

## **Paddy Kearney and the Gandhi Heritage**

***Paddy Kearney Memorial Lecture – Durban, 27 August 2023***

***Dr Raymond Perrier***

### Introduction

Let me start by saying that I am a bit embarrassed to be giving this lecture.

It is not embarrassment out of some false modesty – though I do recognise that I follow in the footsteps of distinguished prior lecturers: Bishop Paul Verryn, Fr Michael Lapsley and Minister Pravin Gordhan. But the time for false modesty is over – 2 days ago I received official notification from UKZN that I have been awarded my PhD so I am delighted that fittingly giving this lecture is my first official task as “Dr Raymond Perrier”!

I am, rather, partly embarrassed because almost everyone in this room knew Paddy better or at least for longer than I did; though after 4 years of researching his life I can certainly claim the most comprehensive knowledge of him.

And I am mostly embarrassed because Paddy would not have liked this – the lecture, the street that is named after him, the people coming to talk about him and praise him. Modesty was the characteristic of Paddy that was most often quoted by the people I interviewed. Let me share just one story:

Around August 2015, I was waiting for Paddy to join me for a meeting and, uncharacteristically, he was late. I started asking around the building if anyone had seen him. And eventually I found him sitting on a bench outside (in an area which since his death has been officially re-named ‘Paddy Kearney Way’) chatting to some of the homeless men. It turned out that our new social worker, Khulekile Mdiniso, who had not met Paddy, had seen a dishevelled old man walking towards the building, in his shabby clothes and carrying two old plastic bags. Not realising he was the Chair of the Trust, she assumed he was homeless and invited him to sit down with the others and wait for lunch. When I explained the mistake to Paddy he replied, with a twinkle: “It is an honour to be taken for a homeless person.”

So, given Paddy’s modesty, should I be embarrassed because I have now written about him – and so much! 241,000 words, 442 pages, 1885 footnotes!

Don’t worry – the aim is to publish a shorter more readable version next year!

But, despite his modesty, I feel that I did have implicit permission from him. Let me explain....

Paddy was a famously private man – a comment repeatedly made by interviewees. But occasionally, in the last four years of his life when I was working closely with him, he would share some story about his own experiences. Given that he had written such an eloquent biography of +Hurley, I asked him why he did not now write his own life story. With characteristic humility, he said he would not do that. I replied that if he would not write his story, would he let me write it for him? And his exact words of reply were: “For as long as I am alive, you cannot write my story.” I am

confident that, from a better place, Paddy – even if embarrassed by the attention that this work focuses on him – is prepared to smile benignly on my efforts to share his inspiring story.

### Acknowledgements

So let me say thank you to Paddy for giving me implicit permission. And for the quality of his personal archives. It is clear that he knew he was dying and so was anxiously preparing his archives for someone else to be able to navigate. In that process he of course threw out some things; but I can be confident that what he chose to keep he knew would be read by a later researcher. So I am very grateful to the Kearney family for giving me access to that archive (which is now part of the Denis Hurley Archive at Cedara) and especially to his brother Prof Brian Kearney.

My sincerest thanks go to my interviewees – this project would not have been possible without them.

### Many thanks to all the interviewees

- Aitken, Marilyn
- Apelgren, Eric
- Argall, Jane
- Briard, Jacques
- Campbell, Alex
- Cason, Fred and (f)Marylyn
- Ceruti, Ines
- Chikane, Frank
- Colussi, Mario
- Coovadia, Jerry
- Cormick Dina
- Corcoran, Cathy
- Criticos, Costas
- De la Croix, Berenice
- Egan, Anthony
- de Haas, Mary
- de Haas, Ursula
- Duval, Sydney
- Dziva, Doug
- Erwin, Alec
- Franks, Vanessa
- Gandhi, Ela
- Gardner, Mary
- Goad, Daphne
- Goemans, Loek
- Gounden, Vasu
- Graham, Paul
- Hamad, Zubie
- Hemson, Crispin
- Hudson, Norman and Estelle
- Irvine, Colleen and Doug
- Joseph, Hester
- Kaufmann, Larry
- Keane, Marie-Henry
- Kearney, Sarah
- Kerchhoff, Joan
- Lindegger, Graham
- Linden, Ian
- Mahomed, AV
- Matthias, Julie
- McCrindle, Tim
- McKay, Anne
- McKay, Priscilla
- (f)Mkame, Liz
- Moore, Anne
- Moran, Brendan
- Mvambo-Dandala, Nomabelu
- (f)Nadal, Paul
- Napier, Wilfrid
- Nicholson, Chris
- (f)Nolan, Albert
- Ntamubano, Jean-Marie
- Nuttall, Michael
- Nyuswa, Mxolisi
- Oliver, Di
- Pearson, Peter-John
- (f)Pieterse, Jude
- Phillip, Rubin
- Smith, Tim
- Snyman, Deon
- Steele, Richard
- Taylor, Peter
- Thaw, Davine
- Thompson, Illa
- Tully, Stephen
- Verryn, Paul
- Vinsen, Coral
- Vorster, Mike
- Warmback, Andrew
- Yeats, Charles

You can see behind me a list of them and some are in the room today. Can I ask them please to stand up so you can acknowledge them.

I especially want to remember those who have passed away since the interviews: Marylyn Cason (in the UK), Liz Mkame, Mgr Paul Nadal, Fr Albert Nolan, Br Jude Pieterse. And also remember Jack Kearney and Bishop Barry Wood who both died before I was able to interview them.

When I submitted my proposal for approval I was told to only put in 30 interviewees – more than that just would not be possible. I submitted a list of 40. In the end I interviewed over 70 people! So if you are not on the list then I am sorry. But if you have a really good Paddy story – see me afterwards!

