

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2021

Statement on the Death of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond M. Tutu of Cape Town, South Africa

December 25, 2021

On this morning after Christmas, we are heartbroken to learn of the passing of a true servant of God and of the people, Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa.

We were blessed to spend time with him on several occasions over the past many years. His courage and moral clarity helped inspire our commitment to change American policy toward the repressive apartheid regime in South Africa. We felt his warmth and joy when we visited him during the 2010 World Cup that celebrated the diversity and beauty of his beloved nation. And, just a few months ago, we joined the world in celebrating his 90th birthday and reflecting on the power of his message of justice, equality, truth, and reconciliation as we confront racism and extremism in our time today.

Born to a schoolteacher and a laundress and into poverty and entrenched racial segregation, Desmond Tutu followed his spiritual calling to create a better, freer, and more equal world. His legacy transcends borders and will echo throughout the ages.

On behalf of the Biden family, we send our deepest condolences to his wife Leah and their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. And on behalf of the people of the United States, we send our deepest condolences to the people of South Africa who are mourning the loss of one of their most important founding fathers.

May God bless Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

NOTE: The statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

Categories: Statements by the President : Deaths :: Tutu, Desmond M., Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, South Africa.

Names: Tutu, Desmond M.; Tutu, Leah.

Subjects: Civil rights : Racial equality; Deaths : Tutu, Desmond M., Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, South Africa; South Africa : Cape Town, Archbishop Emeritus, death.

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