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UPDATE

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ETHEKEZI
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March 2024

*Blessings to those celebrating Easter,
to those about to start Passover,
and those continuing with Ramadan*

Lectures about +Hurley and St Oscar Romero
Diakonia Good Friday Service
Partnership with DUT Drama Department
Paddy and other DHC friends honoured



**Why is the
Mayor sitting
alone?**



**DUT Drama
students doing
research**



**Paddy's niece
receives a
donation**

TWO GOLDEN ARCHES CELEBRATED ACROSS THE UK

Archbishop Hurley was celebrated in March alongside another great Archbishop, St Oscar Romero of El Salvador in a series of events in England and Scotland. Every year the UK Romero Trust organises a national speaker tour to raise awareness of this great Latin American champion for social justice; this year as part of the Hurley Anniversary, our Director was invited to speak on the parallels between the two Golden Arches. In 2012, Julian Filochowski of the Romero Trust had given the annual Hurley lecture in

Durban so this was a fitting 'return match'.

There are key differences between the two archbishops: Hurley was in the public eye for 60 years, Romero for only three; Hurley survived death threats and Government intimidation; Romero did not and was brutally martyred while saying Mass on 24 March 1980. But they had so much in common: they were of a similar age and studied at the same time in Rome during the rise of Fascism (though we cannot prove that they ever met); having unexpectedly been made bishops they both listened to the lives of ordinary people around them and learnt about the huge injustices their countries were facing from oppressive governments that had the backing of religious leaders; they both spoke out as a voice for the voiceless and challenged their churches to do the same; they inspired a new generation of people to connect faith and action.

The tour was organised in partnership with CAFOD and Jesuit Missions and included evening lectures in Exeter, Glasgow and Leeds as well as a school talk at St Aloysius College Glasgow. It was lovely that, at every stage on the way, there was someone in the crowd who had known Archbishop Hurley or Cardinal Napier and who supported the Archdiocese of Durban in some way. The 50 minute powerpoint of the full talk with narration [can be viewed here](#). Raymond explores the two figures as examples of prayerful and prophetic resilience and draws on Isaiah 61 as a manifesto that Christ gives us all.

The culmination was an ecumenical service at St Martin in the Fields. This was especially fitting since it is the home of one of the oldest homeless support projects in London. It is not only one of the most beautiful and historic churches in London (it is the King's parish church!) but its location on Trafalgar Square means that it has links with South Africa whose High Commission (Embassy) is next door. In the bad days of Apartheid, protesters outside South Africa House received support from St Martin's; over the years the church has welcomed Archbishop Tutu, President Nelson Mandela and a host of South African High Commissioners.

Talking about +Hurley in this historic church, and singing hymns written by him, was an extraordinary moment. Among the many people present, some were learning about Hurley for the first time; but there were also several who had known Hurley and indeed had helped build the DHC including Costas Criticos, Robina Rafferty and Sr Marie-Henry Keane OP. The text of the sermon is attached and the full service with music can be viewed on [St Martin's digital channel](#) where there are also many other beautiful services and great preaching.

In this Hurley anniversary year, it is pleasing to know that his example of a religious leader who is not afraid to speak out and to act in the face of injustice is one that can give inspiration not only in South Africa but further afield.

Photo: crowds gathered at the historic and beautiful St Martin in the Fields to hear about Archbishop Hurley and St Oscar Romero.



GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE CHALLENGES INDIFFERENCE

Each year since 1985 Diakonia has organised Durban's ecumenical walk of witness on Good Friday. Not only is this a unique chance for Christians of all traditions to come together on this holiest weekend, but it is also an opportunity to focus on a particular theme of social justice. This year the DHC was working particularly closely with Diakonia Council of Churches to organise the event as part of our commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the death of Archbishop Hurley.

The theme chosen was 'Challenging Indifference' something that +Hurley did throughout his life – challenging the indifference of arrogant political leaders, complacent religious leaders and lukewarm church goers, all of them too comfortable or too scared to respond to the injustice around them. It seems that all these challenges are just as relevant today – and even more so in the run up to an election that could be the most important for 30 years but where many are ambivalent about the universal right to vote that +Hurley and others struggled for, for so long.

eThekweni Municipality used to support the event by providing free use of the exhibition centre; this year they at least promised to provide chairs and a sound system outside City Hall. Their indifference (or incompetence) meant that they did not even manage to do that. The Mayor did, at the last minute, find a few chairs for religious leaders but the majority of the hundreds of people present had to stand – an appropriate act of solidarity with all those eThekweni residents who suffer every day because of the Municipality's failure to provide basic services like running water. The KZN Premier who had promised to be present, apparently was seen in her car arriving at City Hall, but drove away again before the service started.

Our theme was being played out in front of our eyes: one politician who when faced with a problem just drove away; another who despite weeks of planning had a poor solution that was just too little too late; and resourceful and resilient citizens and civic society organisations just making a plan and getting on with it!

