



40 Newlands Rd. Glasgow G43 2JD

12 March 2019

Dear Friends

I am delighted to send my customary greetings to the Baha'i Community in Scotland as you come to the end of your annual fast and celebrate Naw Ruz on 21st March. I hope it is a moment of celebration and renewal for you all.

Recently Pope Francis made a historic visit to Abu Dhabi, the first Pope to visit the Arabian Peninsula. He travelled as a pilgrim of peace, stating "I have welcomed the opportunity to come here as a believer thirsting for peace, as a brother seeking peace with the brethren. We are here to desire peace, to promote peace, to be instruments of peace". He called those present at the Interreligious Gathering at which he spoke to a new way of being together, "we too in the name of God, in order to safeguard peace, need to enter together as one family into an ark which can sail the stormy seas of the world: the ark of fraternity" This is an image which is close to your hearts. We are all quite literally in the same boat, members of the same species, interconnected with one another, facing the same hopes and joys, concerned about and vulnerable to the future of our planet and our world. As the Pope said, echoing his two predecessors, "There is no alternative: we will either build the future together or there will not be a future."

This is, of course, one of the aims of interreligious dialogue and like the Pope I believe we cannot renounce the urgent task of building bridges. We try to do this in small ways here in Scotland. Let us use the festivals that we celebrate this Spring – Naw Ruz for you and Easter for us Christians – as a moment of recommitment to this great task.

Finally on my own behalf and on behalf of the Bishops of Scotland as well as our Committee for Interreligious Dialogue I wish you and the whole Baha'i community in Scotland a joyful feast of Naw Ruz and every blessing in this coming year.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Mario

+ Mario Conti

Emeritus Archbishop of Glasgow

Chair of the Committee for Inter Religious Dialogue