Thanks also to my fellow managers and the Trustees of the DHC who put up with me having this extra call on my time for the last few years. Some might think that writing a PhD was a distraction

from the work of the DHC; others might imagine that the DHC was getting in the way of writing the PhD. Neither of those was true. Because reading about Paddy, and then writing that up, proved to be an excellent way of reflecting on and deepening my understanding of the work that we do here. In classic Jesuit terms, Reflection and Action are not competing claims on our time but two sides of the same coin in the Christian vocation.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank my examiners: one of them is not well known here, Prof Mathijs Lamberigts of the Catholic University of Leuven; but two examiners are well known in South Africa: Sr Sue Rakoczy now retired back to the USA but for many years a much loved teacher at St Joseph Cedara; and Fr Anthony Egan a Jesuit who in fact delivered the annual Hurley lecture at Diakonia in 2014 on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Archbishop's death.

But my deepest thanks are reserved for Prof Philippe Denis, a Belgian Dominican brother, who has recently retired after decades of service at UKZN. I cannot imagine having anyone better. It was helpful to work on a piece of community-based history with someone who is such an expert in the field of oral history; it was important to have someone who knew the Church context as well as Philippe does; but it was truly wonderful to be able to discuss this material with someone who also knew and admired Paddy. In fact, it was Philippe, along with Jane Argall who is here today, who worked with Paddy on the monumental editing of +Hurley's letters which Paddy was so keen to complete, knowing he was close to death.

### Comment on the Universities

So those are the sweet words. Before I move on, though a more sour note. Universities, the last time I checked, exist for the improvement of knowledge and thus are there to support academics, researchers and students. And the administrative personnel and the systems they put in place should work with that in mind. I am sorry to say that that was not my experience of doing my PhD with UKZN.

I was with them out of deference to Paddy (who had had a long association with UKZN and UN) and to +Hurley who was the Chancellor who helped the transition to UKZN. But to be frank there were times when I seriously considered moving my doctorate to a better run university. Sometimes the experience of lack of professionalism, poor communication, dysfunctional systems, and frankly absence of care for me as a student was very disappointing.

Moreover, from some of my recent dealings with DUT, I don't think the back-office functions at UKZN are alone in behaving this way. Moreover, having spoken to academics and students in both institutions I know that my experience is not unique.

Our universities should be striving for excellence and setting standards of excellence so that South Africans can compete on the world stage. The acceptance of mediocrity – or worse – in the support functions sets an appalling example to students. And the good students, and the good academics, will vote with their feet as we have seen happen in Durban. It's not too late to improve. But there won't be improvement if we do not speak out when things are below standard.

End of the gripe. Back to the substance.

## Style of the Thesis

This work is not a straight biography. Rather it takes its inspiration from a book published in 1974 – the same year as the founding of Diakonia: James McClendon’s “Biography as Theology”. Early on I mentioned wanting to reflect on the ‘Theology of Paddy’ but someone said that would not be possible because he was not a theologian and his academic writing was quite limited. In fact he did write quite a lot – as the anthology of his writings shows. But Paddy’s theology is found not in his writing but in his life. And that is how this work combines Biography and Theology.

So my thesis is inspired by the life of Paddy. But also by some crucial works of theology: the documents of the Second Vatican Council. This was the comprehensive re-examination of the Catholic Church that took place in Rome 60 years ago (from 1962 to 1965) and at which +Hurley was a key participant. He is in fact described by one commentator as one of “The Ten Men who made the Council” and +Hurley himself calls it the greatest adult education exercise in history – 2,500 bishops from around the world learning from some of the greatest theologians (not all of the Catholic) and learning from each other. That is why the book that +Hurley is holding in the magnificent statue downstairs is not the Bible but the documents of Vatican II.

Paddy of course was not at the Council but his life was completely shaped by it. He had joined the Marist brothers in 1960 and so – while the Council was taking place – he led a relatively isolated existence, living and working in an old-fashioned Catholic ghetto. I asked Mario Colussi, one of Paddy’s contemporaries as a Marist if the Council was something that they were discussing as young religious brothers. He looked shocked. “No of course not,” he replied. “Perhaps the Jesuits were talking about the Council but we were much more focused on school rugby!”

But we can see that Paddy was starting to look over the walls of the ghetto – assisted by some radical Catholic women at the Grail and their unlikely association with their neighbour in Johannesburg, one Beyers Naudé! So when Paddy emerges from the Marists at the end of 1969 it is into a public church that has changed radically – radical changes certainly on paper and then in practice in SA over the next 20 years largely because of +Hurley.

So the thesis looks at key documents of the Council and argues that, consciously and unconsciously, Paddy lived these out for the next 50 years.

- Vatican II – for the first time in 2,000 years – affirms the role in the Church of the 99% of members who are not fathers or brothers or sisters. And Paddy would spend the next 50 years as a proud lay person.
- The Council affirmed the Catholic Church’s shared mission with Christians of other denominations – no longer schismatics but instead ‘our separated brothers and sisters’. Paddy would spend almost 30 years creating and leading Diakonia, +Hurley’s model of what an ecumenical agency should be.
- The Council no longer saw the Church as *separate* from the Modern World or *against* the Modern World but instead – to use the subtitle of one its key documents – ‘*IN* the Modern World’. This gave theological justification for Paddy’s efforts to resist Apartheid and then, post 1994, to help build the new South Africa.
- The Council opened up the possibility for Catholic Christians to engage with people of other faiths without the compulsion to convert them. Hesitantly, in the early decades, and more

enthusiastically in the last decade of his life with the Denis Hurley Centre, Paddy showed how committed he was to enabling people of all faiths to work together in Durban.

The presence of the diverse people in this room bears testimony to these key focuses of Paddy's life: there are priests and religious but also lay people (including myself!); there are Christians from a range of denominations and people of various faiths; there are social activists who might not have shared Paddy's religious grounding but certainly found common cause with his desire to transform society.

