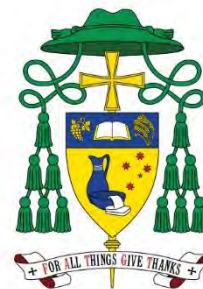


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BGM:lt/1112

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

PALMS AUSTRALIA | VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Since 1961 Palms Australia has recruited and thoroughly prepared Catholics from all over Australia and New Zealand for global mission. Palms' vision is of open palms offering friendship, and in friendship palms come together. Palms together are a sign of support and strength. Our palms together in prayer connect us to God.

I urge you to **please share Palms notices** as you receive them, encouraging your staff and parishioners to consider the challenging, but worthy call of a Palms mission placement.

Our Church supports those who take up a global mission placement in these ways:

1. Catholic Bishops support a Lay Missionary Gratuity Fund that provides a payment of \$2,500 for each year one is on this mission.
2. Catholic schools offer great support and benefits to teachers giving up to two years for this mission. Teachers should talk with Palms about the details.

Palms' vision genuinely inspires us to bridge difference and nurture togetherness in the world; to realise the passage of Galatians 3:28 that *under Christ Jesus there is no longer Jew and Greek, Slave and Free, Male and Female*. The Palms mission offers the challenge to reach beyond cultural, class and gender differences, to affirm the dignity of all.

The teachers, health professionals, accountants, managers, and others who respond to this vision are carefully prepared and supported by Palms Australia for authentic relationships based in mutual development. This enables the sharing of skills that assist overseas parishes, schools and vital grass roots organisations to foster the strengths of their people for sustainable solutions to poverty.

As stated, community development is **shared** and **mutual**, offering important lessons also for mission participants, and recalling Pope Francis' words, *"... if there are poor people ... who seek assistance, let us draw close to them ... they can be teachers who show us how essential it is to live simply."*

The Palms programme provides our home communities true engagement with our global family. It is a means of fostering genuine Church renewal in practical and exciting ways.

Yours sincerely

Most Rev Brian Mascord DD
BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG