



World Council of Churches



A Memorial to Rev. Prof. Dr Mary-Anne Plaatjies-van Huffel

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WCC Moderator

To Mary-Anne's family, to her friends, colleagues, students and to all my fellow mourners at this memorial service for our friend Rev. Prof. Dr Mary-Anne Plaatjies-van Huffel,

*Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above;
and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.—Daniel 12:3*

I find it difficult to fathom, let alone accept, that my dear colleague is actually gone. We cannot argue with our Creator God, who holds our timelines. But Prof. Mary-Anne, as a pioneer and visionary leader, inspired us to begin a journey together, reflecting on the future of ecumenism, and we will miss her wisdom and her witness.

When I reflect on Prof. Mary-Anne's lifetime of breaking down barriers and healing the breach, I see outstanding achievements and pioneering service in ministry. I see faithful and self-critical service to the church. And I see contributions to church history, law, and theology. Less obvious are the suffering she endured along the way, the frustrating struggles for justice and well-being for women in church and society that consumed her days, and the clear vision for what the ecumenical movement can and should be in the future.

Prof. Mary-Anne has served, since 2013, as the World Council of Churches President for Africa, and Africa's struggles for justice were at the heart of her life and commitments. She embodied the best in us.

Indeed, Mary-Anne's commitment to justice shaped and sharpened her Christian discipleship, her ministry, and her vision for ecumenism. I believe her remarkable life is an invitation to see the unity of the church in the quest for fully inclusive communities, to hear the perpetual call to reform and renewal of church and society, to respond with joyful hearts to the summons to the difficult but life-changing conversion that God asks of us.

We are proud and grateful to God for Mary-Anne's life and witness. Shine on, Mary-Anne! Your exemplary commitment will continue to light our paths as pilgrims. We promise, as sisters and ecumenists, to carry on the torch of justice, peace, and liberation.