

World joins SA in bidding emotional farewell to Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu



By [Katja Hamilton](#)

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The world bids an emotional farewell today to anti-apartheid hero, the late Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, who was honoured by President Cyril Ramaphosa with a Category One funeral.



Source: [Daily Maverick](#) Lorenzo Jansen, who lost his sight when he had TB meningitis, touches Archbishop Desmond Tutu's face in one of the paediatric wards at Tygerberg Hospital in Cape Town. Photo: Kim Cloete

Desmond Tutu was a powerful voice in the fight for political and social justice, an [HIV/Aids activist](#) and committed to raising awareness about [tuberculosis](#)

His drive to provide equitable access to medical treatment and care for those living with HIV/Aids and TB was spurred on by his [own experience](#) with TB as a child. This seeded a dream within him to one day study Medicine. (He was accepted to [study Medicine](#) at Wits, but his father could not afford the tuition fees at the time.)

Crowds pay tribute

Tutu's funeral was held at St George's Cathedral in Cape Town's city centre - the Anglican diocese he served as Archbishop for 35 years. From here he led numerous campaigns and marches against apartheid from St George's steps, which became known as the "People's Cathedral" and a symbol of democracy.

Covid-19 restrictions meant that only 100 people could attend the funeral in the cathedral. Nevertheless, hundreds of mourners from all walks of life could be seen at the top end of St George's Mall in Cape Town's CBD overlooking the cathedral. They braved a steady morning drizzle to pay their last respects to the late Archbishop Emeritus.



Mayor of Cape Town, Geordin-Hill Lewis confirmed that in the week leading to the Archbishop's funeral "many thousands of people came and walked through St George's Cathedral" to pay respects to the archbishop as his coffin lay in state. "They paid their last respects, wrote in our condolence book, and left flowers here and all over the city. It is a sign of what he meant to so many Capetonians and to people around the world. It's a sign of what an extraordinary man we're saying goodbye to."

World leaders pay homage

Led by the Archbishop of Cape Town, Thabo Makgoba, the funeral of the late Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu was attended by members of the Tutu family, and dignitaries.

Among them were His Majesty King Letsie III and Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate; Her Royal Highness, Princess Mabel van Oranje; former President, Thabo Mbeki; former President, Kgalema Motlanthe; former Deputy President, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; former President of Ireland, Ms Mary Robinson; Ministers, Acting Chief Justice, Raymond Zondo and Head of the South African National Defence Force, General Rudzani Maphwanya.



President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered the headline eulogy: "Our departed father was a crusader in the struggle for freedom, for justice, for equality and for peace, not just in South Africa, the country of his birth, but around the world as well," Ramaphosa said.

"Throughout his life he became involved in causes both at home and abroad that went to the very heart of the quest for social justice. Through the Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation, he was involved in the treatment and care of people living with HIV and Aids, in the provision of healthcare services to adolescents, and the empowerment of young women. He never stopped fighting. He never stopped speaking out. He never stopped caring,"



Source: Supplied

A key tribute

Bishop Michael Nuttall confirmed the late Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu had asked him some years ago to deliver the keynote address at his funeral.



Desmond Tutu HIV Centre and Health Foundation mourns the passing of beloved patron

29 Dec 2021



"Desmond and I became close in an unlikely partnership at a truly critical time in the life of our country from 1989 – 1996, he as Archbishop of Cape Town and I as his deputy when, as Bishop of Natal, I was elected by my brother bishops to be also what is called "Dean of the Province".

He said the three qualities that captured the essence of Desmond Tutu were the pursuit of justice, his love of kindness and his ability to walk humbly with God.

"Desmond was not on some crusade of personal aggrandisement nor was he driven by egotism," Nuttall said. "Desmond's response to grave injustice came from the depths of his being and often in response to what he called 'the Divine nudge'.

