

in a

Word™

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St. Joseph Freinademetz
1852 - 1908
SVD Missionary in China



St. Arnold Janssen
1837 - 1909
Founder
SOCIETY OF THE DIVINE WORD (S.V.D.)
HOLY SPIRIT MISSIONARY SISTERS
HOLY SPIRIT ADORATION SISTERS

THE THIN PLACES INCREASED IN NUMBER

by

Father Jerome LeDoux, SVD

Already a venue where the thin places of Irish lore, where the space between the supernatural and the natural is razor-thin, St. Augustine Residence, onetime Seminary, where the first black SVD spiritual giants pursued their studies and path to the priesthood and religious brotherhood, conventions were smashed again by visiting Pamela Avellanosa who had studied with our SVDs at Epworth, Iowa.

Bouncy, bubbly and congenial, Philippines native Pamela Avellanosa was born there on December 3, 1980, a special gift to her parents, Raymond and Marcela Avellanosa. An avid bicycle rider, livewire Pamela was barreling down a hill on January 2, 1995 when "I lost my balance," she recounts. "I was going very fast, hit the brakes and plunged headfirst to the pavement. I was immediately taken to the nearest hospital, but the interns only said, 'She'll be fine! It's just a minor injury.' I was screaming from pain," Pamela resumed, "but they said I was just in shock. After four hours I began to throw up. Realizing that it was more serious, my aunts decided to move me to another hospital.

"On the way to the second hospital, I lost consciousness. Both of my pupils became dilated. When we got to the second hospital my heart was no longer beating on its own. The nurses tried to resuscitate me by respirator, but my heart would not beat on its own. Sometimes my heart would start beating again, then it would stop beating for five minutes, ten or fifteen minutes. The longest interval in which my heart stopped beating was thirty minutes. That was during the operation. I didn't know what was happening anymore. That's one of the miracles."

"What caused your heart to beat again?" I asked Pamela.

"When my grandmother was called. She prayed to Blessed Arnold Janssen to help me to recover. She thought she needed to call another doctor, since the doctor on duty had already lost hope and implied that it was already too late.

"When the new doctor arrived, he only wanted to console the family for my impending death. He wanted to prove to the family and to everyone that there was no more hope, that there was nothing he could do to help me. He applied a stimulus on my sternum. I made a slight reflex action which caused the doctor to think that I might still be alive, but hope for my survival was very thin. The doctor said a hand seemed to push him to do something. Even though he thought it was hopeless, something pushed him to do the operation. He was waiting for the anesthesiologist to arrive, but the anesthesiologist took a long time to get there.

So the doctor started the operation even without anesthesia. I could not feel anything because I was totally unconscious.

"I had a big wound on the right side of my head, but the doctor drilled on the opposite side. He said he did not know why he did that. Something was just guiding him. He immediately found and removed a blood clot three inches thick that had a volume of 350 cubic milligrams (12 ounces). I was brain-dead, because my brain was squished into a fist-size. I was also clinically dead because the brain could not send signals to the heart to beat.

"When the doctor removed the clot, my heart began to beat again. But the doctor said that either I will die soon, or, if I live, I will definitely be a vegetable.

"The next day my aunt went to the Pink Sisters (Perpetual Adoration Sisters) and asked for prayers. They said that they would invoke the help of Blessed Arnold through a novena to cure me. After thirteen days, I woke up on January 15, the feast day of Saint Arnold Janssen. They moved me from the ICU to a private room on the same day, although the left half of my body was still paralyzed.

"I was not able to do much. My mother stimulated me to do things by promising to give me chocolate or food. When I asked her for chocolate, she said, 'Push that pillow on your foot.' If I did, then she would give me chocolate.

"One day I threw off all my covers and took off the NGT (nasogastric tube) from my nose, so that they had to feed me through my mouth. By June of that year I was already back in school, but I had to stop attending school because the two-hour commute from my house was too much.

"I returned to regular high school in 1996, and graduated from High School in 1998. For college, I attended the University of the Philippines, studying mass communication and journalism. In 2013, I took Theology in Divine Word College in Epworth, Iowa and graduated Summa Cum Laude in 2015.

The Pink Sisters reported my case to Rome for the cause of the canonization of Blessed Arnold Janssen, founder of the Society of the Divine Word, where one more miracle was required. Rome took over from there, running the case through a battery of half a dozen doctors and as many Vatican theologians. The case was accepted eventually as an authentic miracle, leading to the canonization of Blessed Arnold Janssen on October 5, 2003."



Saint Arnold Janssen Saint Joseph Freinademetz.

The month of January is a special month for the Society of the Divine Word. During this month the Church celebrates the Feasts of Saint Arnold Janssen and Saint Joseph Freinademetz.