### Development of Paddy

Part of the pleasure of working on Paddy's life was to explore how he developed to become the open and accepting person that we all knew and worked with. After all, he had started off in a ghettoised, traditional Irish, clerical Church. There is some evidence that he had to change some of his early world view. Let me give just one example:

Among Paddy's papers were three sets of hand-written letters – the old style blue aerogrammes! – that he wrote to his parents at different points of his life when he was overseas. It seems that the letters were kept lovingly by Paddy's parents and then, after their deaths, were preserved by him in his personal archive. One set from 1958 when Paddy was 16 shows his first glimpse of a world outside of South Africa on a month-long trip to Europe. It is striking how this trip was through a completely Catholic lens. Organised as it was by the Oblate priests of his parish, and travelling with his Irish grandfather, Paddy's experience of Europe is not that of the average 16-year-old. In Italy, he visited Rome and Loreto (not Florence or Venice); in Paris, his main preoccupations were *Sacré Coeur* and *Notre Dame* (and not the *Louvre* and *Pigalle*); and in London, it is the 100-year-old Catholic Westminster Cathedral that drew his attention, not the 900-year-old Anglican Westminster Abbey.

And among the letters is an account of his visit to Canterbury, an unusually non-Catholic part of the itinerary. Is this where we will see the first glimpse of the later renowned ecumenical champion? Paddy described in awe the grandeur of the building, the beauty of the mediaeval stained-glass, the transcendence of the stone vaults. And then commented to his parents: "My blood boils with anger when I remember that *they* stole this building from *us!*"<sup>1</sup>

I quote this comment not to mock the untransformed teenage zealot, but rather to draw attention to the level of conscientisation Paddy would later undergo. He can only have felt sympathy with other Catholics embarking on a similar journey.

So just as Paddy's ecumenical openness developed over time, so did his awareness of the importance of interfaith collaboration. One whole section of the thesis looks at this in some detail and explores the theological understanding that made this possible for him. But a key point I make is that for Paddy this was not just about Vatican documents but also the reality of living in Durban. As he was attending Emmanuel Cathedral – on my left – he was constantly reminded by the building behind me of the significant presence in this city of a Muslim community. Because the Indian population of Durban meant that interfaith issues could be not just a theoretical interest but a practical one: how to engage with the Muslim, Hindu and even Parsee faith traditions.

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<sup>1</sup> SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/C/1 "Kearney's letters to his parents, May 1958 to June 1958" (3 June 1958)

In writing about this, I realised that there was a particular dimension and that was Paddy's exposure to the Gandhi family and to the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi. So that appears now as a standalone appendix which I hope to offer to *Gandhi Marg*, the academic journal that promotes Gandhian thought. And that appendix will be formal focus of the rest of this lecture.

### Early link to the Gandhi family

The most famous Indian (and Hindu) associated with Durban is, of course, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who lived here from 1893 to 1914. In fact, from his offices (round the corner from this building) the young lawyer would have watched the construction of the Emmanuel Cathedral which was completed in 1904.

I want to explore in this lecture the influence that Gandhi and his family had on Paddy. I believe that this influence was *direct* because of Paddy's own links with the Gandhi family and his publicly stated interest in Gandhian ideals. But there is also an *indirect* influence because of the significant Gandhian influence on +Hurley. It is impossible to extricate the two or to say that one causes the other. I think it is fairer to see a virtuous circle (as in so many of Paddy's interests) in which +Hurley encourages Paddy to pursue a certain path, but that Paddy also independently is attracted and influenced by Gandhi.

The link with Gandhi is the clearest evidence of Paddy's open-ness to other faiths. But it is also important because Gandhi's own approach to inter-religious dialogue is one which is later espoused by Paddy. I would argue that it is also implicit in the famous phrase in the Vatican II document on other faiths. *Nostra Aetate* talks about how all religions 'reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all people'. For Gandhi, as for Vatican II – and so for +Hurley and for Paddy, inter-religious dialogue is not about trying to convince the other that you are right, nor even to develop a pragmatic tolerance: it is the desire to learn from others, starting with the humility that you do not already have all the answers.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is of course better known by the Sanskrit honorific 'the Mahatma'; in fact, this was first used of him in South Africa and means, of course, 'the great-souled one'.

But very curiously, this unusual phrase actually appears in a Vatican II document talking about the importance of education and it was a document that +Hurley himself helped draft. Could it be that he was subconsciously making a reference. The phrase refers to the role of Catholic education and says that it exists

“...so that there can be produced not only men and women of refined talents, but those great-souled persons {*magni animi*} who are so desperately required by our times.”<sup>2</sup>

Great-souled is thus – like the more common Catholic term 'saint' – not a title reserved only for a few exceptional people for us to admire from afar, but rather an aspiration that all of us could achieve. If Gandhi was the great-souled person desperately required by his age, then +Hurley and later Paddy have some claim to being among the great-souled persons desperately required by their age.

