



AFRICA/SOUTH AFRICA - "Let us pay tribute to Mandela fighting for his ideals", write the Catholic Bishops

Johannesburg (Agenzia Fides) – "Let us now sing the praises of famous men, great men in their generations... They ruled their governments wisely, were known for their valour. Their counsel displayed wisdom, they saw things from afar". (Ecclesiasticus 44:1-3)

"With these words we, the Catholic Church in Southern Africa, express our gratitude to uTata Mandela for the sacrifice he made for all peoples of South Africa and for the leadership and inspiration he gave in leading us on the path of reconciliation", writes his His Exc. Mgr. Stephen Brislin, Archbishop of Cape Town and President of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC), in the message of condolence sent to Nelson Mandela's family, the historic leader of the struggle against apartheid and the first President of democratic South Africa, who died yesterday at the age of 95.

In the message, sent to Fides Agency, Mgr. Brislin stresses that Mandela "he never compromised on his principles and vision for a democratic and just South Africa where all have equal opportunities, even at the great cost to his own freedom".

The Archbishop continues: "despite great suffering throughout his life he did not answer racism with racism and his words at the treason trial still inspire us even today: "I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities".

"When Tata was released on 11th February 1990 the Country was in turmoil and blood was being spilt almost daily. Through his leadership at that time, reinforced when he became President in 1994, he led the country on the path of reconciliation and peace, calling on South Africans to throw all arms of destruction into the sea. For this we shall always be indebted to him", continues the message.

"The greatest way we can acknowledge the life of Nelson Mandela is to strive for the ideals he cherished: freedom, equality and democracy, and to defend these ideals from those who would corrupt them", concludes Msg. Brislin. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 06/12/2013)