his release from five months' rigorous confinement in a Cologne gaol. Timidly he outlined his plan, whereupon the old man replied, shaking his head and lost in astonishment: "We are living in a time when everything is tottering and threatening to collapse, and now you come and want to build up something entirely new." Another Bishop to whom he turned his weary steps gave him some encouragement at the moment, but remarked a few days later to one of his priests: "You know Janssen of Kempen. He has called on me. He wants to build a seminary for the foreign missions and he hasn't 'two pence' to his name. The man is either a fool or a saint."

STORMY WEATHER.

If the doubters had studied Janssen's chin more carefully, they might have been less confident that he was chasing the rainbow. A windfall in the shape of two donations amounting to 15,000 marks, one from a convent of Poor Clares and the other from a servant girl, determined the obstinate Quixote of the missions, whose trust in God was absolutely sublime, to present his critics with a *fait accompli*. He would buy a house in Holland just over the frontier so as to escape the attentions of Herr Falk's watchful policemen, and then see what happened. To his immense relief, a priest and two young students, Dutch, Austrian and German respectively, joined him at the eleventh hour, and then, on August 4, 1875, this oddly assorted quartette became the proud owners of a derelict tavern with an old barn attached, in the little village of Steyl, near Venlo, on the banks of the Maas.

All Father Janssen's money went in the purchase, so he had a roof and four bare walls to shelter his three recruits, but no crockery, no cooking utensils, no beds, absolutely nothing else, no tables or chairs, no larder. Only the occasional alms which the *Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart* brought in stood between the four and starvation, or so, anyhow, it seemed. This was poverty in the grand manner, and Arnold Janssen definitely loved it. Long before he crossed his Rubicon of the Maas, his patched and threadbare cassock and dilapidated hat had been a standing joke among his clerical brethren. To give him money for a new hat was merely to put it into the grimy fist of the first beggar he met. The bareness of Saint Michael's Mission House at Steyl was somewhat relieved by the arrival of a master carpenter with missionary aspirations, and the food situation

improved when Brother Juniper, O.F.M. Cap., the former unartful dodger of the *Pater Noster* for Ireland, who was a master outdoor-collector, came to Saint Michael's as a refugee from Germany.

But as material conditions grew better, relations between Janssen and his three disciples degenerated. They did not see eye to eye with their leader, and indeed refused to recognise him as such, though they had voted him into power, and his position as rector had been duly approved by his ordinary, the Bishop of Roermond. Janssen wanted them to adopt the severe rule of the Dominican tertiaries, and also clung tenaciously to two other ideas, that, with the missions in view and likewise with half an eye on Darwin and Co., they should make the study of such sciences as ethnology and anthropology a special aim of their vocation, and that in non-missionary lands they would help the parochial clergy by every means in their power. The ideal of the others was not so broad and far-sighted. They did not want to be a new religious congregation, as Janssen seemed bent on making them, nor had they any sympathy with his plans for scientific studies. Let who liked look after Darwin, while they carried out the proper function of missionary priests, which was to preach the plain, unadorned Gospel to the heathen. Soon it came to an overt breach and two of his tiny cenacle walked with him no more. It nearly broke his heart, and no doubt, the critics said to their friends with grim relish:

“My dear fellow, I told you so!”

GOD'S STAMP.

But Arnold Janssen held on his desolate way, pouring out his soul to the God in whom he trusted even though He should kill him and obliterate his humble effort to serve His Divine Majesty. We must skip the stations of his cross and jump seventy years ahead to see what came of all the tears and toils and sufferings. The old tavern and barn are now transformed into a very city of God inhabited by 1200 priests, students for the priesthood, brothers and nuns, all the children of Arnold Janssen. Steyl, in fact, is one of the greatest powerhouses and show places of Catholicism on the face of this earth.

