



CNI

Queen Victoria's gift to chorister returns to St Patrick's Cathedral

A most prestigious set of cuff links, given as a gift by Queen Victoria to a boy chorister in 1901, has been kindly donated to St Patrick's Cathedral.

Dean Morton was contacted a few weeks ago by Sandra Morrow, a niece of former Dean, Dr Victor Griffin, who asked her to bring along to the Cathedral the prestigious cuff - links, behind which there is a most interesting story.

Dean Griffin writes, as he did some time ago to The Irish Times letters page:

“Queen Victoria on her visit to Dublin in 1900 attended the Sunday morning service in St Patrick's Cathedral –as was the custom of the reigning monarchs.

On that Sunday the boy soloist was one Alfred Birch. The Queen was so impressed by his

singing that she arranged for Alfred, accompanied by the Cathedral Organist, Dr Marchant, to come and sing at the Vice - Regal Lodge where she was about to entertain VIPs to lunch. Alfred sang "I know that my Redeemer liveth" from the oratorio, "Messiah", by Handel, and, as an encore, "O for the wings of a dove", by Mendelssohn."

"In thanking Alfred, the Queen said that Mendelssohn loved Scotland and the Highlands, that she had entertained him in Balmoral Castle, and that he had played some of his compositions on the piano there. The Queen then presented Albert with a set of silver cuff - links with the Royal monogram, 'Victoria Regina'."

"Alfred made a career in the British Army, retired as a major with an OBE, and returned to live in Dublin where he resumed his connection with St Patrick's as a member of the past choristers. He told me the story and gave me the Cuff - links for safe keeping in the Cathedral."

Dean Morton is most grateful to Dean Griffin for the gift of the cuff - links to the Cathedral in which they will be placed on display, with an accompanying historical account.

40th anniversary sit-out has raised £215,000 to date



Dean John Mann pictured during the 2016 sit-out at St Anne's with Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy and the Rev Canon Ronnie Nesbitt.

With donations still coming in, the 2016 Belfast Cathedral Black Santa Sit-out has raised in the region of £215,000, exceeding Dean John Mann's target of £200,000.

This is the largest amount collected in the Dean's six years as Black Santa and is a fantastic acknowledgement that, even after 40 years, this Belfast tradition founded by Dean Sammy Crooks in 1976 continues to inspire people to dig deep to help others.

Money was donated in the usual manner, deposited by the general public into the barrel on the Cathedral steps during the period of the Sit-out. Dean Mann said the giving on the street was at least as positive and generous as ever.

Funds were also donated by post and in a new initiative online through the Black Santa Just Giving site. This will remain open for donations until Friday January 20 and can be accessed at <https://www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/stanne-cathedral/blacksanta2016>

The Dean and his team at St Anne's Cathedral thank all those who have supported the 2016 Black Santa Appeal, the proceeds of which will be passed on to charities at the annual Good Samaritans service taking place on Sunday February 5.



Commandments are focus of Clogher RE competitions

Clogher Diocesan Board of Religious Education invites children and young people to enter the following competitions. This year's theme is: *The 10 Commandments*

Archdeacon Ruddell Prize - • Create a set of ten posters which show that you know and

understand what each of the Ten Commandments means today

This competition is open to children of primary school age and can be either an individual or a group entry.

Bishop's Medal

- Create a set of ten posters which show that you know and understand what each of the Ten Commandments means today
- When Jesus was asked which of the commandments was the most important, how did he respond? (Mark 12 v 28-31)
- With the Ten Commandments and with Jesus's response to the above question in mind, discuss how it might be possible for young people to show love for God and love for others today e.g. at home, at school, in church and in their communities

This competition is open to young people of secondary school age and must be an individual entry.

→ Include relevant text, pictures, diagrams, photographs etc.

→ Entries should be on A4 paper

- All entries must be original, the work of those entering
- Entries can be handwritten and/or hand drawn or use IT skills to help

All entries should please be left in the Diocesan Office by Wednesday 26th April 2017.

‘Pope Francis may soon allow Brazil to have married priests’, Leonardo Boff, theologian

Liberation theologian Leonardo Boff has claimed that Pope Francis may grant a special request by the Brazilian bishops to allow married priests to resume their priestly ministry.

