

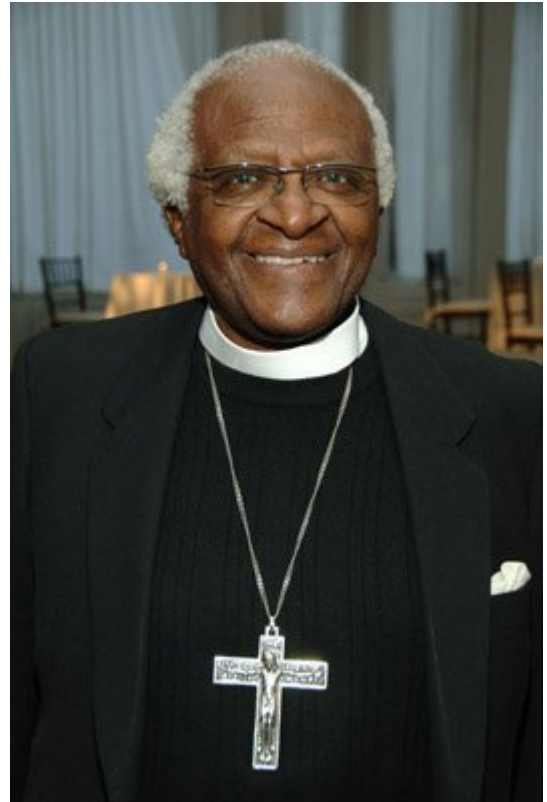
Prayer of the Month • March 2015

Bless our beautiful land, O Lord,
with its wonderful variety of people,
of races, cultures and languages.
May we be a nation of laughter and joy,
of justice and reconciliation,
of peace and unity,
of compassion, caring and sharing.
We pray this prayer for a true patriotism,
in the powerful name of Jesus our Lord.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, praying for his country,
South Africa

*The One World Book of Prayer: A Treasury of Prayers
from Around the World.*

Mabey, Juliet. ed. Oneworld Publications, 1999.



‘Bless our beautiful land’ is a patriotic prayer, but does not advocate a narrow patriotism, rather a patriotism of breadth and inclusion. It is a prayer about south Africa but it is equally applicable to this island nation, a nation that has continually been added to by influxes to these shores from countries around the world, from the Romans and the Vikings to people from the Caribbean and Africa. It is a joyful prayer, a prayer of celebration as well as inviting God’s blessing.

Desmond Tutu is a cheerful figure. Born in 1931, he was the first black archbishop of Capetown. He has campaigned not only about apartheid, but about, racism, poverty, homophobia, and HIV/AIDs, among other issues. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. After the fall of apartheid, Tutu headed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He retired as Archbishop of Cape Town in 1996. He is generally credited with coining the term ‘Rainbow Nation’ for post-apartheid South Africa, referring to South Africa’s ethnic diversity. He has been involved in many other causes, across the world. He is one of the patrons of The Forgiveness Project, a UK-based charity, launched in 2004, that uses real stories of victims and perpetrators of crime to facilitate conflict resolution, to break the cycle of vengeance and encourage behavioural change. He has written or co-authored about thirty books, from ‘Crying in the wilderness’ (1982), to ‘Made for goodness: and why this makes all the difference’, with daughter Mpho Tutu (2010).

Colin Lunt