

# MPHO TUTU VAN FURTH

b. 1963

## SOUTH AFRICAN ANGLICAN PRIEST

*“God challenges us to love those  
with whom we don’t agree.”*

**She is an  
internationally  
respected priest,  
author, and human  
rights activist.**

The Reverend Mpho Tutu van Furth is a South African cleric, author, and activist. A leading human rights advocate and proponent of forgiveness, she was barred from preaching by the Anglican Church of South Africa after she married a woman.

Tutu van Furth is the daughter of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Prize-winning humanitarian and anti-apartheid activist. She was in her 30s when apartheid ended.

Growing up, Tutu van Furth had no interest in joining the clergy. Years of exposure to religious diversity finally inspired her to explore her own faith. At age 40, she

received a Master of Divinity from Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

In 2004 Tutu van Furth began her ordained priesthood at Historic Christ Episcopal Church in Alexandria, Virginia. In 2005 she founded and became executive director of the Tutu Institute for Prayer and Pilgrimage, which provides spiritual renewal for people of faith and faith seekers. She collaborated on several books, including “Made for Goodness: And Why This Makes All the Difference” (2010), which she co-authored with her father, and “Tutu: The Authorised Portrait” (2011), with Allister Sparks, which chronicles her father’s life and accomplishments.

In 2011 Tutu van Furth moved back to South Africa, where she became executive director of the Desmond & Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation. In South Africa she met Marceline van Furth, a Dutch visiting professor of pediatric infectious diseases. When they developed a romance, Tutu prayed about it and concluded, “If this is love, then it’s love.”

After her housekeeper was murdered in 2012, Tutu van Furth spoke publicly about her difficult journey to forgive the killer. In 2014 she published “The Book of Forgiving: The Fourfold Path for Healing Ourselves and Our World.”

When Tutu married van Furth in 2015, the Anglican Church of South Africa revoked her clerical license. As the daughter of a venerated archbishop who campaigned for LGBTQ equality and women’s ordination, Tutu van Furth was deeply hurt. She and her wife moved to the Netherlands, where Tutu was free to preach.

As a religious leader, human rights advocate, and champion of mercy, Tutu van Furth is a celebrated speaker. She has shared the stage with influential figures, such as the 14th Dalai Lama and the spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle. Among many other initiatives, she advocated for forgiveness in the wake of racial tensions and police shootings in the United States. She produced the 2021 documentary “Mission: Joy – Finding Happiness in Troubled Times.”

Tutu van Furth preaches at Vriburj Church in Amsterdam. She and her wife have four children.



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