

- 1 When people of the same country fight against each other, that is called a “civil war”. Between 1991 and 1995 one of the worst civil wars in history took place. It was in Europe and was between people of the former country of Yugoslavia. Whilst most civil wars are between two groups of people, this was mainly between three groups who fought each other: the Serbs, the Croats and the Bosnian Muslims. Each group reminded the others of events that took place even hundreds of years earlier.
- 2 The United Nations Organisation declared certain areas to be “safe areas” where no soldiers or civilians were to go into or go out from, and attempts were made to guard these “safe areas” which enclosed Bosnian Muslim groups.
- 3 This day in 1995 saw the start of atrocities in the so-called “safe area” of the town of Srebrenica. It is estimated that the Serbs massacred about 8,000 people, mainly the men and boys who had been taken away in lorries. Mass graves were later dug up and it was clear that many had not only been murdered but tortured, and their bodies mutilated.
- 4 Politicians and army leaders had stirred up racial hatred and fears. People thought of the historical events of centuries earlier as though they were taking place in their own time. Evil things were done by each of the three sides during this civil war, which was based on what was called “ethnic cleansing” - towns and whole areas were “cleansed” of people of different racial backgrounds. They were forcibly removed; many families were split up. Rape, torture and murder were widespread.
- 5 *Let us pray:*

**God our Father,
it seems obvious to many**

**that people of all races
and people of all religions and none
are brothers and sisters
of one another.**

We ask

**that justice and peace may grow
in the hearts and minds
of each individual,
that we may treat others
in the same way
as we wish to be treated.**

**Rather than thinking over bad things
that have happened in the past,
may we grow
in the freedom, the courage
and the generosity
to place past events into your hands.**

Teach us

**how to break the cycle of hatred
by being generous and caring
towards those
who have done us harm,
resisting evil
and conquering it with good. Amen.**



 *“Srebrenica” is pronounced “Sreb-re-nit-sa”.*

 *Until the Fall of Communism, the European Communist country of Yugoslavia was made up of six federal republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. The Serbs tend to be of the Orthodox faith, and the Croats Roman Catholic. The Muslims are either converts or descendants of Turks and others who invaded the area centuries earlier.*

 *An alternative prayer would be that of Holy Thursday (printed at the back of volume 1).*

 *Romans 12¹⁴⁻²¹ - “Bless those who oppose you. Do not repay evil with evil. Resist evil and conquer it with good.”*

 *Lord, make me a means of your peace;
Make me a channel of your peace.*

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in
'Praying Each Day of the Year',
a 3-volume book
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

Could make use of a search engine
to research this topic further.

This material is part of
the prayer and education website
of the De La Salle Brothers
in Great Britain:

www.prayingeachday.org