

Dean's Letter, 26 April 2020

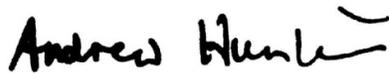
Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Life under lockdown continues. Measures put in place this week by the government are aimed at helping those in real need at this time. We wait eagerly to see this being rolled out here in our community. The Cathedral (through the Covid Care fund) and Food4Futures continue to give out food parcels and food vouchers to those in need. My very sincere thanks to all who are assisting with this through donations, packing and/or handing out of parcels, and administration. Details of donations are in the pew leaflet. The lockdown is highlighting the inequalities in our communities. At the same time, the lockdown is bringing out the best in many. People are reaching out, helping, doing what they can to make a difference. The encounter with another world, another reality, can be life transforming. To place ourselves in the shoes of another, even if only for a short while, is something that we never forget. It changes the way we look at the world.

The Gospel reading for today points to transformation through encounter. It is the encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus. The two unnamed disciples are walking away from Jerusalem. We are given, in their own words, their extreme disappointment and bewilderment in what had happened: "we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (Lk 24:23). Then comes Jesus' reply: "how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe". He then interprets the prophetic scriptures to them. The story culminates when they arrive at Emmaus: he takes bread, blesses, breaks it, and gives it to them. Their eyes are opened, they recognise him, and he vanishes from their sight. But two images of this encounter remain with them, indelibly, and are our ongoing encounter with the Risen Christ: they remember how their hearts burned within them as Jesus had opened the scriptures to them on the road; and they recognise him in the breaking of the bread. Encounter.

The road to Emmaus represents, perhaps, our longing to escape, to run away from Jerusalem, the place of struggle and crucifixion. Yet we carry our fears and disappointments with us. Remember those poignant words of the two disciples "but we had hoped..." At this low point, when it seems that all is lost and our hope is gone, Christ meets us, strengthens us with his word, and shares his life in the breaking of the bread. Our hearts are set on fire and our eyes are opened to see him. With rebirthed hope in our hearts we return to Jerusalem, to the place of struggle, to the reality of our lives, but now changed by our encounter with the Risen Christ, and our eyes opened to a new reality. An encounter with grace and wonder. New hope and fire in our hearts for whatever lies ahead.

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 long horizontal stroke at the end.