

## Dean's Letter, 14 June 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

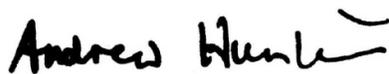
The rage and frustration in communities in the USA, following the killing of George Floyd, has been echoed in this country. His death has sparked, yet again, heated debate and discussion around race, racism – both systemic and current, prejudice, and structural oppression. On Wednesday, I attended via Zoom an excellent 'live' discussion at St Andrew's College, on the topic of race, and held in the context of the school's weekly on-line assembly. Former and current pupils spoke, either live or via a pre-recorded message, on their experiences of racism. It was sobering to listen, and to acknowledge the ways in which people have been hurt, silenced, ridiculed, mocked, or side-lined, on the basis of colour. We don't all live easily or humbly with difference.

Whatever our race or nationality, this is painful ground. As the Cathedral community, we enjoy our diversity. It is good to worship and share our life in Christ together. Yet we hold theologically and in every other way that "in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, male or female, slave or free, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). We belong to one another, in a new community, joined by baptism, sharing in the one common meal. And we are called to live this out in our relationships with one another, which includes hearing and sharing in one another's pain.

How do we speak about our experience of race, or racism? As your Dean and priest, who is also white, I am called to bring and share the good news of Jesus. Is the fact that I am white a hindrance to this good news? Or am I, by God's grace, able to be a sign of God's love that overcomes and embraces difference, a sign of reconciliation, crossing over to the other side, bridging barriers, reaching out, celebrating difference and diversity? What about you?

In the face of the slogan and cry "Black Lives Matter", I respond by saying that all lives matter; but that when someone who is black has been hurt, then that life, that individual, must be the focus of our love and compassion. The killing of George Floyd by a white police officer has served to highlight the experiences of systemic violence and racism, perpetrated by whites over against blacks. Our history here in SA is full of it. Yet we also have the pain and sadness of the death of Collins Khoza and others at the hands of the SANDF or the SAPS, the suffering of many in Zimbabwe at the hands of their rulers; the cruelty of Idi Amin in Uganda. Sin does not have a colour. Humanity - all those created in the image of God - does not have a colour. Let us embrace and reach out to one another, listen to one another's cries of pain, and pray that by God's grace we may heal one another's wounds.

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.