"Listen to what his favourite prophet, Jeremiah, wrote: "There is in my heart, as it were, a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot." (Jeremiah 20:9). That is how Desmond Tutu lived and ministered in a situation of systemic and often brutal injustice in his own beloved country."

Statement around the passing of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu



A life lived completely

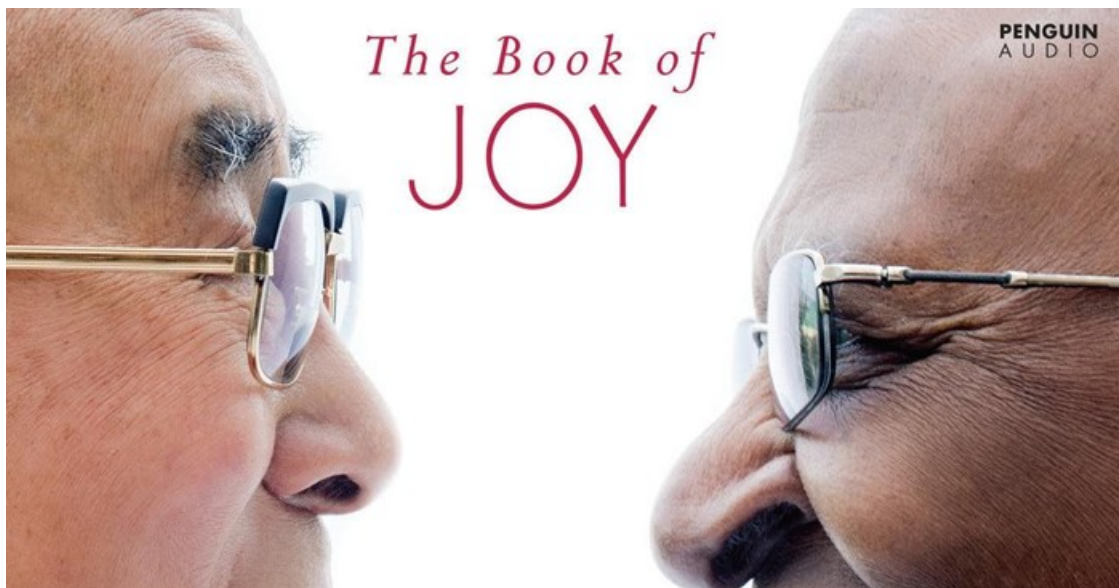
Over the past week, the many moving accounts and images of Archbishop Tutu's life, are a chronicle of a life of activism, statesmanship, ministry and pastoralism. Having won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his work against apartheid, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu will undoubtedly be remembered for leading the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Ramaphosa paid homage to Desmond Tutu's support of the Palestinian cause and a powerful article he wrote in 2014 calling on Israelis and Palestinians to find each other and to make peace.

"In his words, **"peace requires the people of Israel and Palestine to recognise the human being in themselves and each other, and to understand their interdependence,"** Ramaphosa said.

"He advocated for LGBTQI+ rights and decried all forms of violence and discrimination against the community. One of the causes that was dear to him and less well known, was campaigning together with her Royal Highness Mabel van Oranje against child marriage across the globe. I have learned how he travelled to villages in Ethiopia, India and Zambia to understand the circumstances under which young girls were being forced into marriage.

"He also took up this cause with The Elders, the group of senior leaders brought together by President Mandela in 2007."



Condolences for the family

Ramaphosa thanked Mam' Leah and the family, for sharing their husband, father, brother, uncle and grandfather with the nation.

"We know it was not easy, and yet you did so willingly. He belonged to us all and it is all of us who mourn him and celebrate his life today.

"Our nation shares in your sorrow."

. Tutu died from cancer at the Oasis Frail Care Centre in Cape Town on 26 December 2021, at the age of 90. He leaves

behind Nomalizo Leah Shexane, 4 children, 7 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

ABOUT KATJA HAMILTON

Katja is the Finance, Property and Healthcare Editor at Bizcommunity.

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