



WE ARE CHURCH International

Saturday, 13 June 2026

Reflecting on “Made For Goodness” by Desmond Tutu

Facilitator: Uschi S.

1

Opening Song:

Final song: Masithi Amen Siyakudumisa

Masithi.

Amen, siyakudumisa.

Masithi.

Amen, siyakudumisa.

Masithi.

Amen bawo, amen bawo,

amen siyakudumisa.

A re re

Amen rea u rorisa

A re re

Amen rea u rorisa

A re re

Amen Ntate, Amen Ntate

Amen rea u rorisa

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifueACvzlCc>

2

Gathering

We gather in the presence of one another and of Holy Mystery who is known by many names:
Our Creator God, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit, Amen.

3

Opening Prayer

Holy One, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

You are with us this day and each day.

You are among us now, we welcome you.

Reader 1 MAEVE W.

God does dwell in us. This is the essential truth of who we are. We are creatures made in the image of God. At the core of our being is goodness. This is not to deny the reality of sin. Sin is real. Depravity and cruelty are real. Evil exists. But sin, cruelty, and evil are not our essential nature. They are

aberrations. What is normative is goodness. Wrongness runs against the grain of creation. Evil is so contrary to our nature that we must construct justifications to allow ourselves to do what we know to be wrong or cruel. We concoct a justification or we claim that we are powerless to effect change. So we justify torture by saying that brutality might prevent widespread carnage. We avert our eyes from epidemic disease in poor countries, and we tolerate famine: "It's not that we don't care, we just didn't know it was so bad." Or "What are we supposed to do?" The justifications and the unease with our own inaction prove these behaviours to be anomalous. Goodness is our lodestone.

This was true for the girls I met at a school in Northern Ireland. They knew that goodness is the governing quality of humanity. They knew this despite what they had experienced. Cruelty and spite are not the essential qualities of human beings. They are departures from the human norm.

In November 2001, I visited Holy Cross School in Belfast. At that time relations between the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities were fraught. I asked to meet with the leaders of both sides at Stormont Castle, the headquarters of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. But each side would agree to meet with me only if representatives of the other side were not present. The hatred between the two groups was palpable. I had never before experienced anything like it.

I did meet with Gerry Adams, the president of Sinn Féin. I described him to my hosts, a protestant family who had lived and worked in South Africa, "I found him a warm and charming person," I reported. The parents received my observation with no comment. But one of the children—probably parroting a sentiment he'd heard expressed by the adults—responded, "He can't be charming. He's an evil man."

Reader 2 COLM H.

Children experience fear, just like adults. They have their own worries, and they adopt adult concerns. They sometimes take on adult opinions without the sophistication or the information to examine or challenge them. Like adults, they can have their vision obscured. The girls at Holy Cross School were different.

I had been invited to Holy Cross School because the children needed an armed escort to walk to school. I don't remember what had sparked the blockade of the school. But for five months the Roman Catholic girls who attended this elementary school had to run the gauntlet of very angry Protestant adults. The protestors were using the most vile and abusive language. They swore at the children. They assailed the youngsters by throwing urine-filled balloons at them.

When I went to the school I expected to find deeply traumatized, angry children. But these children were not acting out of the trauma playbook. The girls were like elementary school children anywhere. Even after the assaults of the morning they were in touch with the joy of being little girls. There was much nudging, giggling, and squirming. They had prepared a song for me. They sang "Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace." The adults suffered from an acute failure of vision. They could not see God in the little girls. The girls, on the other hand, were blessed with God-sight. They did not answer hate with hate. They could see beyond the unspeakably ugly behaviour they faced to the essential goodness hidden behind the adults' fear.

Under our dehumanizing fear there is goodness. With patience and skill we can uncover it. It happened in South Africa. It happened in Northern Ireland too. The ugly fear and the raw hatred I saw in 2001 were in distinct contrast to the comity I experienced on a recent visit to Ireland. It seemed impossible that Martin McGuinness of the Roman Catholic Sinn Féin and his Protestant counterpart, Ian Paisley, would ever share a negotiating table. Yet I saw them share a joke. The image of those two men laughing together reminded me that even a failure of vision is not final. Because God always dwells in us—in all of us—there is always hope. There is always hope that the scales will fall from our eyes and we will see as God sees. Prayer makes the scales fall off faster.

