

## Dean's Letter, 16 February 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

The news reached us late on Sunday evening last week, that the Bishops of our Province (ACSA) had elected The Ven Joshua Louw, of the diocese of Cape Town, to be Bishop of Table Bay and suffragan-bishop of Cape Town. We pray for him and his family as they prepare for this new ministry. Thank you to all who offered prayers for this process, and for love and support throughout.

We continue this week in our "Big Questions" sermon series, Last week we tackled "Is there a God?" Next Sunday, 23rd February, the topic is "Where do I find hope?" – touching on stress, anxiety, depression. Next Sunday is also Transfiguration Sunday, the Sunday before Lent (also known as Quinquagesima, SAPB pg 87). Today, Sunday 16th February, is just after Valentine's Day (14th February) and so today's topic is "Where do I find love?" – which raises all the questions around relationships, love, marriage, intimacy, trust, commitment. To what extent can we find God's picture and purpose for us in all this? This in itself is a very big question!

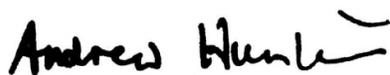
We are helped by today's Gospel reading, Matthew 5:21-37, which is part of the Sermon on the Mount, a great chunk of teaching, sayings and parables. In the verses we are reading today, Jesus speaks about murder, anger and insults; adultery and lust; marriage and divorce; and oath-taking or keeping one's word or promise.

I enter into the debate around marriage, sex and intimacy with trepidation and some caution. No-one wants sex education from the pulpit. Nor can any one sermon address the complexity and diversity of relationships and family types and structures that exist. Within the Cathedral we have those who are single, those divorced, those remarried, those living with a partner, those living as single parents, those married, those who are parents or grandparents. If statistics are correct, most of us are heterosexual, some of us are homosexual (and might be in same-sex partnerships). We have young boys and girls entering into adulthood, children, toddlers, teenagers, young adults; some are wrestling with sexual identity or gender identity... and all of us in various ways look for love and intimacy and belonging. Can one size fit all?

We as the Anglican Church have the orthodox or traditional view and understanding of marriage: "marriage by divine institution is a lifelong and exclusive union and partnership between one man and one woman" (Canon 34, On Holy Matrimony). At the same time, ACSA and the Anglican Communion is part of the debate about the place of same-sex relationships: are they of God? Should they be blessed? Should those in same-sex unions be allowed to minister in the church, and be ordained? We are not as the church of one mind on this.

I propose that we need an ethic of relationship. Faithfulness, mutual respect, trust, honesty, love, commitment... these are some of the things that make up a sound relationship. Let us at least work on these.

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.