In an interview with German daily Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, the Brazilian theologian who left the priesthood in 1992 and subsequently got married said: “The Brazilian bishops, especially the Pope’s close friend Cardinal Claudio Hummes, have expressly requested Pope Francis to enable married priests in Brazil to return to their pastoral ministry.”

[According to the National Catholic Reporter](#), Boff continued: “I have recently heard that the Pope
churchnewsireland@gmail.com

wants to fulfil this request — as an experimental, preliminary phase for the moment confined to Brazil.”

He added that the fact that Brazil has 140 million Catholics, but only 1,800 priests was a “catastrophe”.

“No wonder the faithful are going over to the evangelical churches or to the Pentecostals in droves, as they are filling the personnel vacuum,” Boff said.

“If the many thousands of priests who have married are once again allowed to practice their ministry, that would be a first step to improving the situation but at the same time also an impulse for the Church to free itself of the fetters of celibacy.”

See also -

Allow married Catholic priests to halt decline in Ireland, says clergyman - The Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/31/allow-married-catholic-priests-to-halt-decline-in-ireland-says-clergyman?utm>

Order of Malta leader professes loyalty to Pope amid Vatican investigation

The leader of the Order of Malta has promised Pope Francis his loyalty, as the Order faces an investigation by the Vatican over a recent controversy.

In a letter to mark the World Day of Peace, Fra' Matthew Festing, the organisation's Grand Master, told Pope Francis: "the Order ... even in a difficult and complex time, seeks to render its service in closely adhering to the teaching of the Church and the directions which come from the Successor to St Peter."

Festing was referring to the recent dismissal of Albrecht Boeselager, the Grand Chancellor of the order.

Boeselager has been accused of allowing the distribution of condoms, as part of a scheme with which the order was linked. But Festing said Boeselager was removed for allegedly concealing problems in his previous role of overseeing the order's charitable work. The

Order of Malta's members run hospitals, nursing homes, night shelters and other forms of charitable outreach in 120 countries.

Boeselager refused to resign, which Festing called a "disgraceful" act of disobedience. Festing and the other senior members of the order, including the Patron, Cardinal Raymond Burke, agreed to suspend Boeselager from his membership. A new Grand Chancellor, John Chretien, has been appointed.

Pope Francis has ordered an investigation into the dispute. On Saturday, the Vatican's Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin told the Italian newspaper Il Messaggero that the Order faced an "unprecedented crisis". The Pope's commission would "gather information", Cardinal Parolin said, "and then we will see."

Abp Welby backs Abp Thabo of Cape Town in church v state row

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, yesterday declared his support for the Archbishop of Cape Town, Thabo Makgoba, in a dispute with the South African president.



Archbishop Thabo Makgoba

In his Christmas sermon, Archbishop Thabo had rejected a call from President Jacob Zuma for the church to stay out of politics. In a statement, President Zuma later said that he had been referring to party politics. In response, Archbishop Thabo welcomed the clarification but insisted the church would not keep quiet and would not keep out of politics.

“The Church must be active in politics, in the issues that concern citizens” he said in a newspaper interview. “The Church will not (keep quiet) especially on ethical issues, inequality, corruption and the need for all to be healed and to be afforded their dignity.”

Archbishop Justin took up the theme when preaching at Evensong in St George's Cathedral in Cape Town. He noted the prominent role played by the Anglican Church in South Africa in resisting apartheid and in the truth and reconciliation process that followed.

"More than 25 years later, the issues sometimes seem to go round and round," he said.

"Archbishops are warned to stay out of politics.

You may as well tell a fish to stay out of water.

Water is where fish swim; the *polis*, the organisation of the city, the country, the region, is where people swim – because they are people in relationship, and relationships of citizens need structures, and those structures need good values... and that means politics.

"Religious leaders commenting on values and politics in England are often unpopular!" he continued. "Party politics is what we avoid, but politics is where we live – and it is a central theme of the gospel. Politics is ultimately about the Kingdom of Heaven. Your Grace, dear brother, we stand with you.

"Being opposed is not fun. It does not lift our spirits. And when, as you have in South Africa, you spent decades and decades facing an atrocious and deeply evil ideology of apartheid,

even a trace of wrongdoing brings back the taste of injustice. One thinks, "Perhaps we are simply going round the circle again....Yet we are not."