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<sup>2</sup> *Gaudium et Spes* 31

It is striking how, throughout the interviews with people who knew Paddy, after +Hurley it was either Mahatma Gandhi or Ela Gandhi who are cited most often as the people who influenced him. Thus, two of his fellow-Marist novices mention the influence of the Mahatma;<sup>3 4</sup> for Paul Nadal, it was 'Gandhi who changed Paddy';<sup>5</sup> for Anne McKay, his influencers were Ela alongside Thomas Merton, Rosemary Haughton and Albert Nolan;<sup>6</sup> for Stephen Tully, they were Ela and Fatima Meer;<sup>7</sup> for Loek Goemans, it was Paddy's friendship with Ela which opened him up to interfaith matters.<sup>8</sup>

It is from the interview with Ela Gandhi, reminiscing about her own family's involvement with +Hurley and Paddy, that we can see the clearest indication of early interfaith encounters.<sup>9</sup>

Ela recalls how in 1963-64 her mother Sushila (the Mahatma's daughter-in-law) asked +Hurley to join a committee for Gandhi's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 1969. Also on that committee were Alan Paton (an Anglican) and Fatima Meer (a Muslim). Later in 1971, Ela's husband Mewa Ramgobin set up a 'Committee for Clemency' to appeal for the release of political prisoners to coincide with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the South African Republic.<sup>10</sup> It was a multi-faith initiative and Ela recalls that at the start of meetings people were invited to say prayers in accordance with their different faiths. Ela also recalls the creation in 1971 or 1972 with +Hurley of a Natal Interfaith Council (NIC – though not to be confused with the Natal Indian Congress). Although this organisation was not banned, most of its leadership were (Ela herself, Mewa Ramgobin and George Sewpersad) and so it folded.<sup>11</sup>

Paddy was not involved in any of these earlier initiatives but the link to the Gandhi family did come early on in Paddy's own journey of transformation. Having left the Marists, he spent 1971 teaching at Inanda Seminary, a school for black girls just outside Durban and according to the short unattributed biography at *South African History On-line*:

...[while] at the Inanda Seminary ...[Paddy] was introduced to political activists such as Mewa Ramgobin who lived at the Gandhi Phoenix settlement north of Durban, near the Seminary. When his banning order was lifted, one of the first things Ramgobin did was to come to address the students.<sup>12</sup>

Ramgobin had married Ela Gandhi, grand-daughter of the Mahatma, and so through him Paddy met members of the Gandhi family including Ela's mother Sushila (though her father, Manilal, the Mahatma's son, who had stayed behind in Durban after his father returned to India in 1914, had died in 1956). Of course, you all know that both Ela and her now late husband Mewa Ramgobin were actively involved in the anti-Apartheid struggle; that after 1994 Ela served for the ANC in the first democratic Parliament. And we are honoured that the link with Paddy continues to this day since Ela is an active Patron of the DHC.

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<sup>3</sup> Taylor, Peter. Personal interview by author, 1 February 2021 via Zoom (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

<sup>4</sup> Campbell, Alex. Personal interview by author, 18 January 2022 via Zoom (fellow Marist novice/ brother)

<sup>5</sup> Nadal, Paul. Personal interview by author, 26 October 2020 in Durban (Catholic Monsignor, Vicar-General to +Hurley and Patron/ Trustee of Denis Hurley Centre)

<sup>6</sup> McKay, Anne. Personal interview by author, 21 October 2021 in Durban (communications officer at Diakonia)

<sup>7</sup> Tully, Stephen. Personal interview by author, 8 December 2020 in Durban (Catholic priest and co-founder of DHC)

<sup>8</sup> Goemans, Loek. Personal interview by author, 15 October 2020 in Johannesburg (member of The Grail)

<sup>9</sup> Gandhi, Ela. Personal interview by author, 18 March 2021 in Durban (Fellow founder of Gandhi Development Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre).

<sup>10</sup> "Biography of Mewa Ramgobin" *SA History On-line*. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/mewa-ramgobin> (accessed 20 May 2022)

<sup>11</sup> For more on this see Appendix E: "+Hurley, Kearney and Gandhi".

<sup>12</sup> "Gerald Patrick 'Paddy' Paddy", *SA History Online*, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/gerald-patrick-Paddy> (accessed 18 May 2022) (Note there are some factual errors in this biography but I have been able to confirm the Ramgobin connection with his widow, Ela).

In her interview, Ela made the point that Phoenix always had a tradition of interfaith collaboration.<sup>13</sup> It is an area about 25km from the Cathedral which was demarcated by the Apartheid Government as residential for Indians only; but that meant that all kinds of South African Indians – Muslim, Hindu and Christian – found themselves living side-by-side, becoming friends and in time marrying each other.

The link with the Phoenix Settlement (a continuation of the projects that the Mahatma had started when in Durban) was especially significant in Richard Steele's link with Paddy. Steele, having served prison-time for refusing to enlist in the South African military (citing Conscientious Objection) had left the country and then returned in 1984. +Hurley wanted to demonstrate that CO's did wish to serve their country but in a non-military way and Paddy had the idea of connecting Steele with Mewa Ramgobin who was then Chair of the Phoenix Settlement Trust and wanted to establish it as a site of reflection. Steele comments:

Paddy had an affinity for Gandhi. He suggested me as a possible caretaker for the Phoenix site, residing in the Kasturba Bhavan [the house Manilal built in honour of his mother]. There was no real programme other than just to live there. My salary would come from Archbishop Hurley.<sup>14</sup>

Ela recalls that she first met Paddy in 1973. Intriguingly, she says that Paddy had been sent to her by +Hurley to talk to her about the creation of Diakonia. She recalls:

It was clear that it was planned to be a Christian ecumenical initiative but the Archbishop thought it was important to understand how other faith groups would react. I said that I was always keen to work together with any groups that wanted to do something about the situation in the country.

This meeting was just before she was served with a banning order which meant that from Jan 1975 to Dec 1983 her meetings and her movements were highly restricted and which would have made it difficult for Paddy to engage with her during that time.<sup>15</sup> Later, after her unbanning, Ela collaborated with Paddy in starting various organisations which were based at Diakonia such as a Durban branch of the World Conference on Religions and Peace (WCRP), the Joint Rent Action Committee and the Detainee Support Committee. Later still, she worked with Paddy in setting up the International Centre of Non-Violence (ICON) at Durban University of Technology (DUT, where Ela was Chancellor 2007-2012) and also the Gandhi Literary Peace Institute (which dissolved).

