

Dean's Letter, 10 September 2017

Dear Cathedral family

We welcome Bishop Ebenezer to our 9.30 a.m. service today, where he will celebrate, preach and confirm our confirmation candidates. The annual Confirmation service is always a special occasion and event, certainly for the candidates, and their families and godparents, but also for the Christian community. We surround all being confirmed in our love and prayers; we support them as they take this step of trust and faith; we pray that the Holy Spirit would rest on them, bless them, and strengthen them and fill them with the love and power of God.

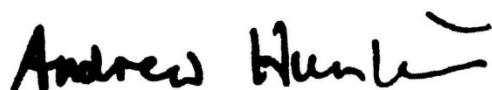
Jesus promised that the heavenly Father would give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him (Luke 11:15). What a gift. Simply to ask, and to receive. Throughout our lives. Every day. In moments of crisis and conflict and challenge. As we go into a meeting or gathering. In times of prayer for others. Asking for wisdom and insight and discernment. As we enter worship. In times of great trial, rage, distress. We ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon us.

Confirmation is that special moment and focus for the work of God in our lives through the Holy Spirit. It is entirely appropriate that we prepare thoroughly for this great event and moment: through the weekly classes of discussion, reflection, Bible study, prayer; through our own asking and longing; through simply being open to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I greatly enjoy leading Confirmation preparation classes! It is probably one of the highlights for me, each week. And I have learned so much from the groups and our discussions, over the years, in our various parish communities. It is a wonderful opportunity to engage and reflect together, to share faith and life stories, to grapple with what we believe, and why, in our troubled and upside-down world. The syllabus for Confirmation preparation consists of six parts: the Creed; the Lord's Prayer; the Ten Commandments; the law of Christian life; the two Sacraments of the Gospel; and the short Catechism. Another way of putting it is: what we believe (the Creed and the Catechism); how we are to pray (the Lord's Prayer); how we are to live (the Ten Commandments and the law of Christian life); how God meets us (the two Sacraments of the Gospel). Obviously this is just the bare bones, the beginning, a general outline which we then flesh out. And the way we engage with these issues changes from year to year. But I constantly refer to it.

Some may know Bishop Geoff Quinlan (former warden for the CR Sisters here, some years back) and his wife Ros (Rosalind). Sad news is that Ros has severe cancer of the throat. An extract from a recent letter, from Bishop Geoff, is elsewhere in the pew leaflet. Let's hold them in our love and prayer.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Hunter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a distinctive upward flourish at the end.