

**Sunday Armenian Genocide Remembrance Service St. Yeghiche Church,
London**
Angelika Ghazaryan

Your Grace, Reverend Fathers, Your Excellencies, dear guests and dear Armenians!

I would like to share a few words in memory of the Armenian Genocide victims. 106 years ago the perpetrators tried to annihilate our nation. They tried, but they did not expect that a famous Armenian would later say:

“I should like to see any power of the world destroy this race, this small tribe of unimportant people, whose wars have all been fought and lost, whose structures have crumbled, literature is unread, music is unheard, and prayers are no more answered. Go ahead, destroy Armenia. See if you can do it. Send them into the desert without bread or water. Burn their homes and churches. Then see if they will not laugh, sing and pray again. For when two of them meet anywhere in the world, see if they will not create a New Armenia.” A quote we all know from William Saroyan.

For me, they are not victims but victors. They have defeated death, yes they paid the highest price, but they did not abandon their faith, their identity, their language and traditions - they are saints in heaven.

As a young Armenian I feel proud of our victors. But most importantly I want to make our victors proud. I carry my ancestors from over 100 years ago in my heart and mind. With every step I take, every opinion I voice and every decision I make, I ask myself - Will my ancestors be proud of this?

I imagine them standing right there with me. It is not a thing of sorrow or weakness but a feeling of motivation and power to reach and grab every opportunity for a stronger future for my country and my people.

I want to point out that this is not only the victors from the 1915 Armenian Genocide but those soldiers and civilians who we have lost in the wars protecting our homeland and people. They will always be there watching over us.

So we cannot disappoint them. We cannot let anyone or anything divide us. We are a small distinctive nation and division will only delay our growth and prosperity. We must take the time to understand one another or maybe not understand one another but always remember that we only have each other's support. Let's unite and remain resilient as Armenia has done for millennia.

For this reason we are commemorating the 106th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 not everyone can come and join us in Church, but you can follow online at the St. Yeghiche's Facebook page. We have various special guest speakers who will share their invaluable words. Please note that after the remembrance prayer by the Bishop and clergy, there will be a procession of laying a wreath in front of the Khachkar in the church yard. Also, some of our lovely young children will lay forget-me-not flowers in loving memory of the Genocide Victims.

Now with the blessing of His Grace Bishop Hovakim, I would like to introduce our keynote speaker ‘The Very Reverend Cor Episcopos Professor Doctor Patrick Sookhdeo’

1. **Dr. Patrick Sookhdeo** is the International Director of Barnabas Fund, based in the UK. He is a close friend of Armenia and has visited Armenia and Artsakh many times. Dr Sookhdeo is also working very hard for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. He has edited the book “Surviving the forgotten Armenian Genocide” of Smpat Chorbadjian and currently Barnabas International does many projects supporting vulnerable groups in Artsakh. Dr Sookhdeo will read a sermon for us today.
2. Our second guest speaker today is **Mr. Aram Araratyan**, representative of the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia. We should acknowledge that our Armenian embassy has been doing immense work despite the limited number of diplomats and resources. Today we thank our diplomatic team, both for supporting our community and building relations. I would like to invite Mr Araratyan to the podium to share his thoughts.
3. I would now like to introduce our final guest speaker **Mr Armand Abrahamyan**. Mr. Abrahamyan is chair of the Armenian Community Council in the UK who have been working tirelessly for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and other imperative initiatives for Artsakh, especially during the recent war, closely cooperating with his Grace the Primate and other community organisations.

A huge thank you to all of our guests for sharing their invaluable thoughts with us all. I would now like to invite the Srpazan and clergy to start the prayer service, which will be followed by a wreath laying in the Churchyard.

Please remember our social distancing rules - keeping two metres apart while you walk outside. Thank you all!