

New Year Message of Peace from the Moderator and the Cardinal

“May the Lord bless his people with peace!” (Psalm 29:11)

As 2007 begins, we want to make this prayer our own, and to encourage all in Scotland to do the same. Peace is a promise of the risen Christ. When we pray for peace we pledge ourselves to work for peace, to be peacemakers, and there has never been a time when peacemaking was more necessary.

Many things concern us as we begin this New Year, and looming large is the **ever present menace of nuclear weapons**. This year there is a wonderful opportunity for our Westminster parliamentarians finally to take steps to fulfil the obligations this country made many years ago to rid itself of nuclear weapons. We pray that our MPs will make a stand for the principles of peace, and will have the courage to refuse to endorse a replacement for Trident. Peace cannot be advanced by the commissioning of new weapons of mass destruction.

Because this small country is dear to us, **we are ashamed of its inheritance of sectarianism and violence**. We call on all to resist attempts to divide people on religious or any other grounds. Faith unites us infinitely more than it divides us. The promise of peace is for all people, whatever denomination and whatever faith.

The promise of peace is **also for the creation, the earth which is our home**. Our planet has been ravaged over many years and is in urgent need of healing. We pledge to do all we can in this New Year and in the years to come to commit churches to environmental justice, and we call on others to join us. We ask our congregations to do all they can to be carers of the earth: aware of the resources they use and of those they can replace.

When we pray for God’s blessing of peace on all people we affirm the deepest truth of our faith, that humanity is created in the image and likeness of God. This must make us acutely aware of the inherent dignity of all people, and of the need to honour all, especially those who often seem least in our society.

All over the world there are peacemakers, seeking to build the kingdom of God among the weak and the marginalized, the insignificant and the forgotten – in places of danger and persecution, oppression and poverty. We take our inspiration from their example and commend them to the prayers of our churches.

May the peace of Christ be with all those on the margin of our own society – the homeless, the poor, those in prison, those who seek a new life among us, and may our pledge to be peacemakers be for them a source of hope.

As we enter this New Year, the Christmas message still rings in our ears: Glory to God in the Highest Heaven, and on Earth Peace.

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