Until the Nazis dismantled it and dispersed its fine machines throughout various parts of their short-lived Reich, the Pontifical Printing Works of Steyl, started by Janssen himself and always operated by his sons, was recognised as one of the most up-to-date and best equipped in Europe. From it used to come before the War, weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly, no less than eleven learned or popular religious periodicals. One of these, *Die heilige Stadt Gottes*, 'The Holy City of God', another of Janssen's inspirations, became easily the best-seller of all Catholic magazines in German-speaking lands and attained a circulation of half a million. Long before we heard of prefabricated houses in this country, they were being made by the expert Brothers of Steyl for shipment to the missions. Not only the Brothers, but the Fathers, too, were encouraged by their Founder and given every facility to turn themselves into skilled craftsmen in wood, metal and

stone. One consequence of this is worth mentioning. Of the thirty-five buxom daughter-houses of Steyl in Europe alone, many were planned, built and equipped by members of the Society of the Divine Word, with a minimum of professional assistance. The greatest of these offshoots of the old tavern and barn on the Maas is the mission seminary of Saint Gabriel's at Modling, Vienna, a place that might astonish even its archangelical patron himself. Here indeed is trust in God vindicated beyond all calculation.

In his strange novel, *Embezzled Heaven*, Franz Werfel, most Catholic-minded of Jews, sends the queer old woman Teta on a visit of inquiry to Saint Gabriel's, but "the famous house of the brave missionaries was a town in itself, and she lost her way." Like Steyl, this new town in itself was founded directly by Arnold Janssen, and by Janssen the feet of its most distinguished citizen, Father Wilhelm Schmidt, S.V.D., were early directed into those paths of learning which have made his name world-famous. Father Schmidt, now nearly seventy-eight but still busy with science and with souls in Switzerland, founded at Saint Gabriel's in 1906 the international anthropological and ethnological review, *Anthropos*, which he still edits. [Father Schmidt died in 1954.]

At this point, the reader may wonder what has become of the foreign missions, the bride of the untravelled Janssen's holy heart by day, the dream of his heart by night. They are there all right, and all the work done by the Society of the Divine Word in Europe and the United States, where it has fourteen flourishing colleges and missions, including the great seminary at Techny, in Illinois, known to all Americans through its publications, is strictly subservient to them. The Society today numbers well over four thousand members, a truly wonderful growth in the span of a single human life, especially in view of the genuine austerity of the rule. The point of such privations is that money may be saved for the missions. Those missions are now to be found in every quarter of the globe, among the negroes of North America and Africa, and the Indians of the Argentine, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay; far and wide on twenty-eight stations, true stations of the cross, in Japan; all over the Philippines, in India, New Guinea, and Indonesian and Fijian islands lost in the wastes of the Pacific: in several of the wildest areas of China, where also the Society has charge of the Catholic University of Peking, with its four thousand alumni. [The Chinese missions suffered crippling persecutions under the communist regime, and the University replanted itself as the Fu Jen University in Taiwan.] *In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum*, 'into all the earth has gone forth the sound of them' or should we not say *ejus*, (the sound 'of him') of the peasant lad who loved and trusted God so well that he became, as in some heavenly fairy tale, an emperor among men?

What an answer the life of this German is to the prating of those dreary imbeciles who say there are no good Germans! Janssen's cause of beatification has been introduced at Rome and is making good progress. [Beatified in 1975, he was canonized in 2003.]

ONE BRANCH OF ARNOLD JANSSEN'S

GREAT ENTERPRISE.

By *REV. J. TSCHAUDER, S. V. D.*

Arnold Janssen's Great Enterprise started as just that, an enterprise for the glory of God and the salvation of souls; as an adventure of a man who was willing to dare for the honour of God and the salvation of souls redeemed in the Blood of Christ. To-day that "Enterprise" is a reality — the Society of the Divine Word which, during seventy years, has developed beyond even Arnold Janssen's fondest hopes. The personnel of the Society already comprises one Cardinal, thirteen Bishops, six Prefects Apostolics, one Administrator Apostolic, one thousand eight hundred and seventeen Priests, seven hundred and fifty-five Seminarians, one thousand seven hundred and forty-six Lay Brothers, two thousand three hundred Students and three hundred and thirty-three Aspirants to the Lay Brotherhood — over seven thousand persons in all.

