

Dean's Letter, 29 March 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Following the President's announcement this past Monday of a complete 21-day lock-down, all Cathedral services, meetings and events are cancelled until after the lockdown ends at midnight on Thursday 16th April 2020. Hopefully we shall be able to gather for worship once again on Sunday 19th April, the first Sunday after Easter. What a celebration of new life and hope it will be!

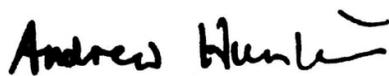
In the meantime, I hope to send out regular messages via WhatsApp, and also on Facebook. This is a big learning curve for many of us, as we enter the realm of the tele-evangelists! But without the private jets...

Today is Passion Sunday (the 5th Sunday in Lent). It marks the start of Passiontide, the final build-up in Lent which culminates in Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter. At the heart of our faith and worship is the reality of suffering and death, as supremely seen in the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the story doesn't end on Good Friday. We are Easter people, people of the resurrection, people of life and hope and promise and new possibilities.

This means that we of all people are best equipped to reflect not only on life with all its struggles, but also on dying and death. The thought of a loved one dying at any time, and particularly in the next few weeks, is overwhelming. Terrifying. Yet for us as Christians, our faith assures us that death is not the end. Yes, it is the end of this life as we know it. But it is also the beginning of the perfect life with God beyond the grave. I was reminded the other day that one of the purposes of pastoral ministry is to prepare people for a good death. It is our job as pastors and priests to acknowledge our human limitations; to know (without being morbid) that life does come to an end; that we are to live as those who do not know what tomorrow will bring. So let us go into these difficult and challenging days, prepared for whatever may come.

At the same time, of course, we hold our dear ones, and ourselves, up to God. Probably by now almost everyone amongst us knows someone, or has heard of someone, who is in self-quarantine, or who has tested positive for the coronavirus. It is a time of fear and anxiety, waiting on events. We may well be feeling helpless, angry, terrified. So let's offer these feelings, our fears, our anger, our terror, our despair, to God. And ask for grace for the days that lie 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.