

Dean's Letter, 4 February 2018

Dear Cathedral family

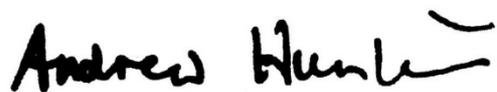
There is an energy about town as students arrive, cars fill up High Street and new faces are everywhere. The College of the Transfiguration starts its first term tomorrow. Rhodes University Orientation week has begun and continues this week. The academic term starts next Monday. The year really is on the go! A school teacher said to me last Sunday, "The term has begun really well, and holidays are a distant memory!" Too true. We spend far more time at work, or at school, than on holiday. Work and study and learning are an essential part of our lives. We find fulfilment and meaning and purpose in what we do, in our work, in our various projects. We grow and learn and gain new insight through study and academic engagement. But we need the rhythm of withdrawal and rest, the time out, the holidays, time away from emails and assignments and colleagues!

From Isaiah 40:31 – "Those that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." We see that rhythm of action – ministry – work - and waiting on the Lord in the Gospel, as Jesus heals, drives out demons, stands against evil, transforms lives with his love and presence, brings hope and renewal – and then "In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed." (Mark 1:35). A time of retreat, to refocus, to listen to God, to discern the next step, the way forward, to gain energy and strength for the day – or the year - ahead. Without times to step back, we can easily burn out, or lose direction.

Easter – and therefore Lent – is really early this year. Ash Wednesday is just around the corner, 14th February. Lent is our annual spiritual withdrawal, a time of quiet reflection, a time to enter the wilderness, a time to face the darkness, a time to draw strength for the battles ahead, whatever they may be.

Sunday worship – coming to church – is part of our weekly rhythm of withdrawal and rest, at the end of a busy and intense week, and the start of another. When we gather for worship, we come to receive from the Lord, to rest in His presence, to be fed with the bread and word of life, to drink from the cup of salvation, to be renewed in the things of God. It is the Lord's grace and love that we carry with us as we leave the Cathedral and head out into the world, back to the struggles and difficulties – but we go not in our own strength, but rather in the strength of the one in whom we trust. We wait on the Lord, so that He may renew our strength. And then we are able to fly, and be instruments of healing and channels of God's love.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.