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Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Desmond Tutu: Archbishop and anti-apartheid veteran dies aged 90

Desmond Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his campaign of non-violent opposition to South Africa's white minority rule.

He was an outspoken critic of the country's previous brutal system of oppression against the country's Black majority.

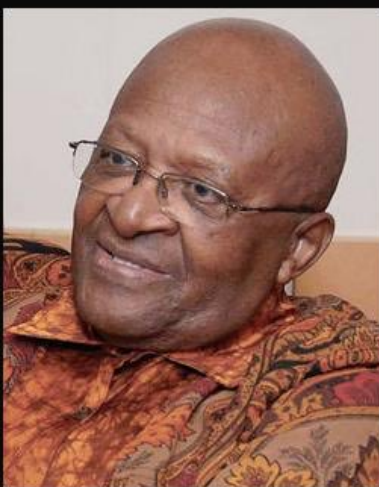
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Desmond Mpilo Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his campaign of non-violent opposition to South Africa's white minority rule.

"The passing of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu is another chapter of bereavement in our nation's farewell to a generation of outstanding South Africans who have bequeathed us a liberated South Africa," President Cyril Ramaphosa said.

"From the pavements of resistance in South Africa to the pulpits of the world's great cathedrals and places of worship, and the prestigious setting of the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, the Arch distinguished himself as a non-sectarian, inclusive champion of universal human rights."

Dr Tutu was diagnosed with prostate cancer in the late 1990s and has been hospitalised several times in recent years to treat infections associated with his cancer treatment.



If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.

(Desmond Tutu)

IZQuotes

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He died peacefully - Tutu family

"Ultimately, at the age of 90, he died peacefully at the Oasis Frail Care Centre in Cape Town this morning," Dr Ramphela Mamphela, acting chairperson of the Archbishop Desmond Tutu IP Trust and coordinator of the Office of the Archbishop, said in a statement on behalf of the Tutu family.

Ms Mamphela did not give details on the cause of death.

The statement described Mr Tutu as a man who "turned his own misfortune into a teaching opportunity to raise awareness and reduce the suffering of others."

It said: "He wanted the world to know that he had prostate cancer, and that the sooner it is detected the better the chance of managing it."

The statement added: "Courageous, gracious, and concerned for the welfare of others to the very end.

"As Mrs Tutu says, although he was not physically imposing, he had the inner strength of a lion."

A statement from the Nelson Mandela Foundation said the loss of the archbishop was "immeasurable".

It said: "He was larger than life, and for so many in South Africa and around the world his life has been a blessing.

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"His contributions to struggles against injustice, locally and globally, are matched only by the depth of his thinking about the making of liberatory futures for human societies.

"He was an extraordinary human being. A thinker. A leader. A shepherd. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this most difficult time."

Tributes



Archbishop of Armagh, Most Reverend John McDowell

At a time when people have become wary of those who exercise political power in many places throughout the world, the death of Desmond Tutu, who exercised, instead, great moral authority as a disciple of Jesus Christ, comes with an intensified sense of loss.

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As a young man, he became painfully aware of the spiritual dimension of the abuse of political power and recognized the vocation of the Church in South Africa to work for racial and economic justice and for the dignity of all human life.

He brought many gifts to embodying and fulfilling this vocation, perhaps the greatest of which was courage in the face of an implacable enemy in the form of apartheid; in confronting international indifference and avoidance of moral imperatives; in facing down the violence of the mob; in working through the painful implications of the overlapping claims of truth and justice.

Desmond Tutu was both a herald and a bringer of justice and in his long life there were many who wished to extinguish the light which he brought into a dark and disordered world. But it was not overcome, and the light of his memory will remain as a beacon of hope to the oppressed, the cheerless and the weary everywhere.

Our prayers are with Bishop Tutu's family and friends; with the Anglican Church of South Africa and with the whole of Catholic Christianity, which has, for the time being, lost such a cheerful son.

Archbishop of Dublin, Most Reverend Doctor Michael Jackson

The death of Bishop Desmond Tutu will bring sadness to countless people worldwide both inside and outside of the Churches.

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His consistent moral stance for justice and equality in a South Africa that made multiple transitions in his lifetime is something he shared with personal generosity on the international stage.

He became synonymous with the needs and the respect for the marginalized, the rejected and the forgotten by his strong voice and strategic coherence.

His family will mourn him most deeply as will his church and his fellow countrymen and women.

