



Speech by Premier Bushy Maape at the memorial service of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, Klerksdorp, Matlosana Local Municipality, North West, 29/12/2021

Programme Director,

Members of the Executive Council present here,

The Executive Mayor of the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality,

The Executive Mayor of the City of Matlosana Local Municipality,

Bishop of the Anglican Church in the Matlosana Diocese,

Provincial Chairperson of the South African Council of Churches,

Leaders of Political Parties,

Religious and traditional leaders,

Members of the Tutu family,

Comrades and Friends,

Fellow Mourners,

We are meeting here today on a sombre mood, having lost one of the forthright leaders of the liberation struggle, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. First and foremost, let me take this opportunity to join His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa, our beloved nation and the international community in sending our condolences to Mama Leah Tutu and the family on the passing of our beloved Arch, Desmond Tutu.

Desmond Mpilo Tutu was born on 7 October 1931 at Makweteng in Klerksdorp to a poor family, two decades after the passing of the infamous 1913 Land Act. The history of Makweteng and many other parts of this country bears the imprints of the unjust and draconian laws inflicted on African people through racial oppression.

After completing his basic education, he was denied entry at a medical school due to a lack of funds. He opted for a teacher training course at college and in 1960 he was ordained as an Anglican priest. This was after he resigned as a teacher when the government of the day started touting Bantu Education as viable policy for African students.

It is these events which will later inculcate the spirit of selflessness and personified him as a moral guide to his nation for over four decades. He defied the limitations of his humble beginnings and the restrictions imposed by the evil system of apartheid. The history of South Africa's liberation struggle is awash with men and women of high ethical standards who deemed it fit to fight against the oppression of African people and the draconian laws of the Apartheid regime. Archbishop Emeritus Tutu falls within this crop.

He was an anti-apartheid struggle icon and clergyman who preached against the apartheid government from the pulpit. He became one of apartheid's most outspoken opponents, leading protests and civil disobedience against the infamous government. This earned him a Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. He was also the founding Chairperson of the Group of Elders and a leading light in the world.

At the dawn of the democracy, he was tasked with a huge responsibility of heading the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as part of the many efforts by government to forge a new nation. Through his fortitude we were able to learn about the horrific pain and gross violation of human rights meted on our people by the evil apartheid government. It is in this region where we heard about the deaths of Benjamin Oliphant and Delekile Khoza. This also includes the disappearance of Boikie Tlhapi and Sam Lethoba Khiba among others.

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu championed the rights of the oppressed, disenfranchised and marginalised communities and individuals of our beloved country. He was unflinching in his criticism of the government post 1994. He led the Treatment Action Campaign at the height of the Aids pandemic. He also championed the rights of the LGBTQ + communities as well as standing against the abuse of children and women.

True to his beliefs which encapsulates liberation theology, he was firm in his stance on non-violence and boldly advocated for sanctions in the struggle against apartheid. Despite overwhelming pressure from the apartheid regime, he stood steadfast and would not be deterred in his belief in the country's liberation struggle.

On behalf of the provincial government, I would like to take this opportunity and convey my deepest sympathies to the family, friends and relatives of the Arch.

He passes away at a time government is grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the killings and abuse of women and children.

This brutal pandemic which is sweeping through the world has left a trail of destruction. Hundreds and thousands of our people have lost their jobs and children have been orphaned by this deadly virus. I would like to appeal to our beloved Bishops, Pastors and Deacons to keep this beloved nation in their prayers. We are miracle nation, one that has overcome challenges far beyond the expectations of the global community.

The passing of the Arch marks the beginning of the end of a generation which was brave enough to stand against oppression and the exploitation of African people. Sadly, our youth has become accustomed to the peddling of lies and propaganda aimed at soiling the history of our people and the heroic acts of our forebears.

I would like to appeal to the youth to immerse themselves with proper history and be solution driven on a number of challenges bedeviling the socio-economic development our beloved nation.

The word of the lord in the Book of Matthew chapter 5 verse 14 asserts that: "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel but on a candle stick so that it can give light unto all that are in the house".

In conclusion the Arch succinctly avers " do your little bit of good where you are it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world".

Bagaetsho gomotsegang.

I thank you!