

Dean's Letter, 9 February 2020

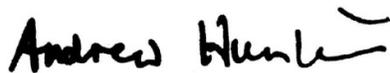
Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

We have three weeks to go before the start of Lent, with Ash Wednesday being on 26th February. I have put myself down to preach for these Sundays, in an attempt to follow a theme or sermon series. With the arrival and return of students to our town, and to the Cathedral, I ask myself, "What are the BIG QUESTIONS, the life issues, the heartfelt longings and needs that young people – or any of us – face?" During the Christians @ Rhodes mission on campus last year, one of the questions addressed by a speaker was "Does God exist?" There was also a talk on dealing with anxiety and depression – a very real experience for many students. And this coming Friday, 14th Feb, is Valentine's Day, a good time to reflect on relationships, love, marriage, intimacy, trust, commitment, and what is God's picture and purpose for us in all this.

So I hope to tackle these, at least in part, today and in the Sundays following. Obviously, there is always more that can be said about any of these topics. And to some extent I may be preaching to the converted. We are in church because we believe and we trust. At the same time, perhaps these are questions or concerns that niggle us, or that we have heard others discuss. So it is good to try to answer some of the questions. The reality is that many of us live and move in a highly secular environment. It is unusual, in certain circles, to be a church-goer or a regular worshipper. Many will identify as Christians, or at least as "spiritual", but are not part of any faith community. It is cool and trendy to practice meditation or talk about our spiritual journey, but it is less cool and trendy to be part of a church, receive the sacraments regularly, be part of a Christian community with all that this involves. In some ways it seems much easier to go it alone, and not be tied down by all the rules and regulations and requirements of being part of the church. Yet among the great gifts that the church does give us are the sacraments; regular and ordered worship; consistent preaching; a supportive and prayerful community; spiritual companions; fellow disciples; an objective set of beliefs; encounter with the revelation of God. These are big things!

I look forward to engaging with these issues, together with you all, in the weeks ahead.

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.