



The Church of Scotland

MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

3 July 2020

Dear All,

Certain philosophical approaches assume uninterrupted growth and progress for humanity - whether in terms of economics or morality. And it is possible to look at the world and see evidence of things being better than once they were. Thirty years ago, one-third of the world's population lived in extreme poverty - living on less than \$1.90 a day. Most recent figures indicate that that figure is now nearer to 10% of the world's population. We can't yet claim to have made poverty history, but progress has undoubtedly been made. Let us rejoice in that whilst committing ourselves to work for further progress.

But in terms of how we humans get on with one another, it's hard to argue that we've made much progress at all. Do we forget so quickly? Are we so inept when it comes to remembering to remember - and to learn?

Twenty-five years ago the world watched in horror at what unfolded across the Balkans generally and, particularly, at Srebrenica. Those who thought that such unthinkable extermination only happened elsewhere, or belonged in the history books, were shocked to see such scenes taking place in 'civilised' Europe.

It was never more important than it is now that we remember what happened - in a historical sense and because it is so very easy to allow ourselves to slip into the same dark places. Even now, there are divisive voices in our communities, doing their best to emphasise difference and to exploit what's going on in the world for their own ends. These voices must not prevail - which will require all people of goodwill to do more than be idle bystanders.

In remembering Srebrenica, with deep shame and sadness, let us apply ourselves to working for reconciliations, understanding and peace in our world today.

I invite congregations across Scotland to be at the heart of this and to light candles and to pray accordingly. And I encourage the whole Church to make use of the resources made available by Remembering Srebrenica Scotland that we might be informed and motivated: www.srebrenica.scot

With every blessing,

Yours in Christ,

Rt Revd Dr W Martin Fair
Moderator
General Assembly of the Church of Scotland



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A Prayer for Srebrenica

God of yesterday, today and tomorrow,
Hear us as we pray and remember the people of Srebrenica,
We pray for those, whose memories are scarred with pain,
For those whose hearts are broken
For lives that were torn apart.

Hold us, and all those we remember in your embrace,
Never letting us forget the sins of humanity.

Bring us close to all;
Mothers and children,
Fathers and sons,
Sisters and brothers of those left behind
And heal their pain and sorrow.

Teach us never to forget the lessons of the past,
And in going forward, create a world of equity;
Not to be divided by hatred and discrimination
But united in courage, love and empathy

Help us Lord to learn to live for a world
Where differences are valued and respected
Where fear and distrust will never consume us.
We ask that those suffering would know your peace
and their lives might be restored through your grace.

Amen