Archbishop Justin has been in South Africa for a private visit. He also visited Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who has twice been admitted to hospital in the past 16 months.

Read the [full text](#) of Archbishop Justin's sermon

News briefs

+++ CMSI 2017 Children's Resource Launch - will take place on Monday 16th January at 7.30pm in CMSI Offices, Belfast. 'Growing in God' explores global mission with a particular focus on the work of the Urban Development Programme in All Saints' Diocese in Nairobi, Kenya. The pack includes original material for four seasons with DVD films and activity workbooks and aimed at 4-15 year olds.

+++ Clogher installations - Sunday 22nd January A service of Installation of Archdeacon Brian Harper, installation of Canon Geoffrey Bridle and admittance of Canon Kyle Hanlon at 7.00pm in St Macartan's Cathedral, Clogher.

+++ Porvoo Prayer Diary -The Porvoo Declaration commits the Churches which have signed it 'to share a common life' and 'to pray for and with one another'. An important way of doing this is to pray through the year for the Porvoo Churches and their Dioceses. The Prayer Diary is a list of Porvoo Communion Dioceses or Churches covering each Sunday of the year, mindful of the many calls upon compilers of intercessions, and the environmental and production costs of printing a more elaborate list. Those using the calendar are invited to choose one day each week on which they will pray for the Porvoo Churches. It is hoped that individuals and parishes, cathedrals and religious orders will make use of the calendar in their own cycle of prayer week by week. In addition to the Churches which have approved the Porvoo Declaration, we continue to pray for churches with observer status. Observers attend all the meetings held under the Agreement. The calendar may be freely copied or emailed for wider circulation.
<https://www.ireland.anglican.org/rss/resources/383/porvoo-prayer-diary-2017>

A thought to carry with you

"I want the morning to ignore
the name I told the night.
I want it to evaporate silently,
like a tear drop in the dawn wind.

"I want the day to proclaim
The love I hid from the morning.
I want it to bend over my open heart
and set it aflame, like a grain of incense.

"I want the sunset to forget
The secret I told the day,
And carry it away with my love
In the folds of its pale robe."

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Teacher unions set to meet bosses over pay impasse

Belfast Telegraph

http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/teacher-unions-set-to-meet-bosses-over-pay-impasse-35339260.html?utm_source=ipad_share&utm_medium=ipad_app&utm_campaign=clickbacks

'People were forced to live in the same house for years': Two decades of divorce in Ireland

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

The Journal

Divorce was legalised 20 years ago after a bitter campaign and a very tight results in a referendum – now there are calls for the law to be modernised.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/divorce-3142623-Jan2017/>

Enda and the Pope the best of friends again

Southern Star Newspaper

Better still, no sooner was Kenny out the gap than **Church** officials confirmed that the Pope would visit **Ireland** as part of the World Meeting of the ...

<http://www.southernstar.ie/news/roundup/articles/2017/01/02/4132423-opinion-enda-and-the-pope-the-best-of-friends-again/>

Times

Reports that PM Theresa May is poised to oversee the introduction of women into three key positions of power this year with female frontrunners for top jobs in the police, the church and the BBC. The paper reports a number of women are thought to be being considered to replace Rt Rev Richard Chartres, whose last public engagement as Bishop of London will be on February 2.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/women-prepare-for-a-power-grab-in-church-police-and-bbc-cwgsrwtwm>

Mirror

Report that singer Shukrananda Gant has become an internet sensation after her mother secretly filmed her playing a song on a piano during a visit to Lincoln Cathedral and posted it on Facebook. The song, called In The Beginning and written by Ms Gant, has been shared more than 28,000 times after it went viral on Boxing Day.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/singer-who-shunned-music-career-9554356#ICID=nsm>

Lincolnshire Live

Reports that the Consistory Court in Lincolnshire has granted approval for an exhumation of remains to allow the wish of a woman to be buried in the same grave as her husband to be fulfilled.

Northern Echo

Reports that the bells of St Helen's Church in York city centre are to ring again after a silence of more than 20 years after being conserved and re- installed in a new bell frame.

January 5

[http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/14999835.Bells to ring again after a two decade break/?ref=rss](http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/14999835.Bells%20to%20ring%20again%20after%20a%20two%20decade%20break/?ref=rss)