Their closest collaboration was the Gandhi Development Trust (GDT). During the Parliament of Religions held in Cape Town in 1999, Ela ran a discussion group about restorative justice which so impressed the Missouri-based Community of Christ Church that they gave her an award and a grant of \$26,000 which could be used to run an organisation and also to fund programmes and grants. She recalls that Diakonia was one beneficiary and, since the Phoenix Settlement Trust was already set up to run the site, she created GDT to focus on Gandhian ideals, development work, education and non-violence. Paddy was a founding Trustee of GDT when it was formally set up in 2002 and was its Chair at the time of his death in 2018. It is noticeable that almost all the other Trustees over the years (Jairam Reddy, Vasu Gounden, Kidar Ramgobin, Chiman Patel, with the exception of

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<sup>13</sup> Gandhi, Ela. Personal interview by author, 18 March 2021 in Durban (co-founder of Gandhi Development Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

<sup>14</sup> Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector)

<sup>15</sup> "Ela Gandhi", *SA History Online*, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/ela-gandhi> (accessed 18 May 2022)



Siyakele Ngubane) were of Indian origin. I asked Ela to comment on this and her reply was very telling:

When you talk about it, I suddenly realise that Paddy was white.<sup>16</sup>

Ela mentioned also how integrated Paddy was in their family: that her son Kidar called him 'Uncle Paddy' and that Paddy participated in some Indian dancing at her son's wedding. (To be honest what is most surprising is not that Paddy was doing Indian dancing but that he was doing any dancing at all!). In fact, Dina Cormick remembers seeing that in his 1983 wedding photo Paddy was dressed not in a Western suit-and-tie but in an Indian kurta.<sup>17</sup> (For a man who usually did not seem to put much care into what he wore, such a choice is interesting especially in Apartheid South Africa in the early 1980s.)

Paddy often wrote for and about GDT and this shows the degree to which he made Gandhian ideals his own. In Paddy's personal book collection on his death is a copy of *Satyagraha – a pro-peace agenda* which contains 33 papers from a 2006 DUT conference which Paddy helped organise (though sadly none of them are by Paddy!).<sup>18</sup>

#### Influence of Gandhi on +Hurley, and through +Hurley on Paddy

There was clearly a direct Gandhian influence on Paddy through his interaction with the family, his engagement with Gandhi's writings and his immersion in Gandhian ideals through ICON and GDT. But, in addition, it is clear that +Hurley was heavily influenced by the Mahatma and, because of +Hurley's influence on Paddy, we can only assume that this complemented and reinforced the Gandhian influence.

Whilst Paddy did not write specifically about the influence of the Mahatma on himself, he did write a nine-page article entitled "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop" for *Gandhi Marg*, the periodical of the Delhi-based Gandhi Peace Foundation which in 2010 produced a special edition about African contributions to non-violence and conflict transformation.<sup>19</sup> Paddy in telling us how +Hurley was influenced by Gandhi is also betraying how he himself was influenced by Gandhi.

Paddy starts off with an alarmingly honest admission:

As a young white matriculant in the early 1930s, Hurley shared the typical racial prejudices of young white people of the day. He was a solid supporter of the British Empire and thought Gandhi was spoiling things by his opposition to British rule in India.<sup>20</sup>

Although it is unlikely that Paddy would have shared +Hurley's views on the British Empire (not least because of the passing of time), we can imagine that he was also anxious that as a young man he

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<sup>16</sup> Gandhi, Ela. Personal interview by author, 18 March 2021 in Durban (co-founder of Gandhi Development Trust and Patron of Denis Hurley Centre)

<sup>17</sup> Cormick, Dina. Personal interview by author, 21 December 2020 in Durban (co-worker at Diakonia)

<sup>18</sup> *Satyagraha – a pro-peace agenda*. (Durban: DUT, 2006)

<sup>19</sup> Paddy, G Paddy. "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop". *Gandhi Marg – Quarterly of the Gandhi Peace Foundation* (2010, 31:4) 595-609

<sup>20</sup> Paddy, "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop", 595

might have 'shared the typical racial prejudices of young white people of the day'. Paddy goes on to quote +Hurley directly:

Mahatma Gandhi appeared a troublesome person to me. Though of Irish descent I was...thoroughly steeped in the belief of the civilizing force of the British Empire, as it was taught to us at school. I resented the words and actions of a person who appeared determined to disrupt the great empire.<sup>21</sup>

But Paddy explains how +Hurley changed; this also gives us an insight into how Paddy himself feels he changed over the years:

Gradually, however, +Hurley's attitudes would change as he opened himself up to new ideas and admitted the inadequacies of his earlier thought. He was always a keen learner, even in old age.

+Hurley confesses that what he had read and heard about Gandhi...

...led to one of those cultural shocks we experience from time to time and which are truly gifts from God. Gandhi appeared to me now as the greatest soul the world has seen since Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century.<sup>22</sup>

One source that was available to be read in Durban in the late 1940s was *Indian Opinion*, a newspaper founded by Mahatma Gandhi. +Hurley admits that he came to 'know and love' its editor Manilal Gandhi (son of the Mahatma) and his daughter, Ela [who was born in 1940]. As a result of this connection, Hurley was often asked to speak or to offer prayers at protest meetings which Ela attended. She recalled:

When listening to [Hurley's] prayers, I was often reminded of my grandfather who always spoke of the separation of the deed from the doer. Sometimes it was difficult to love the perpetrators of Apartheid, while hating Apartheid, but Archbishop Hurley in his simple, truthful style brought that message home very clearly. It remained in my consciousness in the dark days of Apartheid.<sup>23</sup>

Ela herself repeats the account of +Hurley's admiration for the Mahatma and the mutual openness to her family and their promotion of Gandhian ideals. She is one of the contributors to a book of tributes to +Hurley on the occasion of his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an Archbishop.