Reader 3 MAEVE W.

In the last chapter we described prayer as a way of hearing God's voice. It is that. One gift of prayer is that in prayer we can hear the voice of God guiding and directing us. Another, equally important gift of prayer is that we can hear the voice of God accepting us. This, then, is the wonder. We are already loved and accepted. God knows us to be good. When we listen to the voice of God in prayer, we don't hear the carping of a dissatisfied parent who is constantly correcting us. We hear the voice of one who sees and loves the already of us. We hear the voice of one who knows and loves the not yet of our being. God loves who we are. God sees and loves who we are becoming. Prayer is also how we learn to see as God sees.

In our prayer we can begin to see ourselves as God sees us. We can begin to see ourselves as we truly are.

In God's vision, sin is not the essential and foundational truth about us. Goodness is. We are not originally sinners, distant from God. We are originally the crowning achievement of creation. We are those created in the image and likeness of God. We are created out of the abundance of God's love. We are created for God's joy. And we have choices. The choices we make sometimes lead us away from God. They lead us into sin. For Christians, finding our way home to God is not a "self-help" project. Jesus Christ is our hope for complete wholeness, for healing that is salvation. And that hope has already been accomplished. So we are constantly called to experience the truth about us: that we are beloved of God.

Sometimes it can be hard to see ourselves as God sees us. It can be impossible to imagine God's loving gaze. Maybe you don't recall ever being looked at lovingly. Perhaps you experience every gaze as critical, judgmental, disapproving, or, at best, indifferent. But that is not how God looks at us. God's gaze is like the gaze between lovers wrapped in a tender embrace. God looks at us the way a mother looks lovingly at her newborn baby. If you can see the loving gaze between mother and child in your mind's eye, you can begin a small meditation on being held in God's loving gaze. Once you are able to fix the gaze in your mind, put yourself in the sight line of the one gazing. Allow yourself to be the subject of that long, loving look. In this way you can imagine, then experience, the loving gaze that God turns to us. As we allow ourselves to accept God's acceptance, we can begin to accept our own goodness and beauty. With each glimpse of our own beauty we can begin to see the goodness and beauty in others.

Why does this seeing matter? What difference does it make? It makes all the difference in the world. How would it be to turn with God's loving gaze and see those we name as enemies? How would we treat them? What of the people we love so imperfectly? If we could see as God sees, what would we see? Would we see anyone who should fall outside the reach of our care? The pimps, prostitutes, and prisoners, the drug-dealers and the deranged, the illegal immigrants, the terrorists, the race baiters, the homophobes and haters—all are held in God's loving gaze. God's love overshadows us all. That drug addict on skid row, that street person smelling to high heaven—if we really had the eyes to see, they would give us a glimpse of God. God camouflages the divine glory, which would be blinding. But if we truly look, we can see.

Reader 4 COLM H.

With God's eyes we see our enemies as they are—a bundle of incomprehensible hurts and hatreds, anger sheathed in human form. And we see them as they truly are—people made in God's own image, with hopes, loves, laughter, blood, and tears like ours. With God's eyes we see our children as they are—a pimply jumble of faults and failings, forgotten homework and skipped chores. And we see them as they truly are—gifts to us of grace and wonder, treasurers of divine imagination, teachers who point us to God. With God's eyes we can see ourselves as we are, with all of our pride, every lack, all our limitations, and each prejudice. And we can see ourselves as we truly are—not sinners in need

of saving but saints in need of seeing. And all of us are good. No, not just good, but very good. We are precious to God; the crown of creation, beautiful beyond compare. Very, very good.

