

## Dean's Letter, 7 June 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

The death of George Floyd at the hands of police, in Minneapolis-St Paul (also known as the Twin Cities), USA, two weeks ago (25th May) has shaken many in the USA, and has been felt here also. The videos of the white police officer kneeling on Floyd's neck until he was dead have gone all over the world. Archbishop Thabo Makgoba wrote: "George Floyd's killing flies in the face of the solidarity evident in the world's response to the pandemic, and we condemn the brutal treatment he was subjected to. As we heard those words of desperation, 'I cannot breathe', we mourned for the loss of all life at this time, through violence everywhere and in the COVID-19 pandemic."<sup>1</sup>

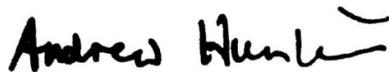
His death has led, in the USA, to widespread protests, both peaceful and violent; outrage; profound sadness; despair. But also, again, to the determination that things, including systemic violence and racism, must change. The Presiding Bishop of ECUSA, Michael Curry, spoke of the "pandemic of selfishness" behind Floyd's death. The antidote to this pandemic, he said, is love, following in the footsteps of Jesus, "the way that leads to healing, justice and love", to create communities where all can live together in peace.

The USA context is very different from ours here in SA. But parallels are drawn between the struggle for racial equality in the US, and the struggle for freedom in SA. Key African-American figures and leaders have inspired people in this country. And the killing of George Floyd has shaken many here. May our everyday relationships with others, across whatever differences may exist – language, race, culture, background - by God's grace, be moments of encounter and connection. Let's remember that each of us carry within us the sign of Christ. We are called to be living icons, sacred pictures of God's love for the world.

Today, Trinity Sunday, is (I think) the only Sunday in the church's annual calendar that has a key doctrine (i.e. what the church holds and believes) as the central focus, rather than a gospel event such as the incarnation or the resurrection, or an event in the life and teaching of Jesus. On this day, we celebrate the church's recognition of the Trinity as the three 'Persons' of the one God – Father (Creator), Son (Redeemer), and Holy Spirit (Sanctifier). The Nicene Creed speaks of Christ as being "God from God, Light from Light" and the Holy Spirit as being "the Lord, the giver of life... who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified..."<sup>2</sup>.

At the heart of the Trinity is the eternal relationship of love between the Persons of the Godhead. According to the late Brian Gaybba, "the infinite reality called 'God' is a community", and that God "has created the community of humanity for the purpose of sharing in that inner divine life"<sup>3</sup>. This means that as we come closer to the heart of God, we come closer to the source of all love and all light. And, in the words of Jesus, the love of neighbour and love of God belong together.

My love to you all



1. 2 June 2020
2. An Anglican Prayer Book, pg 108
3. God is a community, pg 103