My father Manilal and mother Sushila knew him very well and revered him deeply. I remember that they often spoke of +Hurley's English humour which was very much like that of my grandfather.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Paddy, "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop", 596 (+Hurley's words quoted by Paddy)

<sup>22</sup> Paddy, "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop", 596 (+Hurley's words quoted by Paddy)

<sup>23</sup> Paddy, "Gandhi's Influence on a Catholic Archbishop", 599 (Ela Gandhi's words quoted by Paddy)

<sup>24</sup> Gandhi, Ela. "An Epitome of Kindness". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 115

## Spiritual influence of Gandhi

One of the clearest ways in which +Hurley could now show his admiration for the Mahatma was in delivering a Centenary Address about him at Wits University in 1969. Paddy quotes from it saying that +Hurley was most impressed that for Gandhi truth was not just to be spoken about but to be lived. As a result “the religious truth that illuminated Gandhi’s mind was lived out in political activity as honestly and courageously as in any other facet of his life.”

In recognising Gandhi’s desire to win over an opponent rather than to defeat them, +Hurley quotes the French writer Jean Guittou: “In the struggle for truth, there are no victors or vanquished, for he who is vanquished by the truth is, in truth, the victor.”<sup>25</sup>

Paddy also quotes from an unpublished address of +Hurley about Gandhi’s integrity that was written in 1993 when +Hurley was parish priest at the Cathedral. (The talk is included in a list of +Hurley’s talks which are kept at the +Hurley Archive at St Joseph’s Cedara).<sup>26</sup>

All too often the pious, even the saintly person, pursues a path of spiritual perfection that brings results merely in the field of personal holiness, albeit a personal holiness that is deeply marked by the love and service of others. ....[Gandhi’s] was the sort of mind that saw with startling clarity that if you wanted to be true to yourself and true to the people you loved you had to put that love into practice to change political, economic and cultural factors hurting people, stifling their freedom, and impeding their growth and progress.<sup>27</sup>

Paddy describes how under Gandhi’s influence in these last years of his ministry, +Hurley’s ‘enthusiasm for ecumenism became strong and broader’ – by this it seems clear that Paddy is using ecumenism not just to mean relations between Christians but also to include inter-religious co-operation since Paddy goes on to quote +Hurley as saying this:

The great religions of the world will have to work together. They will be sitting at Gandhi’s feet, cherishing their dearest beliefs as Gandhi cherished his, but finding common cause in the grace needed to give the world the moral guidance so necessary for its survival and development.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, Paddy references +Hurley’s attendance at the Sant’Egidio meeting in Rome in 2004, just a few days before his death, and stresses that this was not just other Christians but people of other faiths working together for peace (even though Sant’Egidio’s communities themselves are exclusively Christian).

In the Sant’Egidio gatherings, he tasted what the Church of the future might be like – a Church more in tune with the great social concerns of Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>29</sup>

The reference by +Hurley to the centrality of love for Gandhi resonates with comments +Hurley himself made about the centrality of love as he discovered it at Sant’Egidio. In one of his last writings +Hurley says:

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<sup>25</sup> Paddy, “Gandhi’s Influence on a Catholic Archbishop”, 602

<sup>26</sup> Denis, Philippe. *Facing the Crisis – selected texts of Archbishop D E Hurley* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1997) 266 (1993)

<sup>27</sup> Paddy, “Gandhi’s Influence on a Catholic Archbishop”, 606 (+Hurley’s words quoted by Paddy)

<sup>28</sup> Paddy, “Gandhi’s Influence on a Catholic Archbishop”, 606 (+Hurley’s words quoted by Paddy)

<sup>29</sup> Paddy, “Gandhi’s Influence on a Catholic Archbishop”, 609

You know, more and more I realise that love is the only thing that matters. Love makes the difference.<sup>30</sup>

Paddy identifies themes that were important to Gandhi and which inspired +Hurley – but they are also the ones that we see in the life of Paddy himself: humility, being open to learn, distinguishing the deed from the doer, willingness to forgive, religious truth lived out in political activity, honesty and courage, the victory of truth without vanquishing the opponent, personal holiness, love and service of others, being true to yourself, being true to the people you love, putting love into practice, changing political, economic and cultural factors, working together, finding common cause, moral guidance, the centrality of love.

Although Paddy does not refer to dualism in this reflection on Gandhi and +Hurley, I would suggest that what appeals to him, and what he is laying out for others, is a religious world view that avoids dualism as an unhelpful separation. In his chapter, “The Dualism in the Faith of the Church” William Dych comments on this in the context of *Gaudium et Spes* : that Vatican II document I mentioned earlier which is sub-titled ‘The Church in the Modern World’. Dych sees this document as going some way to resolving that dualism.

It is the dualism in our theology of faith, and of hope and charity as well, that creates the necessity of putting things together that never should have been separated in the first place.<sup>31</sup>

This resonates with the view expressed by French philosopher Jacques Maritain; Paddy confirms that +Hurley prepared for the Council by reading Maritain’s 1936 *Humanisme intégral*<sup>32</sup>. It also concurs with a quotation (that Paddy uses at a DHC meeting in 2018) from a speech by +Hurley in 1981 in which he expresses his view on politics and religion in a way that shows a similarity with the Mahatma’s own views:

There is a difference between political concern, which a religion must have if it wishes to be relevant to political morality, and political activism which tends to identify a religion with a political faction. When people say that the Church should not be involved in politics, our reply should be: in action? - I could not agree more; in political concern? - I could not agree less.<sup>33</sup>

### Paddy and Non-Violence

For his collected writings, Paddy selected a number of items that reference the Mahatma. He included a six-page life of Gandhi from *Worldwide* (the bi-monthly magazine of the Comboni order in Southern Africa) though he does not really say anything especially new about him.<sup>34</sup> There are also

