

## Dean's Letter, 19 April 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

A few weeks ago, at the start of the lock down, we were under the impression that we would be able to gather for worship once again, today. But this is not to be. Lock down continues, until at least the end of April, and quite possibly for longer. What felt like an almost light hearted time of rest and retreat is now becoming tougher and more intense. The news each day is grim. In SA, infections are continuing. People are dying (though not in large numbers.) Tensions are rising around food parcels in some areas. Tragically, schools are being vandalised. Government schools are reopening online (some have already done so), for the start of the second term. Universities and some schools have moved to online learning.

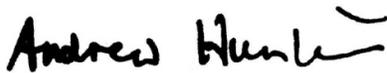
At the same time, the lock down is working: the rate of infection is not escalating and we have had relatively few deaths. This is giving us all time to prepare for what we may be facing in the time ahead. This is the worrying part: that it will take much longer than we had thought, for the virus to subside and disappear; and that this lock down, with all its implications, may have to continue. We must do what we can: social distancing; wear masks; wash hands; stay at home as far as possible; avoid large gatherings.

All this is during Eastertide: our great celebration and affirmation that with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we know that life is greater than death, light is greater than darkness, hope is greater than despair. The gospel story for today (John 19:19-31) continues with encounters between the Risen Lord and those who knew him.

For some, faith, belief and trust is easy. It comes naturally. We respond with joy and delight to the Good News of Jesus Christ. We hear the Gospel words and we are encouraged and strengthened in our faith. For others, the Gospel story makes no sense. The whole thing seems to be nonsense. "Unless I see..." Thomas represents all who doubt and question; all who believe only what they can touch or see. What convinced Thomas was seeing the wounds of Christ. The suffering Christ. The body of Christ that carries the scars, signs of suffering and signs of love. During this lock down, there is anxiety and worry, hunger and need, angry demands and growing frustration. We are racked by doubt, despair, desperation, as things get tougher and tougher. Let's invite the Risen Christ to meet us in our doubt and despair.

Let's continue to carry one another's burdens through this time. In many ways the lock down is bringing out the best in us.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.