



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Bishops Commission for Christian Unity and Inter-religious Dialogue

29 November 2021

Via email

To the Bishops and their collaborators in Christian Unity and Inter-religious Dialogue

Dear Brothers,

No doubt, like me, your in-boxes are filling at this time of the year; but I would ask you to consider this message and pass it on to your collaborators as you plan the year ahead. It has particular importance in the synodal journey we are on with the Plenary Council and the next Synod of Bishops.

In December 2020, the General Assembly of the United Nations, during its 75th plenary session, proclaimed that 4 February of each year be dedicated as an **International Day of Human Fraternity**. This day is an invitation to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue with the hope that a global response based on peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity will be achieved as the world continues to face the crisis caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

The UN resolution commemorates the signing, on that day in 2019, of the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyib.

Pope Francis' subsequent encyclical, *Fratelli tutti*, built on this event; and gives us the framework for prayer and action, which will vary according to local circumstances. Our Commission will be grateful to receive news of initiatives in the observance of this Day from the particular churches in Australia, which we will share with one another.

Called to take root in every place, the Church has been present for centuries throughout the world, for that is what it means to be 'catholic'. She can thus understand, from her own experience of grace and sin, the beauty of the invitation to universal love. (Fratelli tutti, 278)

With thanks for your fraternal cooperation in this important work,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Michael McKenna
Bishop of Bathurst
Chair, Bishops Commission for Christian Unity and Inter-religious Dialogue