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<sup>30</sup> Paddy, *Guardian of the Light*, 322 (+Hurley’s words quoted by Paddy)

<sup>31</sup> Dych, William. “The Dualism in the Faith of the Church”. *The Faith that does Justice - examining the -Christian Sources for Social Change*. John C Haughey ed. (New York: Paulist, 1977) 65

<sup>32</sup> Paddy, G Paddy. *Guardian of the Light*. (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN, 2009), 101

<sup>33</sup> SJTI Archive: BIO - 11/W/3/Minutes/6 (2018) (Quote from speech by +Hurley to the South African Council of Catholic Social Services, 16 October 1981)

<sup>34</sup> Paddy, *Faith in Action*, 77 (“Profile of Mahatma Gandhi”, *Worldwide*, Feb-March 2016)

four more pages of articles about Gandhi – how he was too strict as a parent and whether his assassination could have been avoided.<sup>35</sup>

More interestingly, he included his own review of a book on moral conscience by Martin Prozesky who was also inspired by Gandhi.<sup>36</sup>

The quest for a global ethic has in fact already commenced, [Prozesky] says, nearly a century ago through Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi came to South Africa as a Hindu. Here he encountered Muslim, Christian, African, Jewish and other value systems from which he saw a new ‘soul force’ emerging, even in the midst of appalling racism and exploitation.<sup>37</sup>

Paddy also included the message he wrote for the memorial service (in December 1988) of Sushila Gandhi (Ela’s mother):

I do hope [the chair at UKZN] will become a reality—helping Gandhi’s life, ideals and actions to become much better known and used than they are at present. Of course, a much more important memorial would be the extent to which each of us present here today captures the vision of Gandhi and lives it out in our own situation.<sup>38</sup>

The Gandhi Chair at UKZN was not created but, as Paddy points out, the important test is the degree to which Durban and South Africa have lived out Gandhi’s vision.

Of all the Gandhian ideals, the one that Paddy seems to have found most engaging is the principle of non-violence. In the thesis, there is a much longer section on Paddy’s support for Conscientious Objectors. One of those, Richard Steele, mentioned above as one of the early practical links between Paddy and a Gandhian organisation, reflected:

I assume that Paddy was pacifist but he would not have espoused it publically *per se*.<sup>39</sup>

When describing Hurley’s sympathy with black dock workers who were illegally striking in Durban in 1973, Paddy refers to this as ‘a non-violent pathway to change’ and he connects Hurley’s actions to the foundational document of Catholic Social Teaching the 1891 *Rerum Novarum*. He quotes +Hurley as saying:

If the strikes were an example of what blacks could achieve in a peaceful and orderly fashion, they should be welcomed enthusiastically...When the oppressed speak, it is God who speaks.<sup>40</sup>

There is a part of me that is horrified when people write in books. But as a researcher, I was pleased to discover that Paddy did leave us *marginalia* in copies of some of his books. One of them, now at

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<sup>35</sup> Paddy, *Faith in Action*, 82, 85, 86

<sup>36</sup> Prozesky, Martin. *Frontiers of conscience: exploring ethics in a new millennium* (Pietermaritzburg: Equinym, 2003). Prozesky himself had co-edited, a book of papers from a UKZN conference on the occasion of the Gandhi Centenary though sadly there is little reference here to Gandhi’s influence from or on South African Christianity. Brown, Judith and Prozesky, Martin. *Gandhi and South Africa – Principles and Politics* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal, 1996)

<sup>37</sup> Paddy, *Faith in Action*, 224 (*The Southern Cross*, April 2004)

<sup>38</sup> Paddy, *Faith in Action*, 127 (‘Message for Memorial Service’, 10 December 1988)

<sup>39</sup> Steele, Richard. Personal interview by author, 27 October 2020 in Durban (Conscientious Objector)

<sup>40</sup> Paddy, *Guardian of the Light*, 184 (+Hurley’s words quoted by Paddy)

Cedara library, is his copy of Wallis and Hollyday's 1989 book about South Africa (at the start of a time of great violence in South Africa).

Paddy has under-lined the following quotation from +Tutu and added the word 'non-violence' in the margin:

More and more I have come to understand that Gandhi and Martin [Luther King] and Jesus were right. You don't have to be judgemental about the desperation of oppressed people reaching for a gun, but I will continue to warn my people. We are in danger of losing our souls. We are jeopardising our future. We are selling out our humanity for a quick victory. We are changing the pain of today for a much deeper malady of tomorrow.

The more I see violence the more I understand the need of breaking the cycle of violence in South Africa. I am more committed to the Struggle now than ever before. I'm also more committed to non-violent action and a non-violent lifestyle, to try to preserve what is best and noble for our country.<sup>41</sup>

And a few pages later, Paddy has under-lined another passage, this time by Alan Boesak, and added the word 'spirituality' in the margin:

We have got to get down to the business of training as many people as possible in non-violent action and its spirituality. We must be seen as being quite prepared to take the consequences of standing up on behalf of God's people. ...It isn't my struggle, it isn't even the struggle of the people of South Africa. It's the struggle of all the people of God.<sup>42</sup>

Not surprisingly, when speaking at events of the Gandhi Development Trust, Paddy returns to the theme of non-violence. One example among many is a speech he gave at the annual re-enactment of Gandhi's Salt March in May 2010. He talked about the need for scattered groups to come together into 'a powerful non-violent movement that will help transform our society into a place of peace based on justice'. (Note that this is 2010 so it is clear that, 16 years after Liberation, Paddy did not think that we had 'transformed our society into a place of peace based on justice'. I am pretty sure that he still saw it was work in progress when he died in 2018.