On behalf of the Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough, I wish to add my gratitude for his spirituality and for his courage in the face of many obstacles to the breaking in of the Kingdom of God in the world in which we live.

Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Reverend Doctor Justin Welby

The death of Archbishop Desmond Tutu (always known as Arch) is news that we receive with profound sadness – but also with profound gratitude as we reflect upon his life. My prayers and condolences are with his family and all who loved him, with the Anglican Church of the Province of Southern Africa, and all of the people of South Africa.

Arch's love transformed the lives of politicians and priests, township dwellers and world leaders. The world is different because of this man.

Archbishop Tutu was a prophet and priest, a man of words and action, one who embodied the hope and joy that were

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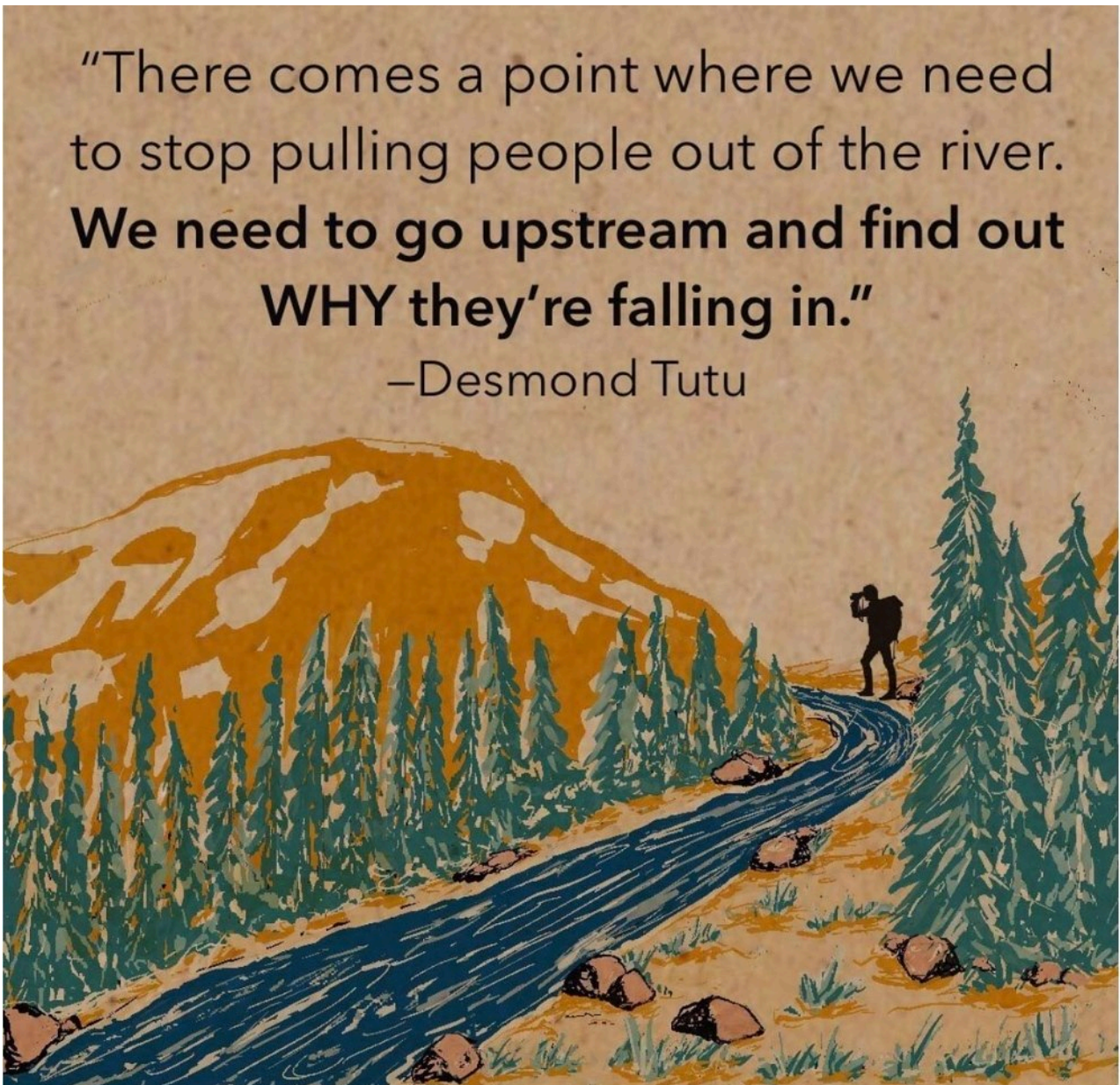
the foundations of his life. He was a man of extraordinary personal courage and bravery: when the police burst into Capetown Cathedral, he defied them by dancing down the aisle.

