

Dean's Letter, 2 June 2019

Dear Cathedral family, brothers and sisters in Christ

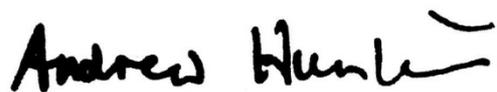
At the recent Diocesan Synod, 15th – 18th May 2019, one of the Synod expressed our concern about the withdrawal of Gift of the Givers (GOTG) from Makhanda, and the apparent breakdown of relationship between the GOTG and the Makana Municipality. The person speaking to the resolution spoke of the sense of despair, anger and betrayal that was being felt by those of us who live here. Many of us are aware of the outrage expressed, on social media, and in the pages of *Grocotts*, at what has been happening. By now, it appears that there has been a measure of agreement reached. Sadly, however, GOTG is not returning to Makhanda, as far as I can see. Synod expressed its very real gratitude and appreciation to GOTG for its assistance and intervention at a time of crisis in the life of our town. Their departure may well mean the end of our dream to have a borehole next to the Cathedral, with storage tanks next to the Cathedral for general use: tapping into the spring of water that is in the Cathedral crypt, and for “springs of living water” to flow from the Cathedral out into the community! Unless we find other sources of support for this dream, and do it ourselves?

Synod was a good experience! The days were long, from 7 a.m. until we adjourned 12 hours later, with Saturday being a half day. But the worship was wonderful, the Bible studies and sermons inspiring, the debates and input very interesting. We were given an overview of various projects and works being done in the diocese. There are good things happening, particularly in meeting real need and touching areas of pain in people's lives.

I wonder how many of us have sat next to the bedside of a loved one and heard their final words, their last prayers. Those looks of love and loss; the immense sadness that overwhelms us – how we treasure those memories and those times! And how much we long to return to moments of parting, if only we could once again have those special moments! And how often is the prayer of a dying parent or grandparent for their family, “Whatever happens, may they love one another!”

Our Gospel reading for today (John 17:20-26) is one of those special moments. It is part of the final prayer of Jesus (John 17), often known as Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. Jesus is our “great high priest” (Heb 4:14). The High Priest in the Old Testament had two key functions. He was to offer sacrifice on behalf of the people; and he was to pray for them. Jesus as our High Priest has offered himself as the supreme sacrifice; and now in this prayer, he prays for us. He prays firstly for his disciples (Jn 17:1-19); and now, in these final verses, he prays for all who are to follow in their footsteps: “those who will believe in me through their word” (Jn 17:20). In Jesus prays for the church's unity (“may they be one”), mission (“so that the world may believe”) and he looks forward to the consummation of it all (“that they may be with me where I am”). The prayer reveals Jesus' major concerns for us as his disciples, and for the world. May we be one, together, in response to his prayer.

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.