

## Dean's Letter, 11 February 2018

Dear Cathedral family

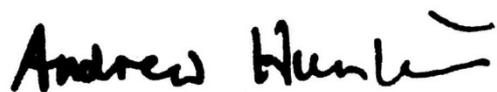
Today, Transfiguration Sunday, marks the end of the Sundays after the Epiphany, and is a preparation for Ash Wednesday. The Gospel reading, Mark 9:2-9, takes us up the mountain with Jesus and with the inner circle of his disciples, Peter, James and John. There on the mountain Jesus is transfigured – “his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.” (Mark 9:3). Elijah and Moses, representing the Law and the Prophets, appear and talk with him. The voice of the Father from heaven speaks: “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” (Mark 9:7). The event is understood as a fore-taste of the resurrection; an affirmation of the ministry of Jesus; the voice of God giving assurance to the disciples; a profound encounter with the glory of God; an invitation to climb the mountain of prayer; a mountain-top experience of wonder and awe and majesty and revelation. It is with this experience of the glory of God that we approach Ash Wednesday and Lent, the wilderness journey with Jesus in the lead-up to Easter.

This coming Wednesday is Ash Wednesday and marks the start of Lent. Ash Wednesday is named for the practice of placing ashes on the foreheads of the faithful as a sign of repentance. The ashes used are gathered after the Palm Crosses from Palm Sunday celebrations last year, are burned.

We shall of course be celebrating Shrove Tuesday (the day before Ash Wednesday) with our usual pancake feast! Come along to St George's Hall and enjoy. But don't leave it too late in the afternoon! The delicious pancakes get eaten up in no time! The tradition of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday may have arisen as it permits the finishing up of luxuries such as butter, eggs and fat, before the start of Lent; and also to have a final feast before the Lenten fast begins! Lent is an important time and season for Christians, when we do self-examination, turn from sin, and open ourselves to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. It is our “wilderness” time. Jesus went into the wilderness to face temptation, and to prepare for ministry. During Lent, we enter our inner wilderness; we face our temptations and struggles; we search our hearts; we ask God to cleanse and purify us.

The Bishop-elect of the diocese of Kahlamba, Archdeacon Moses Madywabe, will be on retreat here in Grahamstown during this week, from Shrove Tuesday until Sunday. He will be staying at the CR Sisters, and Revd Claire will be conducting the retreat. His consecration will be in Queenstown on Saturday 24th February. Let's pray for him, for his family, for the diocese of Kahlamba, and for Revd Claire, during this time.

My love to you all

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