He was a man of enormous vision: seeing the possibilities for building the Rainbow Nation long before anyone else, except perhaps President Mandela.

His vision and bravery were allied with a canny political sense and wisdom, enabling him to be a healer and apostle of peace while so many still saw wounds and war.

"There comes a point where we need to stop pulling people out of the river. **We need to go upstream and find out WHY they're falling in."**

—Desmond Tutu



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He was a pioneer, the first Black Archbishop of Capetown, the pioneer of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

He was a great warrior for justice who never stopped fighting – whether it was for those in his own country, for inclusivity in the South African Constitution, or for those suffering injustice around the world.

When you were in parts of the world where there was little Anglican presence and people weren't sure what the Anglican church was, it was enough to say "It's the Church that Desmond Tutu belongs to" – a testimony to the international reputation he had and the respect with which he was held.

Most of all he was a Christian disciple – that was the root of everything else.

After meeting him, many would speak of being in the presence of one who brought God close to them. His joy, grace, laughter, hope and life caught up those around him with a sense of Jesus Christ.

It was Jesus' love we saw in his eyes, Jesus' compassion we heard in his voice, Jesus' joy we heard in his laughter, Jesus' face we saw in his face. And it was beautiful and brave.

His greatest love is now realised as he meets his Lord face to face.

We are thankful today for such a life so well lived, even as we feel the sorrow of such great loss.

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Most Reverend Mark Strange, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church

The Scottish Episcopal Church joins the Anglican Church of Southern Africa in mourning the death of its former Primate, Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

It is with great sadness that I learned of the death of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. That sadness is for his family, friends, and for all of us who will not hear his powerful, joyful and distinctive expression of Christian love again.

He was a good friend of the Scottish Episcopal Church and his visit to our Provincial Conference held at St Andrews in 1995 was a formative moment in our history. Many of our members still speak of the hope and vision that his words offered to us.

Bishop Tutu was always happy to share his gifts, helping people to lay down division and dance forward in the faith of Christ.

He showed us how to listen to those we struggle with, how to forgive and how to rebuild relationships.

We offer prayer for those who were closest to him, the communities of Cape Town and the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

Rest in Peace dear child of God.

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Most Reverend Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York

One of the great and abiding images of the second half of the 20th century was Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela dancing in the courtroom at the end of the closing session of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Cape Town. Nelson Mandela asked his friend Desmond Tutu to chair the Commission.

It was a bold and creative way of helping a nation divided brutally between black and white learn to live in glorious technicolour by facing up to the horrors of its past and by putting the Christian imperative for forgiveness alongside the need for truth as the only way of achieving reconciliation.

And Desmond Tutu was asked to chair it because this incredibly joyful little disciple of Jesus Christ was one of the few people in South Africa other than Nelson Mandela himself, who could unite the nation and carry the trust of everyone.

In this respect, he was a giant.

The world itself feels a little smaller without him. His expansive vision of how the Christian faith shapes the whole of life has touched many hearts and changed many lives. The Anglican church in particular gives thanks for one of its greatest saints. But Christian people everywhere, and all people of goodwill, will today be mourning the loss of someone who showed the world what following Jesus looks like and where it leads.

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Our prayers today are particularly with his family and with our sisters and brothers in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. When I go to my chapel this morning to celebrate the Eucharist on this, Saint Stephen's day, I may dance a little jig in thankful memory of this wonderful human being. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

BBC News obituary

Desmond Tutu South Africa's rebellious priest

Desmond Tutu was the smiling South African archbishop whose irrepressible personality won him friends and admirers around the world.

As a high-profile black churchman he was inevitably drawn into the struggle against white-minority rule but always insisted his motives were religious, not political.

He was appointed by Nelson Mandela to head South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up to investigate crimes committed by both sides during the apartheid era.

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World Council of Churches (WCC)

The WCC has learned with great shock of the passing on of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. We join the world in mourning a leading stalwart of justice, equality and equity. May his soul rest in Peace.

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He was also credited with coining the term Rainbow Nation to describe the ethnic mix of post-apartheid South Africa.

Desmond Mpilo Tutu was born in 1931 in a small gold-mining town in what was then the Transvaal.

