



Bishop's House  
Corran Esplanade  
Oban PA34 5AB

20 April 2021

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to be sending you greetings from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue as you celebrate the birthday of Lord Mahavir in the festival of Mahavir Janma Kalyanak Diwas this weekend. The theme of this year's letter is rebuilding hope in the present and post-pandemic world which we can do because of "our conviction that the Supreme divine who sustains us and leads us through the thick and thin of life will never abandon us".

This 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 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.

As we begin to come out of lockdown we hope and pray that we can begin to enjoy renewed well-being and the presence of friends and family which has been denied us for so long. Hopefully, we will remember the lessons of this time of coronavirus. We have 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. May we have a renewed sense of human fraternity and a renewed commitment to deepen this as we continue the good relations between faiths and the work of interreligious dialogue here in Scotland.

It is in a 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 a happy feast of Mahavir Janma Kalyanak Diwas!

Yours sincerely

+ Brian McGee

+ Brian McGee, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles

President of the Bishops' Committee for Interreligious Dialogue