

Mr. Chancellor, Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The great honour that has been bestowed upon me tonight is due to the influence that others have had in my life. To them I express my gratitude, beginning with Almighty God, who called me into being and in His providence has guided me through life. Then I thank my parents and family for the part they played in my formation, as well as my pastors and teachers who opened up the Scriptures within the Tradition of the Church.

The direction of my life was completely changed in 1951 when I read two books; the one was Alan Paton's "Cry the Beloved Country" and Trevor Huddleston's "Naught For Your Comfort." These two authors opened my eyes to the plight of the underprivileged and led me to abandon my architectural studies at the University of Pretoria in order to begin the study of theology. I believed that as a pastor I would be more equipped for service to the poor and oppressed peoples. That desire was fulfilled when I was a pastor in Tembisa.

During the four years in Rome while I was preparing for the Baccalaureate and the Licentiate in theology the Second Vatican Council was in session. To the Fathers of the Council I owe the attitudes and positions I have adopted in my ministry. The Decree of the Council which had the greatest impact was firstly, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, "*Gaudium et Spes*" which begins with the words: "The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts." It was the Bishops of the Southern African Episcopal Conference and particularly the late Archbishop Denis Hurley of Durban who were my mentors in applying these principles to everyday life in South Africa. To them I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude. The little that I was able to do in the field of justice and peace, in working for equality in education and the opening of our institutions and schools to all races in defiance of government policy, and in making known to Church and State leaders in the western world the plight of those who were being forcefully removed according to the apartheid policy. This resulted in the increase of economical pressure being applied.

In the field of promoting Christian unity and Interfaith Dialogue I was inspired by the Vatican Documents, "*Unitatis Redintegratio*" (the restoration of Christian Unity) and "*Nostra Aetate*" which deals with relations with other world religions, by promoting mutual understanding and cooperation for the common good, encouraging us to reach out to persons and communities who share our humanity, particularly the Jews and the Muslims who like us have Abraham as our Father in Faith. Because *Nosta Aetate* reminds us that the Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in other religions, we can reach out also to the Hindus and the Buddhists. I am grateful for the small part I have been asked to play in responding to the plea of the Vatican Council, that we forget that past and make a sincere effort to achieve mutual understanding for benefit of all, to promote together and preserve peace, liberty, social justice and moral values.

I thank you.