

Dean's Letter, 26 July 2020

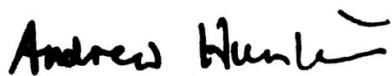
Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

How we long and yearn to know what lies ahead of us! These difficult and uncertain days stretch out; each corner brings a fresh view but the end is not yet in sight. As time goes by, even the changes and unpredictability of it all create their own level of stress and anxiety for us. We are unable to plan, unable to look forward, because the road ahead is so fluid. During this past week we have been hearing of this or that person who is infected; a school with teachers and pupils who are ill, leaving the rest of the school in uncertainty and fear; community outrage at gangsters and their thieving ways; people we know and love who are seriously ill. There are worried eyes and drawn faces at every turn. And the nagging questions, doubts, about what is happening to us, what will happen to us. What will our future look like? Is there any purpose, any sense in going on, in doing what is in front of us?

Our NT reading for today brings words of profound assurance and comfort: "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). These are not lightweight words. *All things...work together... for good... for those who love God... who are called...according to his purpose.* Let's not distort or avoid the calm assurance and certainty that we are given here. To say "all things" does not remove the horror or despair that we experience. Instead, to say "all things" invites us to face our experiences of trauma and humiliation, sadness and injustice, and to bring them into the light and healing touch of God's love, so that even the worst can become an instrument for good. That is the message of the cross of Christ, where resurrection and hope came out of torture and horror and suffering and death.

The nature of the kingdom of God is of small beginnings (the example of the mustard seed) growing into great trees of life and healing and shade (Matthew 13:31-32). Big projects have small beginnings. Our daily efforts to keep things going in the face of adversity will, in good time, bear fruit. Every time we sit in yet another meeting to take a few small steps forward with this or that idea, or we speak with that one person to encourage or guide, or we have to pick up the pieces after a disaster, we can take heart: of such things (even these!) the kingdom of heaven is made. Let's not be afraid to be visionary. And even the seeds of our suffering can be planted and grow into a tree of hope and redemption and wisdom and transformation and justice.

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, sweeping underline.