

Tribute to Paddy Kearney

For some strange reason, as I prepared this tribute to Paddy Kearney, one idea that kept intruding, was that it should flow from Matthew 25:14-23.

Soon this idea was accompanied by another, namely that what Paddy stood for and did was reminiscent of Nelson Mandela, in that he too lived a life of tremendous sacrifice and service, Paddy for the people of Durban and Kwazulu-Natal, Madiba for those of South Africa and Africa.

A third common thread was that both Paddy and Madiba kept before their eyes that South Africa is home to both Blacks and Whites, which needed to be transformed from apartheid into democracy, from an unjust system geared to benefit one privileged group into a true democracy in which everyone Black and White enjoyed equal rights and dignity together!

I believe that it was their extraordinary use of the talents given to them in their different but similarly challenging circumstances that made both men great servants of the people in their respective spheres of influence. Paddy served through his faith and Diakonia the institute he led for many years, Madiba through the African National Congress of which he was a member and Government of National Unity, which he led for 5 years

One major difference between Madiba and Paddy is that while Madiba gave his Methodist faith scant public expression, Paddy's Catholic faith and practice were clear for all to see.

For these reasons I have no hesitation in concluding this tribute with the words of the Master in Matthews gospel: 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' Mt. 25:21

Paddy, Rest In Peace.

+ Wilfrid Cardinal Napier OFM
Archbishop of Durban