He first followed in his father's footsteps as a teacher, but abandoned that career after the passage of the Bantu Education Act in 1953 which introduced racial segregation in schools.

He joined the church and was strongly influenced by many white clergymen in the country, especially another strong opponent of apartheid, Bishop Trevor Huddleston.

He served as bishop of Lesotho from 1976-78, assistant bishop of Johannesburg and rector of a parish in Soweto, before his appointment as bishop of Johannesburg.

It was as a dean that he first began to raise his voice against injustice in South Africa and again from 1977 onwards as general secretary of the South African Council of Churches.

Already a high-profile figure before the 1976 rebellion in black townships, it was in the months before the Soweto violence that he first became known to white South Africans as a campaigner for reform.

Saving suspected police informer

His efforts saw him awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 in what was seen as a major snub by the international community to South Africa's white rulers.

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Desmond Tutu's enthronement as Archbishop of Cape Town was attended by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, and the widow of Martin Luther King.

As head of the Anglican Church in South Africa, he continued to campaign actively against apartheid. In March 1988, he declared: "We refuse to be treated as the doormat for the government to wipe its jackboots on."

Six months later, he risked jail by calling for a boycott of municipal elections.

He was caught in a cloud of tear gas in August 1989, when police took action against people leaving a church in a township near Cape Town, and the following month he was arrested after refusing to leave a banned rally.

As archbishop, his calls for punitive sanctions against South Africa struck a chord throughout the world, especially as they were coupled with a total condemnation of violence.

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Mothers Union

We are deeply saddened by the death of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. A Nobel Peace prize laureate and instrumental in ending apartheid in South Africa, the world has lost a great leader and exceptional peacebuilder. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family at this difficult time. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

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In 1985, Tutu and another bishop bravely and dramatically rescued a suspected police informer as he was being assaulted and about to be burnt to death by an angry mob in a township east of South Africa's main city, Johannesburg.

The clergymen pushed through the mob and pulled to safety the bleeding, half-conscious man, just before the petrol-doused tyre around his neck was set alight.

Tutu later returned to rebuke the man's attackers, reminding them of "the need to use righteous and just means for a righteous and just struggle".

Tutu warmly welcomed the liberalising reforms announced by President FW de Klerk soon after he took office. These included the lifting of the ban on the African National Congress (ANC) and the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990.

Soon afterwards, Tutu announced a ban on clergy joining political parties, which was condemned by other churches.

On Israel and the Palestinians

He was never afraid to voice his opinions. In April 1989, when he went to Birmingham in the UK, he criticised what he termed "two-nation" Britain, and said there were too many black people in the country's prisons.

Later he angered the Israelis when, during a Christmas pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he compared black South Africans with the Arabs in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

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He said he could not understand how people who had suffered as the Jews had, could inflict such suffering on the Palestinians.

Desmond Tutu was a great admirer of Nelson Mandela, but did not always agree with him on issues such as the use of violence in pursuit of a just end.

In November 1995, Mandela, by then South Africa's president, asked Tutu to head a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, with the task of gathering evidence of apartheid-era crimes and recommending whether people confessing their involvement should receive amnesty.

At the end of the commission's inquiry, Tutu attacked South Africa's former white leaders, saying most of them had lied in their testimony. The commission also accused the ANC of committing human rights abuses during its fight against apartheid. Both sides rejected the report.

Reduced to tears

Tutu was often overcome by the pain of those who had suffered under apartheid and, on more than one occasion, was reduced to tears.

He also found much to criticise in South Africa's new black-majority government. He launched a stinging attack on the ANC administration led by President Thabo Mbeki.

He said the ANC had not done enough to alleviate poverty among the poorest in the country and that too much wealth

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and power was concentrated in the hands of a new black political elite.

He later urged Jacob Zuma, who had been accused of sexual crimes and corruption, to abandon his attempts to become president.

He was also vocal in his condemnation of Robert Mugabe, once describing the Zimbabwean president as "a cartoon figure of an archetypical African dictator". Mugabe, in turn, described Tutu as "evil".

He could also be critical of his own Anglican church particularly in the aftermath of the row over the ordination of gay bishops.

Ever the rebel

"God is weeping," he once said when he accused the church of allowing an "obsession" with homosexuality to take precedence over the fight against world poverty.

He returned to the subject of poverty when he visited Ireland in 2010. He urged Western nations to consider the effect of cuts in overseas aid in the wake of the economic downturn.

Tutu formally retired from public life in the same year to, he said, spend more time "drinking red bush tea and watching cricket" than "in airports and hotels".

