

Write Basil Barron
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WRITE

St. Chad's Anglican Church

(EDENVALE AND BEDFORDVIEW)

Telephone: _____
53-3346

The Rectory,
59 Seventh Avenue,
Edenvale, Transvaal.

Mr. A. Paton,
P. O. Box 278,
Hillcrest.
Natal.



1st. June 1971 See

C 132
C5/P36

23.7.71. Very many thanks,
Any more information re. G.C.?
Show you letter on return in
in October

Dear Mr. Paton,

I have received a note (origin unknown), stating that you are interested in the origin of the Rhino, which used to adorn the mantelpiece at Bishop's Court in the days of Archbishop Geoffrey Clayton.

I gave him the rhino as a result of a controversy.

In December 1948, a week prior to my ordination, I was staying with Geoffrey at Bishop's House, Johannesburg. At dinner table and argument developed between the two of us, during the sweet course. We were having pancakes, cinnamon and syrup. After eating three of these, Geoffrey invited me to have more; I declined, and he asked, 'Why?' I replied, 'Because I have had enough.' He then asked, 'If I have had enough, and still ate more, what would you say?' 'I would say that you were gluttonous,' was my reply.

This really shook Geoffrey, and he roared with laughter. The argument continued in similar vein until nearly 9.00 p.m., by which time we were deeply involved in Moral Theology, and the definition of gluttony. At this stage he said, 'You ought to study the rhinoceros, a powerful beast which never stops eating. By the way, please go down the road to the Zoo cafe, and get me a box of cigarettes. While you are there take a look at the rhino.' I was well aware the he had plenty of cigarettes, and did not require me to buy more. He never explained how I was to study the rhino in the dark. In spite of the late hour, I was glad of a stroll and walked towards the Zoo, also aware that the cafe had long since closed for the night.

Upon my return he enquired after the rhino; 'It is dead,' was my reply. 'What did it die of?' asked Geoffrey. 'Over eating,' I said. He nearly burst a few blood vessels, and after calling me all the liars he could lay his tongue to, the argument was dropped, and we went to bed.

But, quite unknwn to either of us, the only rhino in the Johannesburg Zoo HAD died a few months previously, from an unknown disease.

A month or two after Geoffrey had moved to Cape Town as Archbishop, in 1949, I was walking down Eloff Street, accompanied by the Revd. Basil Berthold, who knew the above story. In a Curio shop window I spotted the rhino, and promptly bought it. It was packed and posted off to Geoffrey; inside the package I placed a slip of paper, with this definition from Chamber's Etymological Dictionary :

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"Rhinceros : A very large animal allied to the elephant, having a VERY thick skin"

Geoffrey was delighted, and wrote a letter of thanks. Unfortunately I did not keep his letter.

I hope this answers your enquiry.

Yours sincerely,



Horace R. Willson

From Sewer
4/6/71