

Dean's Letter, 27 October 2019

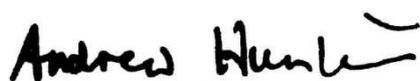
Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

We celebrate our Patronal Festival as the Cathedral today, a month later than normal. The Feast of St Michael and All Angels is on 29th September. As this fell during school holidays, and because of the month of Dedication and Stewardship being in October, it was decided to transfer our Patronal Festival to today. My thoughts for next year are that we shall do it differently: retain our Patronal Festival at the end of September; and observe our Dedication and Stewardship Sunday at the end of October. I also hope that we shall have the Feast of St Francis on or near October 4th, and have the blessing of animals on that Sunday, as a culmination to the Season of Creation in the month of September. There is a wonderful rhythm to the church's liturgical calendar; it tells its own story and presents us with so many different facets of God's grace. And Sunday by Sunday, we are enfolded with wonder and beauty, scriptures and the Eucharist, signs and channels of God's love and grace, and the revelation of Christ, in our lives and in our world.

The Collect and scripture readings for today are those for St Michael and All Angels (AAPB pg 309). The angels (or "heavenly beings") shouted for joy when the foundation of the earth was laid (Job 38:4,7); we join in worship with the angels (Psalm 148:2); Michael and his angels defeat the devil (Revelation 12:7-8); the angels of "these little ones" continually see the face of the Father in heaven (Matthew 18:10). We are given a picture of a spiritual and heavenly world beyond what we normally see or experience; a reality greater than the everyday; a power at work, present and active.

It is strange, nevertheless, to hold these pictures next to the picture and images that have flooded us in recent times: the rape and murder of children and young people; the Bishops sex scandal; the daily and at times hourly revelations of further corruption, greed, abuse of public funds – the VBS bank looting by highly placed political leaders, as a prime example. However, what the presence and ministry of angels tells us is that God is active and involved in the events of the world; that God's presence through His angels is around us. The ministry of angels is a reminder, a glimpse as if through a partially open door, of hope and life and light. The gifts of God to us in our struggles and heartaches. The new possibilities that are presented to us. The angelic visitations to Mary and Elizabeth and Joseph and Elijah, that offer and inaugurate a new era, a new beginning, a way forward. Mary's response to the angel, "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me as you have said" (Luke 1:38) is our response also,

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.