

Dean's Letter, 15 November 2020

Dear Cathedral family, Brothers and Sisters in Christ

The news has been full of the USA presidential elections. The election of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris is a welcome move away from the divisive rhetoric, anger and misinformation of the Trump years. President Biden will need to unite a bitterly divided country, and bring healing, just as President Ramaphosa has had the task of restoring trust in our government following the destructive nine years of Jacob Zuma. But as we know, the damage caused by greedy and corrupt leadership is proving very hard to undo.

How much are we driven by anger or fear? Both these emotions are immensely powerful forces – we all know, I am sure, what it feels like to be angry, furiously angry; and probably there have been times when we have been deeply afraid, have felt fear, or even terror. I remember an occasion when I found myself literally shaking with fear. And we know the fear of a nightmare, or the fear of an unusual sound at night, or the fear of attack or danger, times when we have run for our lives.

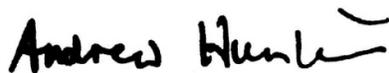
We open the scriptures to find hope and good news. But our scripture readings for today are solemn words of warning. They cast fear over us. The prophet Zephaniah writes of the day of the Lord as a day to be feared: it will be a day of wrath, distress, ruin, devastation, anguish, darkness and gloom – clearly a great battle is being foretold (Zeph 1:14-16). St Paul writes to the Thessalonian church to warn them that the day of the Lord “will come like a thief in the night” (1 Thess 5:2). Our gospel reading, the parable of the talents, is also a solemn warning to use what we have been given, to the utmost, not to bury it in the ground (Matt 25:14-30).

The end of the world is a theme of movies. Cataclysmic floods. Massive climate change. Invasion by aliens. But more importantly it is a reality that is in front of us all. Our world is fragile. Our lives can come to an end in an instant. There is no guarantee, no promise, of a future. We need to live as if each day is our last, with care and faith and hope, with obedience to the will of God. We are placed on this earth – born – for a purpose, to know and love God. All else follows from this.

But it is not only about the end. It is about here and now. Using our talents for the good of others. Honesty. Integrity. Courage. Doing the right thing. In a tribute to the late Auditor General of SA, Kimi Makwetu, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba paid tribute to his work, and noted that his “service to South Africa is unparalleled in its commitment to the values of good governance and his determination to make the country accountable for public spending. It is a great pity that despite his and his staff's work, the number of qualified audits remains so high, and that so much money is wasted on expenditure which does not serve the common good. I call on all South Africans, and especially those running municipalities, to commit to serving all of our citizens with integrity.”

Using our talents to the glory of God. Let's do that, so that when the great day comes, we can hear the words of the Father, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.