



## The Power of One Act of Respect

"Asked by the BBC to identify the defining moment in his life (Archbishop) Desmond Tutu spoke of the day he and his mother were walking down the street. Tutu was nine years old. A tall white man dressed in a black suit came towards them. In the days of apartheid in South Africa, when a black person and a white person met while walking on a footpath, the black person was expected to step into the gutter to allow the white person to pass and nod their head as a gesture of respect. But this day, before a young Tutu and his mother could step off the sidewalk the white man stepped off the sidewalk and, as they passed, he tipped his hat in a gesture of respect to her!

The white man was Trevor Huddleston, an Anglican priest who was bitterly opposed to apartheid. It changed Tutu's life. When his mother told him that Trevor Huddleston had stepped off the sidewalk because he was a "man of God," Tutu found his calling. "When she told me that he was an Anglican priest I decided there and then that I wanted to be an Anglican priest too. And what is more, I wanted to be a man of God" said Tutu.

Huddleston later became a mentor to Desmond Tutu and his commitment to the equality of all human beings due to their creation in God's image a key driver in Tutu's opposition to apartheid."

My prayer on this Friday is that we can all strive to be "people of God" who are willing to "step off the sidewalk" and "tip our hat" to our sisters and brothers, particularly those on the margins. May it be so...