

01.30.14 Governor Patrick Delivers Remarks at Nelson Mandela Memorial

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY:

Governor Deval L. Patrick
Nelson Mandela Memorial
Northeastern University
Thursday, January 30, 2014

Peace, reconciliation and love. Resilience, persistence, determination and love. Grace, hope and love. When I think of Nelson Mandela, a giant of a leader, I keep coming back to love. He lead by love.

You don't hear leaders talk much about leading by love. Not nowadays. You hear about forceful leadership. Cunning leadership. Smart leadership. Strong leadership. But you don't hear much about loving leadership. But it might be that loving leadership, leading by love, is the most powerful kind of leadership. And Nelson Mandela may be the most extraordinary and best modern example of that. After decades of Apartheid in South Africa -- a system designed to grind up human dignity, and cause people to abandon all hope in tomorrow -- if ever there were people entitled to their rage it would be black South Africans. And yet, Mandela lead in a different direction. He taught his people -- and all of us -- to find common cause through common humanity. And it was then, and still is, a powerful lesson.

Nelson Mandela famously wrote:

"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

Imagine that. When's the last time you heard a public figure talk about love as the motivation for policy choices?

Nelson Mandela understood that love is not a substitute for wise policy or effective programs, or for personal responsibility or moral rectitude or perseverance. Love is not an excuse. But without love it's hard to make sense of compassion or common destiny or community itself.

We could use more of that message right now. With so much want in the midst of so much plenty, with so much hurt in the midst of so much joy, with so much despair in the midst of so much hope, we could use more love in each of us for each of us. We could use more justice -- which, Madiba understood, is what love looks like out in the open.

I thank God for the spirit and the loving leadership of Nelson Mandela. And I pray that it lives on in the people of South Africa and of the world.