Mission Colleges and Seminaries of the Society of the Divine Word have been erected in nearly every European country, the United States, South America, China [and later in Taiwan], the Philippine Islands and the Netherlands East Indies [now Indonesia]. They number nearly fifty, and educate boys for the Priesthood and Brotherhood as members of the Society. Shortly before the war, houses were opened in Ireland, Belgium, England, Italy and, of late, also in Australia.

The Mission fields of the Society of the Divine Word circle the globe — China, Japan, India, Philippine Islands, Indonesia or 'Netherlands East Indies', Africa, South and North America and New Guinea. The salvation of close to fifty million pagans and over one million Christian souls are entrusted to the Society.

The Society of the Divine Word came to the special notice of the Catholics of this country of Australia when the battle for New Guinea was at its height. Then the work of the Missions in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea was officially recognised. Attention was focused on the Society's New Guinea Mission because of the rescue of the small remnant of personnel at Hollandia (just over the border in formerly Dutch territory in New Guinea where they were being held as hostages by the Japanese) in 1944.

Interest of the whole country, especially of the Catholics, in the New Guinea Missions has been accentuated with the certain knowledge that New Guinea is the first barrier of the defence of Australia from the north. The history of the Papuan Missions and Territory has been written, but the Mandated Territory remains an unexplored and little-known territory even today. The first to really penetrate the jungles of that part of the tropical island were the Missionaries of the Divine Word.

The story of the founding of the Divine Word Missions, known as the Eastern and Central New Guinea Missions, in the Mandated Territory, is a story of heroism and

enterprise; the story of its destruction in the last war is one of horrifying loss and lamentable suffering.

EARLY DAYS.

The portion of New Guinea now known as the Eastern and Central New Guinea Missions, was for some years under the Sacred Heart Fathers, whose headquarters were at Rabaul. Lack of Missionaries forced the indefinite postponement of the evangelisation of the mainland portion of the vast Rabaul Vicariate, which comprised all of what was then German New Guinea.

On May 29, 1895, the Prefect of the Propagation of the Faith, Cardinal Ledochowski, informed the Superior-General of the Society of the Divine Word of his intention to separate the mainland of New Guinea from the Vicariate of Rabaul, and convert it into an independent mission. He also sought an indication of the Superior-General's willingness to take over the new mission. Father Arnold Janssen accepted at once, and on February 10, 1896, the 'Prefecture of Williams Land' (as mainland New Guinea was called by its German rulers) was canonically erected.

The Rev. E. Limbrock, S.V.D. a missionary in China since 1883 was appointed first Prefect Apostolic. His first companions were the Rev. F. Vormann, S.V.D., and Rev. J. Erdweg, S.V.D., and the Brothers Canisius, Eustachius and Theodulphus.

The little party arrived at Madang, after three months' voyage on the *Stettin*, on the 18th of August, 1896. From Madang, Father Vormann set out on a reconnaissance trip. Later on, together with Fr. Erdweg, Brother Canisius and 10 native labourers, who had been lent to them by the Rabaul Missionaries, he boarded the *Stettin* and travelled to the north-west, stopping at the island of Seleo (off Aitape). The Superior and other Missionaries were unable to make the trip, as they were in the grip of malaria.

The owner of a coconut plantation on Seleo, a certain Mr. Kaernbach, assisted the missionaries in purchasing a block of land on Tumleo, a small island two or three hours by boat from Seleo. He helped unload their cargo, and mobilised the Seleo natives, who, in canoes and boats, ferried the cargo and equipment across to Tumleo.

On October 25th, Father Limbrock and the two Brothers bade Madang and its malaria-infested mangrove swamps farewell. Three days, later they celebrated a happy reunion on Tumleo.

BEGINNINGS.