But ever the rebel, he came out in support of assisted suicide in 2014, stating that life should not be preserved "at any cost".

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Contrary to the views of many church figures, he held that human beings had the right to choose to die.

He said his great friend and fellow campaigner Mandela, who died in December 2013, had suffered a long and painful illness which was in his opinion "an affront to Madiba's dignity".

In 2017, Tutu sharply criticised Myanmar's leader and fellow Nobel Peace laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi, saying it was "incongruous for a symbol of righteousness" to lead a country where the Muslim minority was facing "ethnic cleansing".

Later that year, he opposed Donald Trump's decision to recognise Jerusalem as the official capital of Israel. "God is weeping," he wrote on Twitter, over this "inflammatory & discriminatory" act.

A small man, "the Arch", as he was known, was gregarious and ebullient, emanating a spirit of joy despite his intense sense of mission.

He was witty, and his conversation was frequently punctuated by high-pitched chuckles.

But beyond this, Desmond Tutu was a man of impeccably strong moral convictions who strove to bring about a peaceful South Africa.

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-22292744>]

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Bishop Desmond - A personal reflection by Houston McKelvey

I had the good fortune of meeting Bishop Desmond Tutu in a couple of quite contrasting venues.

My interest in South Africa and apartheid was further kindled in my early teens by the late Canon Jack Hawkins who was Vicar of Antrim to which my home parish Muckamore was then joined. It was through Canon Jack that I heard and met Father Trevor Huddleson in the parish hall in Antrim.

A member of the Community of the Resurrection from Mirfield, Father Trevor had witnessed first-hand the impact of apartheid in South Africa and especially in the townlands like Soweto.

Shortly afterwards I read his book “Nought for your Comfort” which remains in my top ten of the reads which were formative in my life and views.

Father Trevor Huddleson also deeply influenced a young man in South Africa. In that climate of apartheid a teenager in Johannesburg saw Fr Trevor raise his hat to his mother. This was the first time he had seen a white man treat a black woman as an equal. The memory stayed with Bishop Desmond all his life and it was fundamental in the shaping of his vocation too.

My first meeting with him was in New York. I was in a four strong working party led by the then Bishop Eames sharing our church’s concerns about the situation in Northern

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Ireland with church leaders and politicians in New York and Washington. We were invited to a service in an all-black parish at which Bishop Desmond was the speaker.

His presence was quite remarkable and due entirely to US government pressure exerted by the Reagan administration upon the South African government who had placed Bishop Desmond under rigorous house-arrest. He had been released for his US visit but harsh stipulations were placed by the SA government regarding his communications whilst on release.

Before the service the rector of the parish came to the pulpit and welcomed us. He proceeded to read what was obvious to most as Bishop Desmond's non-attributable sermon. Desmond when his sermon time came virtually wished us a happy Christmas, and it was only the week after St Patrick's Day.

I had promised to bring back to BBC NI Religion - in the form of the late Father James Skelly - recordings made during our trip. I was readily admitted to a press conference with Bishop Desmond. Journalists from a few east African countries tried to be clever. Himself had none of it, and castigated especially the oil-producing African countries which had not joined the anti-apartheid trade embargo supported by most nations.

I could but admire his skill as a Christian communicator and the way in which he could focus his concerns. I later had the challenge of interviewing him for Radio Ulster. It was not because he was in anyway unhelpful, rather I was in awe and respect. The man in the flesh surpassed my esteem

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based on my considerable reading about his country, his church and his witness.

My last meeting with him was also something of the same. Gladness at seeing him and tension in the event. That came after processing in to Belfast Cathedral for the Sunday morning sung eucharist at which I was the preacher, and espying him sitting in a front pew with that ever-beaming smile, the Blessed Desmond himself. Afterwards we talked about the meeting in New York.

And looking back, his impact on the USA, South Africa and the world, was more immense than could have been foreseen at the time.

Without doubt Desmond Tutu was an agent of God's Grace and only God knows how many people Desmond influenced on behalf of the Kingdom.

A Prayer by Bishop Tutu

Disturb us O Lord

When we are too well-pleased with ourselves

When our dreams have come true because we dreamed too little.

because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us O Lord

When with the abundance of things we possess,

We have lost our thirst for the water of life.

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When, having fallen in love with time, we have ceased to dream of eternity and in our efforts to build a new earth, we have allowed our vision of Heaven to grow dim.

Photo gallery

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