



Diocese of Argyll and the Isles

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Charity Registration No: SC002876

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Pastoral Letter - Holy Land Accompaniment

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

We are all filled with anguish at the terrible suffering which is currently being inflicted upon the people of Gaza, especially on children and women. I recognise that the situation in Palestine and Israel is very complex but terrible atrocities are occurring within Gaza.

We can feel helpless in the face of such suffering and the sin which causes it.

Recently I was approached by a priest and lay woman from our diocese who expressed such feelings of helplessness and wondered if there was any way we could support those who are suffering. After discussion among ourselves and residents of the Holy Land we believe that, as a diocese, we could accompany those who wish it with prayer and listening.

I know that some will question the value of listening and prayer when so much practical assistance is necessary. For twenty five years I have been privileged to visit, and live among, people suffering from the injustices of utter poverty and war. Often I felt I had little or even nothing to offer them. Yet repeatedly I am astonished at the response from those who are vulnerable and feel discarded when someone accompanies them - they experience their true dignity as a human person and the hope which springs from that. No value can be put on this.

Advocacy is important and there are several Catholic bodies engaged in this. I am proposing accompaniment: listening, sharing and prayer. Our contacts in the Holy Land have responded positively and want a bond with the people of our diocese. They agree that our accompaniment would be ecumenical and open to contact across faiths and borders

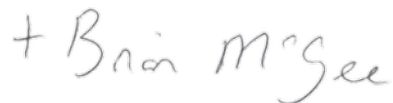
If you are interested in exploring the possibilities of such accompaniment please join us for a digital meeting on Tuesday 2nd September at 6.30pm. To register please Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/5XYLIKiPS8Sh4TRYiH8m8Q>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

We do not envisage such accompaniment to be a short term project but rather a long term commitment for as long as people in the Holy Land desire it. If you are unable to participate actively you can still accompany through your personal prayers for peace, justice and eventual reconciliation.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "+ Brian McGee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Right Reverend Brian McGee

Bishop of Argyll and the Isles