October 28th may be considered the actual inauguration of the Catholic Mission of 'Williams Land', for it saw not only the gathering of all the missionaries of the newly-

founded mission, but it also marked the first baptism. Little Anthony Joseph became the first of many thousands of Catholics to follow both on earth and into heaven. Anthony Joseph died a few days after baptism.

Even then, time was not heavy upon any of the missionaries' hands. There were sick to be looked after, sores to be dressed, ulcers to be cleaned. Though not quite understood by the natives, this work helped remove the mountain barriers of fear and mistrust.

The missionaries soon thought of opening a school. A primitive building was quickly erected, but those for whom it had been intended showed remarkably little interest in it. This was one of the greatest difficulties to be met and overcome — indifference to everything that required effort, physical or mental. However, in the year 1897 the first primer and a number of prayers were printed in the Tumleo language.

In 1899, the missionaries were half way between Aitape and Madang, at Monumbo, then a group of populous villages along the coast, just opposite Manam or Volcano Island. The same year witnessed the arrival of the first Sisters, Servants of the Holy Ghost. Besides taking over schools and dispensaries, they provided considerable help to the missionaries. Every year saw new missionaries coming to New Guinea, Priests, Brothers and Sisters.

Tumleo Island remained the headquarters of the mission until 1905, when circumstances forced the Superior to cast around for another, more suitable place. The North German Lloyd cut off the Tumleo run, which threatened to make Tumleo an isolated island. Further down to the south-east, about 120 miles beyond Bogia, was Madang, where the missionaries had landed nine years previously. Madang had regular steamers from Hong Kong, Singapore and Sydney. Madang would be an ideal place in that respect. The District Officer at Madang could advise nothing more than that the missionaries explore the coast to the north-west — something might be found up there which would be suitable for a mission station and headquarters.

Father Limbrock did not have far to go. Ten miles from Madang, he came upon one of the best harbours in New Guinea, then still a solitude of water, swamp and jungle, but sheltered from both the north-west and the south-east monsoon. The long narrow Sek Island almost closed the entrance to the harbour. Sek Island was populated whereas there were few signs of human life around the harbour, except a few gardens belonging to the Sek Islanders, who were the owners of that land.

A NEW MISSION HEADQUARTERS COMES INTO BEING.

The Sek people readily ceded all the land around the harbour to the mission. They were paid with trade goods, as was customary. Axes, jungle-knives, loincloths, saucepans, beads and other useful articles were given in compensation. Soon, however, fierce

opposition arose against the Catholic Mission. The Sek people, instigated by a group of white residents, all but cancelled their contract and handed back the articles they had received in payment for their land.

Doilon, or Alexishafen, as it is known to-day, would have never become the headquarters of the Catholic Mission and Seat of a Bishop, had it not been for one native of Sek Island. That native was Futol, whose name could be translated into "Hard Hitting Talk" or "Three Strokes." Be that as it may, Futol's talk to the assembled natives must have hit their heads extremely hard, for it was he who succeeded in making the natives stand by their contract. The trade goods were not handed back, and the mission began the development of Alexishafen. It was natural that Futol should henceforth regard himself as the "father of the Catholic Mission." Often in later years, he would paddle across from Sek to Doilon and watch with keen interest the progress of "his mission." He was part and parcel of the mission. All he asked, as his life-long pension was "Kas-ti panag" (Give me some tobacco). He was actually known as "Kas-ti panag."

SAINT MICHAEL'S.

The mission at Alexishafen was officially opened on May 22, 1905, and placed under the patronage of Saint Michael, the Archangel, one of the principal Patrons of the Society of the Divine Word. In order to make the exploration of the area easier, native labourers, under the supervision of Brother Canisius and Brother Sylvester, (a recently arrived missionary brother) cut long, straight clearings through the dense jungle and mangrove.

Every fortnight one of the three North-German Lloyd steamers of the Hong Kong-Sydney run called at Madang. The Singapore-Batavia-Rabaul steamer called every second month. The new station and its surroundings was surveyed and laid out by Father van den Hemel.