Saint Arnold whose feast day is on January 15 is the founder of the Society of the Divine Word. Commonly called the Divine Word Missionaries the order he founded in 1875 has been blessed as is evident in the subsequent growth of the communities he founded. From modest beginnings he sent out the first Divine Word Missionaries in 1879! Today there are more than 6,000 Divine Word Missionaries active in 63 countries, more than 3,800 missionary Servants of the Holy Spirit, and more than 400 Servants of the Holy Spirit of Perpetual Adoration.

Saint Arnold died on January 15, 1909. His life was filled with a constant search for God's will, a great confidence in divine providence, and hard work. He had great faith in the undertaking. One Bishop when he was informed of Saint Arnold's wish to establish a mission house called him a "saint or a fool". He was declared a Saint by Pope John Paul II in October 2003 as a result of the miraculous cure of Pamela Avellanosa that Father Jerome LeDoux, SVD describes on the previous page.

The Feast day of Saint Joseph Freinademetz is celebrated on January 29. Born in Austria and ordained a priest in 1875 Joseph was eager to do Missionary work. With his bishop's permission, Joseph entered the mission house in Steyl, Netherlands, in August 1878.

In 1879, he received his mission cross and departed for China with Fr. John Baptist Anzer, another Divine Word Missionary. Five weeks later they arrived in Hong Kong, where they remained for two years, preparing themselves for the next step. In 1881 they travelled to their new mission in South Shantung, a province with 12 million inhabitants and only 158 Christians. Those were hard years, marked by long, arduous journeys, assaults by bandits, and the difficult work of forming the first Christian communities.

Saint Joseph came to appreciate the importance of a committed laity, especially catechists, for first evangelisation. He dedicated much energy to their formation and prepared a catechetical manual in Chinese. At the same time he put great effort into the preparation, spiritual formation and ongoing education of Chinese priests and other missionaries.

Freinademetz learned how to discover the greatness and beauty of Chinese culture and to love deeply the people to whom he had been sent. He dedicated his life to proclaiming the gospel message of God's love for all peoples, and to embodying this love in the formation of Chinese Christian communities. He animated these communities to open themselves in solidarity with the surrounding inhabitants. And he encouraged many of the Chinese Christians to be missionaries to their own people as catechists, religious, nuns and priests. He was called a "saint" by the people he served. Truly, his life was an expression of his motto: "The language that all people understand is that of love."

In the end, as he lay dying from the typhus he contracted while ministering to the sick, Joseph said, "I love China and the Chinese; I want to die among them and to be laid to rest among them . . . I want to continue being Chinese even in heaven."

The signs of God's approval reach even to our own United States of America. For in this country the SVDs have made a great impact on the lives of many from Chicago to Los Angeles to New Orleans and to New Jersey. It was the Divine Word Missionaries and their insistence on inclusion of all people that brought to the Church in this country the ordination of African American men to the priesthood.

In both Saints one finds a living testimony that the kingdom is open to all no matter the race, culture, and language. They saw in the differences of people a source of enrichment and grace for the Church and the world.



in a word or two

Father James Goode, OFM reminds us that the first Sunday of February is the National Day of Prayer for the African American and African Family. Theme is "God's Mercy Pulls us Through" For more information go to:

<http://www.solidgroundministry.com/NDPAAAF2016p.pdf>

There will be further information in the next issue of IN A WORD.

Marriage On A Lampstand

National Black Catholic Marriage & Family Symposium

March 4-5, 2016

Hyatt Regency

Schaumburg, Illinois

www.marriageonalampstand.org



The National Black Catholic Marriage and Family Symposium is sponsored by ArusiNetwork. The organization focuses on encouraging, strengthening, and supporting marriage among African Americans. Taken from the Kiswahili phrase for "marriage celebration," Arusi looks at marriage from an African worldview that defines the "I" in the "we" and emphasizes the role of the community as beneficiary and stakeholder of marriage. Founded by pioneer marriage educators Andrew & Terri Lyke, Arusi stresses that just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a church to sustain a committed, lifelong, healthy marriage. The work of ArusiNetwork assists the Church in exploring effective ways to engage the stakeholding community in the sacramental life of marriage and married couples in the mission of the Church.



A Video documentary titled ONE HEART...MANY FACES highlights the lives and canonization on October 5, 2003 of Saints Arnold Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz.

"Their lives do have something to say to us today. We live in a multicultural and multireligious world that compels people from the farthest ends of the earth to learn to live together side by side. Their way of living can help us do that." -Niels Johnassen, SVD

For copies of the DVD contact us by going to our web site at <http://www.inaword.com>

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN FAMILY



**GOD'S
MERCY
PULLS US
THROUGH
GOD'S
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THROUGH
GOD'S
MERCY
PULLS US
THROUGH**

FEBRUARY 7, 2016

FIRST SUNDAY OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Divine Word Missionaries is an international missionary community of over 7,000 brothers and priests. In 1905 the SVDs began working among African Americans in the Southern United States. Today, Divine Word Missionaries work in over 35 parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas.

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Web page can be found at <http://www.inaword.com>