



Bishop's House
Corran Esplanade
Oban PA34 5AB

1st November 2021

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to be sending you the traditional annual letter from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue with greetings to you and your community as you celebrate the festival of Diwali on 4th November.

The theme of the letter is “Hindus and Christians: Together Bringing Light in People’s Lives in Times of Despair.” For us in Scotland this is an appropriate reflection. You are celebrating Diwali in the middle of COP 26 when we are praying that world governments will take seriously the danger of climate change and make provision to reverse its damaging effects. For many people the future looks bleak as they face accounts of global warming, air and water pollution, waste disposal, the loss of biodiversity. And all this coming during a pandemic. I am sure that there is truth in the statement from the Pontifical Council that “there runs through in all of us, in varying degrees, a sense of resignation, despair and despondency.”

Diwali is the occasion when your community celebrates the victory of good over evil, and light over darkness. This is a belief that all faiths share and together we can light up the world by witnessing to our interfaith friendship and our solidarity in caring for one another and our common home. We, Catholics and Hindus, with other faiths, will be able to do this at the interfaith vigil in Glasgow at the beginning of COP 26. That will be a public witness of interfaith solidarity and the desire of faith communities to work together for a better future for present and future generations. I pray that we continue this good work into the future that lies ahead of us.

Once again, on behalf of my colleagues the Bishops of Scotland, on my own behalf and on behalf of our Committee for Interreligious Dialogue and the Catholic community in Scotland I wish you and your families a joyful festival of Diwali and every blessing in this coming year.

Yours sincerely

+ Brian McGee

Bishop Brian McGee, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles

President of the Bishops’ Committee for Interreligious Dialogue