Some parts of the service were able to take place at City Hall including the silent procession and the flowering of the cross. But a number of elements were pre-recorded (anticipating the Municipality's failure) and these can be [viewed via You Tube](#). Rev Buli Sihlali Woolley preaches forcefully on the theme: indifference lies, she suggests, in the gap between faith and action. That is why we are able to profess faith so strongly – as Christians have done this weekend and also Muslims and Hare Krishnas through their big public religious celebrations in Durban – yet do not always turn that faith into action.

The service ended with Catholic Archbishop Jwara leading all in reciting the prayer in English and Zulu in honour of Archbishop Hurley: a man who regularly turned faith into

action and challenged and continues to challenge us to do the same.

Photo: Christian leaders from across the denominations lead the Good Friday procession to challenge indifference.



PARTNERSHIP WITH DUT AND BRIDGING TO THE ELECTIONS

We value the many links that we have had with DUT (Durban University of Technology) including their Urban Futures Centre, International Centre for Non-Violence and Health Sciences programme. The Chair of the DHC Board, Rev Dr Delysia Timm, was formerly a senior member of the leadership team at DUT and our Patron, Ela Gandhi, was their Chancellor.

We are delighted that this year we are working closely together with their Drama Department. The students were a vital part of the Good Friday Service, adding youthful energy and a new perspective onto the service theme. Zenneth Cibane led the Drama and Production Studies Ensemble in song as they sang the cross out of the City Hall precinct at the start of the procession, with the hymn *Ndikhokhele Bawo*. Students then carried the cross for the first stretch of the procession. Dance lecturer Mduduzi Mtshali and his Drama and Production Studies Dancers created three dramatic site-specific movement pieces which were performed in silence, in front of the Old Prison Wall, the Central Methodist Church, and the Playhouse to congregants as they processed by behind the cross.

The students were also hugely helpful in the publicity build-up to the event. As first-time voters, their voice and presence were utilised in many of the pre-publicity photo opportunities – some of them appearing on front page of various newspapers. For the on-line version of the service, two of the first years read the Bible readings and the Hurley prayer.

Senior lecturer Dr Tamar Meskin (daughter of the late Paddy Meskin, a DHC patron) and Head of Department, Dr Tanya van der Walt, are bringing students to the DHC to start hearing the stories of homeless people and refugees as part of their research for creating community theatre. Part of their course work this term will also be staged publicly as an element of a timely project called "The Bridge."

This is an ecumenical initiative between DHC and Diakonia Council of Churches to bridge the time from Good Friday on 29 March to our national elections on 29 May. Many people are anxious about the election period and also not sure how to vote.

Each week (starting on Monday 8 April) the Bridge will provide on-line prayerful and reflective material to help people to get a theological perspective on the issues and also help Christians to support each other with prayer. Materials will be prepared by groups of churches around Durban and so will form a kind of virtual pilgrimage over the next eight weeks. The Bridge will not promote any political party but will instead help voters to make better informed decisions.

To sign up to The Bridge [click on here](#) or send your name via What's App to 068 765 4107.

Photo: DUT students inspire the crowd on the Good Friday procession while performing outside Central Methodist Church.



ACTIVE CITIZENS MOVEMENT HONOURS 3 PEOPLE LINKED TO DHC

Dr Nora Saneka, Chair of The Active Citizens Movement (ACM) reports on a Human Rights Day event they hosted on 21 March at Blue Waters Hotel, Durban.

"At this event we commemorated ACM patrons who have passed on and left an indelible mark on South African society. The people honoured were Professor Hoosen 'Jerry' Coovadia, Mrs Zuleikha Mayat and Paddy Kearney. They all spent their lives working in ensuring human rights prevail. As founding members and patrons of the Active Citizens Movement (ACM), these individuals exemplified a commitment to upholding the values enshrined in our Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Their ethical values continue to be upheld through various ACM campaigns, including those around environmental issues, food sovereignty, gender justice, and our anti-corruption campaign. We advocate for the protection and support of whistleblowers.

"The ACM Human Rights Day event brought together a diverse array of guests, including community leaders, activists, and students, and included an arts exhibition and music.

"Through this celebration, we remembered our beloved Patrons and the urgent need for us to form networks of solidarity at a time in which the voice of the people needs to be heard. Our Constitutional democracy, which is there to uphold the common good, is under threat by corrupt forces. ACM, as a non-party political movement, is committed to protect and advance human and environmental rights, both in South Africa and globally.

"A letter was presented to Mrs Ursula de Haas, Paddy's niece, stating that an amount of R2500 in memory of Paddy Kearney was being donated to feed the homeless at the DHC (*pictured at the top*). Another R2500 to feed the homeless was given to the DHC to honour Zuleikha Mayat, also an ACM Patron. Jerry Coovadia was a Patron of ACM and also of the DHC."

For more information about ACM email activecmsa@gmail.com.

Photo (with apologies for the quality): the picture is from the early days of the ACM and shows the late Paddy Kearney (far left) together with a number of DHC Patrons: Ela Gandhi (3rd from left), the late Jerry Coovadia (centre, front) and Bishop Rubin Phillip (far right). Campaigning against State Capture the slogan on the T-shirts says "Hands Off Treasury".



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