Alexishafen grew rapidly in every way. Sisters arrived and took over the hospital and school. The native teachers' school was transferred from Tumleo to Saint Michael's. Coconut plantations were laid out. Even the cultivation of rubber (*ficus*) was begun. Hundreds of acres of cleared jungle yielded logs of ant-proof timber, which called for a sawmill and steamer. The sawmill was built, the 90-ton steamer, *Gabriel*, was commissioned. The *Gabriel* served the mission for almost 20 years, from 1909 to 1929, only to find an inglorious end on the slip at Rabaul.

Together with the economic foundation of the mission went the actual mission work among the natives. The process of conversion was a long and weary one. In fact, conversions among the natives up to World War I were not numerous. Paganism was not only deeply rooted in the hearts of these primitive and often savage people, but the natives had been left with very few traces of the *anima naturaliter Christiana* (the soul

that is Christian by nature). The missionaries found it very difficult to gain a few footholds in the devil's own fortress. Between 1905 and 1909, mission stations were strung along the coast connecting the other widely separated stations. To the north-west, about 20 miles from Alexishafen, the three stations of Mugil, Megiar and Matukar, were opened. Further to the west of Aitape, the Malol, Arop and Aisano stations came into existence. All, at least by New Guinea standards, were populous villages or more fertile districts.

During the First World War, the interior behind Alexishafen and Bogia was opened and Father Kirschbaum's countless explorations up and down the mighty Sepik River prepared, slowly but surely, the hearts of the savage head-hunting Sepik natives for the meek Gospel of Christ. The mission, for the first time, began to show a substantial increase in the number of converts and catechumens. The sweat and toil and patience of the heroic pioneers began to bear fruit.

As the first Great War drew to a close, the position showed signs of deteriorating. The missionaries' numbers had been on the decline. Since 1913, there had been no new missionaries to take over from the dead, the sick and the weary. Malaria, black-water fever and exhaustion had taken its toll. Then, after the first War, there was question of nationality. The Commonwealth Government of Australia gave a spark of hope when permission was granted to the German missionaries to remain in the mission another two years after the cessation of hostilities. This would give time for the work to be taken over in part, at least, by English-speaking missionaries. That concession was later extended to 1928, when the question of nationality was entirely dropped and missionaries of all nationalities were permitted to remain or to enter the New Guinea Missions in the Mandated Territory. Between 1923 and 1928 conditions improved considerably with the arrival of reinforcements from the United States, Holland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and, in 1928, again from Germany, when three priests and seven Brothers from that country arrived; they were the first Germans since 1913.

NEW HORIZONS.

New Guinea had no communication system worth speaking of at this time. Most of the traffic used the sea route along the coast. The mission made extensive use of the rivers where this could be done. There were only two rivers that were suitable for navigation, the Sepik and the Ramu. This latter could be negotiated only by smaller craft. Using the Ramu, stations were opened in the deep interior in 1930. Those interior stations were real solitudes compared with other island or coastal stations. Atemble and Annaberg, especially, were real lonely outposts that required plenty of courage to hold.

A great change was brought about in the New Guinea communications system by the discovery of gold in the mountains of the interior. Missionaries and prospectors arrived about the same time. Father Ross S.V.D. was in the Bismarck Mountain and Mount

Hagen regions as early as 1932. He met the Leahy brothers there when the latter came through prospecting for gold. Until then those mountainous interior regions were completely unknown to the white men. The culture of these people dated back to what seemed to be the Stone Age. The white man went into those regions for one of two purposes — gold or souls. The missionary was looking for immortal souls created by God for heaven — he found them in abundance. Down on the coast he had counted his people by the hundreds, in the Chimbu and Wahgi valleys, as well as on the heights of Mount Hagen, he counted them by the thousands. The climate was so different, too — much more to the liking of the white man. Down on the coast it was hot day and night; in this new region, five or six blankets were needed at night.

