

Dean's Letter, 1 November 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

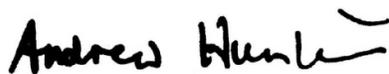
Having thought that we were emerging from the dark cloud of the Covid pandemic, infections are once again on the rise. However, all is not lost. The solution is in our hands: social distancing, wearing of masks, washing hands, sanitising as much as possible. A young doctor friend of ours, currently working in one of our Provincial hospitals, said that with the wearing of masks, none of the health care officials – doctors, nurses, etc – contracted TB or other ailments, unlike in previous years when it was the norm for health care people to be ill. Masks really do make a difference. None of us enjoy wearing them. But let's do what we need to do.

Grief and loss have been part of our experience of the past six months. People have died, but Covid restrictions have meant that we have not been able to come together to mourn and to give thanks. This has been very hard. At the same time, many of us have been able to follow funeral services via Facebook, elsewhere in the country, and to be part of events that we would not otherwise have attended. All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, which we celebrate and observe today, is a special time of remembering. Reflecting on the global Covid deaths, the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote (29 September 2020): "Behind the figure of one million people who have died from coronavirus are a million mothers and fathers; daughters and sons; grandparents and siblings; friends, colleagues and neighbours. One million precious, beloved, irreplaceable children of God. Today is a dark and difficult day, for our nation and our world. It's a day to grieve with those who grieve. To pray for those who suffer. To cry out to God in prayer for an end to this pandemic.

"But it's also a day to remember that it was into a troubled, fearful and hurting world that God sent His only Son. To remember that Jesus Christ came not just to walk with us, but to lay down His life for us. There is no agony, trauma or grief that we are left to face alone. It is this Christ who accompanies us through any darkness, comforts us by his love, and offers hope through His light. In His name, we pray for the resilience and courage to keep going through this time of trial. 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.' (John 1:5)"

Most of us probably think of saints as the ancient and holy figures portrayed in stained glass windows. Certainly the history of the church is full of people whose lives have pointed others to God, transformed societies, been courageous witnesses in the face of persecution and suffering. Today's saints are those who feed the hungry, care for the downtrodden, witness to justice, protect the environment, reach out across barriers of hatred and suspicion, are full of the love of God. When we think about it, we realise that we are surrounded by saints.

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.