Paddy also used this opportunity to portray the Mahatma as part of a wider movement of peacemakers and so he connected 2010's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Salt March with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Luthuli receiving his Nobel Prize and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of birth of Dr Monty Naicker.<sup>43</sup> He further reinforced this link by deciding to name the main hall at the Denis Hurley Centre (this very room!) the 'Gandhi-Luthuli Peace Hall', with portraits of both the local peacemakers, a tribute which was even picked up in the Indian media.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, 58, (+Tutu's words quoted by the authors)

<sup>42</sup> Wallis and Hollyday, *Crucible of Fire*, 68, (Boesak's words quoted by the authors)

<sup>43</sup> SJTI Archive: BIO- 496/P/5 "Salt March speeches"

<sup>44</sup> "Mahatma Gandhi honoured in Durban for peaceful opposition to Apartheid", *Economic Times*, 8 July 2015  
<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/mahatma-gandhi-honoured-in-durban-for-peaceful-opposition-to-apartheid/articleshow/47993730.cms?from=mdr> (accessed 21 Oct 2022)

## Conclusion

In a website linked to the GDT, Paddy offers his own words of tribute<sup>45</sup>:

It has been a great privilege to be associated with the Gandhi family. I have immense admiration for Mahatma Gandhi and he has made a huge impact on the philosophy of non-violence and we in Durban are very lucky to have that connection with the Gandhi legacy.

On the same page, Attorney JP Purshotam, a friend and colleague of Paddy's says:

Paddy is a living example of the passion and zeal that Gandhi demonstrated during his life for truth and justice.

Both directly and indirectly, Paddy was clearly influenced by Gandhi: he shared a similar passion to challenging injustice, to working with people of other faiths, to integrating the sacred and the secular, and to espousing the way of non-violence. These were also values that were key to +Hurley and that he in turn encouraged in Paddy.

It is noteworthy that since Paddy's death in 2018, this annual Memorial lecture in his honour is organised by the two Gandhian organisations in Durban (GDT and the Phoenix Settlement Trust). The speakers (such as Fr Michael Lapsley or Minister Pravin Gordhan) are chosen because they also promote the same ideals. In fact, Minister Gordhan in the room last year (albeit via Zoom) quoted these words from the Mahatma and they are ones that can be applied equally to Gandhi, +Hurley and Paddy: "Judge me by my actions."<sup>46</sup>

But I want to close the reflection on Gandhi by highlighting an interesting divergence in the way that +Hurley and Paddy saw the Mahatma; or at least the way in which they were prepared to express this publicly.

I came across a quotation of +Hurley which is striking for two reasons. First of all, it shows a Catholic archbishop making a controversial interfaith claim. But secondly, Paddy chooses not to quote it in his 2010 article about +Hurley and Gandhi even though he would certainly have been aware of it. Was it, perhaps, because +Hurley was going even further than Paddy felt comfortable?

The quote also does not appear in any of Paddy's works about +Hurley but instead in an earlier short biography of +Hurley in 1997 by Frederick Amoore. He describes +Hurley in May 1982 opening the 'Peace Library' in Durban inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and he quotes +Hurley as making this controversial statement about the salvation of a non-Christian:

As Christians we apologise that our effort comes so late in the day, but we pray that [this library] may be a sign to the one whom we call Lord and Saviour, and elicit the approval of the Mahatma who, I am sure, shares the joy of everlasting life with Christ.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Pillay, Indhrannie. "Paddy Paddy – Icon of Peace and Nonviolence". Satyagraha – in Pursuit of Truth. <https://www.satyagraha.org.za/word/paddy-Paddy-icon-of-peace-and-nonviolence/> (accessed 3 May 2022)

<sup>46</sup> "Memorial Lectures", *Denis Hurley Centre website* <https://www.denishurleycentre.org/page/memorial-lectures> (accessed 21 Oct 2022)

<sup>47</sup> Amoore, Frederick. 'Denis Hurley: his witness to love of neighbour'. *Facing the Crisis – selected texts of Archbishop D E Hurley*. Philippe Denis ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 1997) 223; also: Rambharos, Shishupal. "One Human Family". *Denis Hurley – a portrait by friends*. Anthony Gamley ed. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2001) 172

Paddy's behaviour would suggest that he shared this sentiment; it is interesting that he did not write it, nor did he publicise the fact that +Hurley had said it.

### Paddy's Legacy

This annual lecture is a part of Paddy's legacy; the books that he wrote about +Hurley and his own anthology of writings are another important part of his legacy; and I hope now that this enormous tome (and the shorter version to follow!) will also be part of his legacy. Another part of his legacy is financial. He was very keen that the DHC should encourage people to leave money in their wills that we could then invest so that the +Hurley legacy would also be a legacy for them. And Paddy kickstarted this with his own generous donation so it is rightly called the 'Paddy Kearney Legacy Fund'.

But I am reminded of a famous English quotation. When asked what kind of monument should be built to honour Sir Christopher Wren the architect of St Paul's Cathedral in London, his son stood in the middle of the building and said: "*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice!*" If you are looking for a monument, look around you.

So as you sit here "in the house that Paddy built", if you are looking for a monument to him, look around you. I therefore want to close not with my words, or even Paddy's words, but with an email which I received just a couple of days ago from someone who has used the DHC:

*I'm Bonginkosi Thusi, a former drug addict. Your Centre played a pivotal role in my life when I was down and out, food and decent clothing wise. I came across an article in one of the freebie newspapers regarding the plan of honouring the Founder of the Centre. I would love to come to say thanks. Thanks for looking after the needy, homeless, asylum seekers, and providing free health care to the less fortunate. I haven't accomplished so much yet; I'm a now doing agri work at home. But the Centre has changed my life for the better. Thanks for being there when life was tough. Drugs almost destroyed my life. I'm now fully 4 years without drugs. God answered my prayer and I will always cherish my union with your centre, the Denis Hurley Centre.*

*With love, Bonginkosi Cosha Thusi*