On the coast, tinned vegetables and native taros and yams made up the menu; in the mountains practically all vegetables could be grown, even potatoes. This was the land of the missionary's dream, and to those high altitudes and thousands of untouched souls, the missionaries trekked. They struggled over mountain ranges, plunged through deep valleys, forded swift rivers to reach those people. It took them up to three weeks to reach their destination and more weeks and months until they were settled. Such places as Mount Hagen, Korugu (or Chimbu or Simbu), Kundiawa -Kerowagi, Bundi, Guyebi, and Dengeragu became chapters in the new mission history of New Guinea.

The natives lived in a constant state of war, family feuds, and murder. Fighting seemed to be their favourite pastime when not engaged in dances and festivals to celebrate some victory. At first, the missionaries had to keep close to their little compounds, which were islands of peace in the middle of warring and treacherous natives.

The new mission was opened in the Mount Bismarck and Mount Hagen region. It soon called for the supreme sacrifice of life from the young missionaries. Here for the first time New Guinea's soil was drenched with the blood of Divine Word Missionaries.

Father Charles Morschheuser, from Munster, in Westphalia, Germany, was ambushed by natives and killed with arrows on December 16, 1934, while on his way to celebrate Christmas at another station.

Brother Eugene Frank, an American, lost his life in the same manner, on almost the same spot, five weeks later. He was attacked on January 23, 1935, and died in the hospital at Salamaua.

THE MISSION TAKES TO THE AIR.

One of the most pressing needs of the mountain missionaries was for a more frequent and quicker communication with the main Mission Station at Alexishafen. New Guinea gold was being shipped by plane. Planes ferried miners, machinery, dredges, food and all types of supplies, even native labourers, over razor-back mountain ranges to the gold

fields of Wau and Bulolo. The missionaries had to traverse similar country on foot, wait for the supply columns of native carriers winding their way through abysmal valleys and gorges, creeping slowly over mountain ranges. Weeks elapsed, precious time and cargo was lost.

Bishop Francis Wolf, S.V.D., realised this and did the only logical thing — he became air-minded. He established his own air transport service. Two small planes were supplied by a European Mission Organization called the M.I.V.A. (The M.I.V.A. {"Missionary International Vehicular Association"} aimed at aiding the missions with modern means of transportation.) An M.I.V.A. trained pilot, Mr. William Schaffhausen, was sent with two planes. Things began to look good for the men in the mountains.

There were, it is true, times when the missionaries scanned the skies for weeks in vain, just as before they had watched the next mountain range for their supply columns. There were times, too, when they had plane and pilot at the station due to mishaps or bad flying weather. All those things had to be taken as part of the game. A third plane was added to the little fleet of airliners, and so a *Saint Peter*, a *Saint Paul*, and a *Saint Therese* were in operation, with a fourth plane awaiting assembly.

In July, 1939, Saint Michael's, Alexishafen, became the scene of general rejoicing throughout the South Sea Missions. His Lordship, Bishop Wolf, S.V.D., of the Eastern New Guinea Mission, celebrated his Episcopal Silver Jubilee. All his missionaries, the Bishops from Central New Guinea, Rabaul, the Solomons, as well as the natives from every part of the mission, flocked to Alexishafen to contribute their share to the "big-fellow feast day belong Bishop."

THE HAND OF GOD.

The gala rejoicing of this Silver Jubilee Celebration closed with tragedy for the mission, the first of a long series of tragedies which ended in the complete destruction of the Eastern and Central New Guinea Missions as well as the other missions of the South Seas.

On Sunday, August 6th, 1939, the plane *Saint Therese* crashed in taking off. The Bishop had gone to the aerodrome to see a party off to Wau. In that party were Father Francis Kirschbaum, who had come from Wau to join in the jubilee celebrations, Father James Weyer and Father Otto Bader, who were to go to Wau for a short holiday. Only a few moments after its occupants had waved a cheerful good-bye the plane plunged to the ground, killing all occupants. Besides the three priests, the pilot, Mr. Schaffhausen, and a native teacher were killed.

