

## Dean's Letter, 10 February 2019

Dear Cathedral family, brothers and sisters in Christ

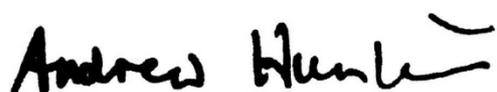
Our love and prayers are with all our students at Rhodes University as the academic year begins this week. We welcome first years, and returning students, to the Cathedral, and pray for God's blessing on them all in the year that lies ahead. Our prayers are also with the staff and students at the College of the Transfiguration (COTT), as their O-Week begins. The COTT student numbers are very encouraging, with approximately 60 students registered, including a significant number of new students. We look forward to meeting them in the months ahead.

Of course, the year is well under way for our schools and for everyone else, and the holidays are a distant memory. But the energy and excitement of these early weeks, as many of our young people begin important new phases in their lives, are an annual boost for us all. There has also been sadness and tragedy: the deaths of four school children at Hoerskook Driehoek, in Johannesburg, with the structural collapse of an overhead walkway; and the shooting of a student at the Durban Institute of Technology (DUT). The violent protests on that campus are a disgrace, with cars and buildings being burnt, and increasingly aggressive confrontation between students and security. It is completely irresponsible to escalate protests to that level, and worse; nothing is gained, and much is destroyed, with such action. And almost inevitably, someone pays the ultimate price.

Our scripture readings for this morning present to us some of the great stories of people's encounters with God, and their experiences of God's majesty and wonder: the vision of God in glory in the temple, and the call of Isaiah (Isaiah 6); the resurrection appearances of Jesus to the disciples and to Paul on the road to Damascus, which was his conversion (1 Cor 15); and the most wonderful fishing story, the catch of fish after a long night of nothing, and the response of Peter, James and John, who left their nets to follow Jesus (Luke 5).

The wonderful thing about these stories is that God encounters and calls people – you and me - today. It is not just something we read about in the Bible. I spent time this past week meeting with people who in various ways have encountered God, and whose lives have changed significantly as a result. People spoke of personal change, growth and transformation; of healing; of profound and life-changing conversions; of a deep love for others, of compassion for those who are struggling; some spoke of being alongside people in need; reaching out and bringing people to worship and to their own encounter with the grace and love of God; for some, there has been a growing love for the scriptures; a lifelong thirst for knowledge and understanding; of being recognised by others as a leader and as someone who is an instrument of God; of a love for the altar, the sacraments, the Eucharist. As we gather for worship today, we are in the presence of God; and remarkable things can happen!

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.