Let us turn into the stillness and listen to God speak with the voice of the heart:

*You are my child,
My beloved.
With you I am well pleased.
Stand beside me and see yourself,
Borrow my eyes so you can see perfectly.
When you look with my eyes then you will see
That the wrong you have done and the good left undone,
The words you have said that should not have been spoken,
The words you should have spoken but left unsaid,
The hurts you have caused,
The help you've not given
Are not the whole of the story of you.
You are not defined by what you did not achieve.
Your worth is not determined by success.
You were priceless before you drew your first breath,
Beautiful before dress or artifice,
Good at the core.*

*And now is time for unveiling
The goodness that is hidden behind the fear of failing.
You shout down your impulse to kindness in case it is shunned,
You suck in your smile,
You smother your laughter,
You hold back the hand that would help.
You crush your indignation
When you see people wronged or in pain
In case all you can do is not enough,
In case you cannot fix the fault,
In case you cannot soothe the searing,
In case you cannot make it right.
What does it matter if you do not make it right?
What does it matter if your efforts move no mountains?
It matters not at all.
It only matters that you live the truth of you.
It only matters that you push back the veil to let your goodness shine through.
It only matters that you live as I have made you.
It only matters that you are made for me,
Made like me,
Made for goodness.*

4

Sharing of thoughts

5

Prayers of the community

6

Eucharistic Prayer

U: With gratitude, we place our gifts, our dreams, or joys, and our sorrows on the table of love we gather round. Abundant Giver, we thank for your amazing gifts of life and love. Help us savor them! Spirit Sophia, we open ourselves to you. Fill us with your healing presence. We join as on at tables around the world.

- *Please extend your hands in blessing* -

Put out your spirit on us and on these gifts, that we may be vehicles of justice and compassion as we and they become the body and blood of Jesus.

Reader 5 SOLINE H:

(Lift the bread)

On the night he was betrayed, while at supper with his friends, Jesus gave thanks and broke the bread saying what you have said to your beloved family and friends throughout the ages: Share with me!

All: This is my body which is given up for you. When you break bread together, remember me.

(Lift the cup)

After supper, Jesus took the cup, blessed it and said:

All: Take this all of you and drink. This is my blood, the new covenant of God-with-you. When you drink from this cup, remember me.

Holy One, we are living in difficult, perplexing times. Please give us moral courage. May we never be too busy or frightened to stand up and speak out for justice, equality, freedom and peace.

Reader 6 SOLINE H:

(Raise gifts)

May we be one with all creation. May all divisions be healed. May we come together in your spirit, recognizing that all is truly sacred.

All: Amen!

7

U: We thank you that we have gathered here as the Body of Christ;
May we be truly Eucharistic to one another.
Let us pray in the words Jesus taught us:

Prayer of Jesus

All:

O Birthing Father- Mother of the Cosmos

Focus your light within us - make it useful.

Create your reign of unity now-

through our fiery hearts and willing hands

Help us love beyond our ideals

and sprout acts of compassion for all creatures.

Animate the earth within us: we then

feel the Wisdom underneath supporting all.

Untangle the knots within

so that we can mend our hearts' simple ties to each other.

**Don't let surface things delude us,
But free us from what holds us back from our true purpose.
Out of you, the astonishing fire,
Returning light and sound to the cosmos.
May it be so!**

9

U: Let us be the peace we wish to see in the world.
The peace of our God is with you always.
Let us share the gift of Peace with one another.

10

U: May we be who we are, the Body of Christ.

11

Communion Song

Fatma Said sings "Aatini Al Naya Wa Ghanni" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljIFE8jxjCo>

(Bring me the Flute and Sing)

*Bring me the flute and sing, for song is the secret of
eternity. And the wailing of the flute remains, even after the
end of existence. Have you taken the forest, rather than the palace, to
be your home?*

*Have you climbed up the creeks and the rocks? Have you bathed in perfume and then dried yourself
with sunlight? Have you tasted the wine of the early morning from
goblets of ether? Bring me the flute and sing; that is the secret of
eternity. And the wailing of the flute remains, even after the
end of life.*

*Have you sat alone at dusk among the grapevines? Among their clusters hanging like chandeliers of
gold?*

*Have you made the grass your nighttime bed? Have you wrapped yourself in the evening air with
the sky as a blanket? So that you can allow the future to come and let go
of the past? Bring me the flute and sing, so our hearts may be in
balance. And the wailing of the flute remains, even after the
end of all sins. Bring me the flute and sing; forget maladies and
their cures. For people are but lines of poetry, written, but with
water.*

12

Final Blessing

U: Let's go in peace, in gratitude and in service to our world.

All: Amen

13

Final Song:

Yael Deckelbaum Yael Deckelbaum - Prayer Of The Mothers (Official Video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyFM-pWdqrY>