

## Dean's Letter, 9 August 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

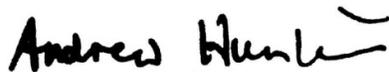
There are times when death is stalking the streets, knocking at our doors. There have been a number of deaths in our community in recent days, and we acknowledge each one. On a personal note, this past week began with news of the deaths of two wonderful people in my life. Sister Ursula, one of the Assumption Sisters here in Grahamstown, died in Port Elizabeth early on Monday morning. She was a wonderful spiritual companion to me and to many others, a bright spirit, a gift from God to us all. Revd Don Narraway, former Dean of Bloemfontein, died on Sunday evening. He and his wife Pat were family friends of Claire's parents; he prepared Claire for confirmation; I came to know him in more recent years. He was a great spiritual guide to both Claire and me, and a wonderful friend in the Lord. These two souls, Don and Sister Ursula, have gone from my life. I thank God for them. Let us continue to hold in our prayers all who have lost loved ones in recent days.

The image of Jesus walking on the water (our Gospel reading, Matthew 14:22-33) is a powerful one. It is not to be taken in a literal sense. Rather, says Tom Wright<sup>1</sup>, we are to hear this story in terms of our own journey of faith and our own struggles with doubt and fear, courage, risk taking, trust and hope. Walking on water is a metaphor for living with courage in dangerous times – and stepping out of the boat, like Peter, in spite of it all, keeping our eyes on Jesus as our Lord.

We are indeed surrounded by stormy weather, threatening clouds, battered by the waves, far from the land, the wind against us. Danger and death are at every turn. Among the threatening clouds are the emerging stories of corruption and greed and fraud on the part of the well connected, the siphoning off of state funds. It is tragic that some appear to be using this time of national crisis to enrich themselves. We are in a pandemic not only with Covid-19. We are in a pandemic of corruption and greed.

We are also in a pandemic of gender-based violence. Some of our students had a Zoom discussion (which was live streamed on the Cathedral Facebook page) on this topic. The story of the rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13) was used as a discussion starter. It was noted how Tamar's rape by her half-brother Amnon resulted not only in his revenge killing, two years later, but nearly brought down the entire kingdom of Israel. Sexual assault within the family is in many ways far harder to deal with than a "stranger danger" assault, due to the very real issues of shame and the fear of not being believed. The discussion will and must continue.

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.

<sup>1</sup>*Matthew for Everyone*, 191