



Bishop's House  
Corran Esplanade  
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10 April 2022

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to send you greetings as you celebrate the birthday of Lord Mahavir in the festival of Mahavir Janma Kalyanak Diwas on 14<sup>th</sup> April. Now more than ever our world needs the message of Lord Mahavir that "non-violence is the ultimate religion". As people of faith, we join you in feeling the pain of our world and the suffering of so many of our brothers and sisters because of war and violence and with you we long for peace.

As you celebrate Mahavir Janma Kalyanak Diwas the Christian community will be remembering the last days in the life of Jesus and looking forward to the festival of Easter which offers hope to the world and shows us that death and violence will never have the last word. This year is particularly auspicious because apart from our two faiths other faiths are celebrating significant festivals at this time. The Jewish community are celebrating Passover which, like Easter, tells us that God can free us from the slavery of injustice, Baha'is are remembering the day on which their founder Baha'u'llah declared his mission as a Manifestation of God, Sikhs are commemorating the birth of the Khalsa in the festival of Vaisakhi, Theravada Buddhists are celebrating their New Year and indigenous faiths are coming together for what is called Gathering of Nations. And at the same time Muslims are keeping Ramadan which is a time of fasting and intense prayer.

In his sermon at the beginning of Lent Pope Francis quoted a text from the prophet Isaiah reminding us that God "gives strength to the weary, he strengthens the powerless... Those who hope in the Lord will regain their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles; though they run they will not grow weary, though they walk they will never tire (Is. 40:29, 31). I hope and pray that at this auspicious time the recognition that so many religions are celebrating and praying for peace will strengthen our faith and trust in God that gives us hope for peace in our world.

Once again I am delighted to be 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