

NELSON MANDELA BIRTHDAY FESTIVITIES BAN

Archbishop Stephen Naidoo of Cape Town described the banning of festivities for the 70th birthday of Nelson Mandela by the South African authorities as “ridiculous” on 7/8/1988.

“On the occasion of his birthday, instead of repressing further what few rights we have left in this country, the authorities would do better to join all South Africans in profound reflection on the injustices in our society, and on the immense suffering they cause.

To: Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, on the occasion of your 70th birthday, 25/8/1988.

From: Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference

The Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference congratulates you on attaining the biblical age of plenitude in wisdom and maturity, three score and ten.

It is our hope and prayer that this occasion, by focussing once again on the circumstances in which you have to ‘celebrate’ your birthday with your family, will serve as a reminder of the urgent need for all South Africans to unite in the effort to remove the things which divide us, and to build up instead the sort of unity and community which is the desire of every human heart, and also a very special feature of the African spirit, with its deep concern for the person as a member of the family, the clan and indeed the extended family of human kind.

We therefore pray with you and for you, that the day may not be long in coming, when such efforts will enable us to celebrate in freedom the bond of our common dignity as children of the same father, and sisters and brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

With heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for many happy returns of the day.

Signed: BISHOP W.F. NAPIER, OFM, of Kokstad