

## Dean's Letter, 15 September 2019

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

We are living in very dark days. Each news item brings more horror, more sadness, more despair. Last weekend saw the funerals of Uyinene Mrwetyana in East London, Jesse Hess in Cape Town, and the Mpungose children in Durban. Natasha Conabeer was to be buried yesterday, also in Durban. And news reports continue to stream in, of children and young women who have gone missing, or who have been found dead, murdered, brutally assaulted. The litany of terror and grief seems endless. Added to this are the simmering communities in Gauteng and on the east Rand, where xenophobic attacks and the looting of shops, and some deaths, have been reported.

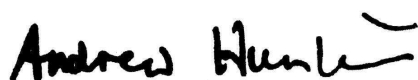
The Dean of Johannesburg, The Very Revd Xolani Dlwati, was present last Sunday (8th September) when Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi was trying to mediate and call for calm, and when he (Buthelezi) was booed when he called for calm and for people to work with foreign nationals. Dean Xolani wrote: "It was clear to me that this was not at all about xenophobia but deep political games. I strongly believe that arrests and strong action only from government and police will not bring about long term sustainable solutions to the problems we face at the moment. The crux of the matter is that South Africans are greatly frustrated by non-delivery of government to the promises made since 1994. They are then taking it out on foreign nationals" (whatsapp message, 8th Sept 2019). And he has appealed to the Archbishop to facilitate a process of deep critical reflection on the state of our nation and xenophobia.

We here in Grahamstown had a taste of all this in 2015, when there were a few days of attacks on foreign-owned shops. It seemed then to be opportunistic – people taking the chance to grab what they could. But at the same time, when there are extremes of poverty and wealth cheek by jowl, unemployment, growing frustration...you can fill in the dots.

And the issues highlighted during the 2016 Reference List student protests against rape culture and gender violence are still with us. When will we rise from the ashes? Last week's [newsletter from Diocesan School for Girls](#) here in Grahamstown focused on the recent instances of rape and gender violence, and concluded with the following:

"We call on our leaders and all men to acknowledge that this is a crisis, that it is systematically destroying our country, and that, as a national priority, it needs to be addressed in a considered, effective and sustained way. Our whole response to violence against women as a society needs to change. It needs to be condemned as the outrage that it is by all people across faiths, cultures, genders and generations. And whilst perpetrators need to be apprehended and held to account, until we take responsibility, as a country, for the ways in which we each either contribute to or resist a national culture in which violence against women is endemic and men feel entitled to women's bodies, we will not achieve the change that we long for."

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.