World War II came to paralyse, to a great extent, the mission and its work. Many of the missionaries were of German nationality, and had, therefore, to abide by certain

regulations which restricted their movements. They were allowed to remain and carry on their work for God and souls and the work of the missions went on until the Japanese arrived.

The main invasion of the Mainland of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea did not take place until December 18, 1942, when the Japanese suddenly occupied all the key points along the coast: Wewak, Madang, points near Finschafen and villages south of Salamaua. (Finschafen and Salamaua themselves had been occupied since March 1942.) Alexishafen was occupied a few days after the Japanese landed at Madang.

The Japanese set about stripping the mission and missionaries of everything. Under the pretext of protection, all missionaries, regardless of nationality, were put into concentration camps. The camps had to be built by the missionaries themselves. Having no supplies of their own, and the Japanese refusing to give them food, the priests, Brothers and Sisters were pressed into gardening. When the gardens were far enough along to furnish vegetables, the Japanese shifted the missionaries to another camp, "for safety reasons". One group of missionaries had to build three camps in one year.

While on their way to the third camp at Hollandia, the transport, *Dorish Maru*, was attacked by Allied aircraft. The date, February 6, 1944, will always remain indelibly imprinted upon the minds of everyone on that boat for that attack resulted in the death of over sixty of the Internees. Bishop Wolf, S.V.D., was fatally wounded in this attack and died a few days later. Meanwhile the mission stations were being systematically reduced to ruins by the Japanese and by Allied bombing as well.

The loss of mission personnel was greater than the material loss. The structures can be rebuilt by the toil and sweat of the missionaries over the course of the years, but it will take a long time to replace those men and women who were killed and whose bodies have been so shattered, that they will never be able to take their place again in the mission fields. The material loss of the missions is about 95 per cent. The loss of missionary personnel by death alone was fifty-one per cent!

As World War II ended, the two Vicariates of the Divine Word Fathers in New Guinea lay in complete destruction, more than half their missionaries killed, another twenty-five per cent, unable to return to the field due to the after-effects of their imprisonment by the Japanese. No other mission in the world suffered so heavily. The toil of fifty years lay in ruin and the task of rebuilding left to the willing but feeble hands of "old-timers." They have returned after impatiently waiting transportation for many months, to start afresh, to build up a new Church in New Guinea. *They have returned, reinforced by nineteen new sets of hands from across the sea, with a confidence even greater than that which they possessed when they first beheld New Guinea's palm-fringed coastline years before.*

NEW VENTURES IN AUSTRALIA.

The Society of the Divine Word's latest missionary endeavour is its new establishment in Australia, Saint Vincent's Mission Seminary, Marburg, Queensland. Saint Vincent's, a preparatory school and novitiate for Clerics and Lay Brothers, opened in July, 1945, to train Australian youth for the missions of the Society of the Divine Word. [The house of formation has now moved to Melbourne. Its address is: **Dorish Maru College**, 100 Albion Road, Box Hill, 3128, Victoria, Australia. Headquarters are at 199 Epping Road, Marsfield, 2121, New South Wales.]

The glory of the missions of the Society of the Divine Word is shared by the Missionary Sisters, Servants of the Holy Ghost, founded also by Father Arnold Janssen to work hand in hand with the Divine Word Fathers and Brothers. They, too, shared the burden of material loss with the Society of the Divine Word, and suffered especially heavily in the death and incapacitation of their Sisters. The Sisters, Servants of the Holy Ghost, total nearly four thousand professed Sisters throughout the world. The Servants of the Holy Ghost have also opened a Novitiate in Australia, the Holy Ghost Convent, at Aspley, Brisbane, Queensland. [Their contact address is: **Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters (SSpS)**, PO Box 129, Aspley, Queensland, 4034.]

Father Arnold Janssen's Great Enterprise started as an "Enterprise" and has developed into one of the world's most active Missionary Organizations. May the blessing of God rest upon those men and women who strive under his banner for their own sanctification and the salvation of the pagan souls placed under their care by the Vicar of Christ!
