

Dean's Letter, 15 April 2018

Dear Cathedral family

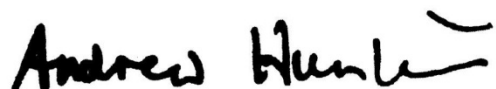
Our gospel reading for today, Luke 24:36b-48, is another of the wonderful resurrection appearances that we read and savour during Eastertide. It is the follow-on from the Emmaus Road encounter (Luke 24:13-35), as Jesus opens the scriptures to the disciples, and breaks the bread. Note how their "hearts burned within" them as Jesus opened the scriptures to them on the road (verse 32) and how they recognised him when he took bread, gave thanks, broke the bread and gave it to them (verse 30-31) – a clear Eucharistic encounter with Jesus in word and sacrament. The gospel continues with today's reading, as the Risen Christ comes to the disciples and to us with his words of life; he shows his wounded hands and feet; he shares a meal with them and with us; he opens their minds, and ours, to understand the scriptures; he reminds them and us that "repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations" (verse 47). This is the transforming power and reality of the gospel!

This past week, and yesterday (14th April) saw the memorial service and funeral for the late ma-Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Loved and revered by many, hated and feared by some, she walked tall in the history of our country. She suffered greatly – her years of banishment to Brandfort; her months in solitary confinement; separated from her daughters. Small wonder that she never gave up the struggle for justice and freedom. In tributes to her, Anglican Church leaders said the following:

Archbishop Thabo Makgoba: "I send my condolences to the family. I am humbled to have known her. I admired and respected her. May she rest in peace and rise in glory." Archbishop Emeritus Njongonkulu Ndungane: She was one of South Africa's "most courageous anti-apartheid activists... A mother holds a special place in one's heart, and this is no less so for the woman who was affectionately known as 'the mother of the nation'... Although Mama Madikizela-Mandela made some well-documented errors of judgment during her life, she remained committed to the vulnerable and was often the first at the scene of a tragedy to provide comfort and compassion to those impacted by it." Bishop Steve Moreo, Bishop of Johannesburg: Her death was "a blow to South Africa as a nation... During her life, she kept close contact with all parts of the Church. A practising Methodist, she used her strong ecumenical links to reach out to other denominations, not least that of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa in general, and the Diocese of Johannesburg in particular. There were many occasions when her insight and background information assisted the Anglican Church in the dark days of the 1970s and 1980s to be part of a Christian witness in bringing about the demise of apartheid."

Her death, and the great outpourings of grief and love - and anger - at this time are for us as a country something of a turning point – particularly during these early days of the Ramaphosa presidency, and as the Zuma trial gets under way. May we as a nation become the best that we long to be: a place where all are welcome, all are respected, all live in peace, and none are pushed aside or abused or threatened. And may we as followers of the Risen Christ lead the way in repentance, forgiveness, and healing.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.