



an on the eve of the postponed joint Pilgrimage of Peace to the country with

In his message the Archbishop says he is “deeply sorry” that the joint pilgrimage of peace has been postponed. He says that God sees the “great suffering” of South Sudan and urges its leaders to pursue peace.

The joint visit was due to take place from 5-7th July but was postponed last month after the Vatican announced that the Pope would not be able to travel on advice from his doctors.

The Pope has released a video message today on the first day of his planned Apostolic Journey, which would have begun in the DRC before being joined by the Archbishop and the Moderator in South Sudan on Tuesday. The Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Right Revd Dr Iain Greenshields, has also released a video message today addressed to the people of South Sudan.

A transcript of the video message follows below:

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ. I am deeply sorry not to be making our planned pilgrimage of peace to South Sudan next week.

Join me in prayer for my dear brother, Pope Francis. I pray for his recovery, and that we will be able to visit South Sudan with the Moderator of the Church of Scotland very soon.

I was last in South Sudan in 2014. Your country and your people have been in my heart and my daily prayers ever since. You are people I love - full of great vibrancy and powerful resilience. You are children of God, seen and chosen.

Yet I see and know that you have suffered greatly and continue to suffer. I see the floods that endanger your homes; I see the famine that makes each day a struggle; and I see the violence that overshadows so much. Many of you cannot return to your homes.

God sees and knows that too.

Pope Francis, Moderator Iain and I wanted to visit to encourage and stand in solidarity with you as you hope for peace.

This was promised during the spiritual retreat at the Vatican in 2019. We promised to visit and your leaders promised to work together for the good of all South Sudanese.

I pray that your leaders would remember those commitments. Peace requires much more than not being at war. It must be created together, with your fellow leaders and even with your enemies.

There will be challenges ahead, and I pray that through them your leaders would listen to you and to themselves and to God, so that when we visit we may pray with them for the healing of the nation.

And I pray for all of you, in your daily choices, to change the spirit of revenge into the spirit of reconciliation.

God knows how hard that is.

Christ on the cross chose forgiveness and service amid suffering. He showed us that those hardest things are our greatest strengths.

And he is with you by his spirit to the ends of the earth.

I hope that I also will be with you very soon, with my brothers Pope Francis and Moderator Iain. May you know our prayers and love with you this week and always.

3 min read

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