



Bishops' House
Corran Esplanade
Oban PA34 5AB

March 19th 2021

Dear Friends,

When I sent you Naw Ruz greetings last year we had just begun lockdown and did not for a moment think it would last as long as this. It has been a difficult year for all of us. Many have lost loved ones without being able to accompany them into death or being able to mourn with family and friends. Many have been pressurised by work and home schooling. Others have experienced loneliness and stress while others have found time to enjoy their homes and explore new interests. We have also seen with our own eyes how interconnected we are as human beings, how we are all affected by viruses that cannot be contained within nations, cultures or religions, how dependent we are on each other and on those who serve the needs of our community. We have come to be grateful for the work of nurses and doctors, care workers, essential service providers – all those who keep our communities running smoothly and contribute to its well-being.

Hopefully, as we emerge from lockdown and see a brighter future ahead, we will not lose the lessons we have learned over the past year. Your faith reminds us all that we are one humanity with no place for xenophobia or competition. This year Pope Francis issued his latest encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti" which underlines that we are all interrelated and interconnected, brothers and sisters all.

It is in this spirit of fraternal friendship and respect that I am sending you, in my own name, in the name of the Scottish Catholic Bishops and indeed the whole Catholic community, greetings for the festival of Naw Ruz. Coming as it does at the time of the spring equinox we can also experience with you a belief in the life and hope that come with lengthening days and emerging new life in nature.

May this year's New Year celebration be a moment of renewal for you and the whole Baha'i community and bring many blessings in the coming year.

Yours sincerely

+ Brian McGee

+ Brian McGee, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles,
President of the Bishops' Committee for Interreligious Dialogue