

## Report on Salisbury Diocesan Synod - Saturday 18 February 2012

There were two main items on the agenda at St Nicholas Corfe Mullen – The Just Economy and the Anglican Communion Covenant. The Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Holtam, presided. The Bishop of Sherborne, Dr Graham Kings, and the Dean of Salisbury, June Osborne, also attended.

In his Presidential Address, the Bishop of Salisbury touched on the financial crisis, civil partnerships, the Anglican Communion Covenant, the rise of secularism and the Queen's Jubilee, concluding: "In Christ something new is happening for the sake of the world. What is the new wine and what the new wineskins in these debates about money, sexuality, women bishops and the covenant? Jesus presents a radical challenge to religious people whilst associating with the outcast. It is the same challenge we face today."

Canon Andrew Studdert-Kennedy, the Revd Antony MacRow-Wood and Dr Peter Dominy gave short talks on 'The values of money and a just economy', pointing out the need for sober assessment, collective responsibility, and step-by-step changes to current financial culture.

There were mixed reactions from delegates, with some in favour of taking matters further; others disagreed strongly, not least with Dr Dominy's assertion that money was inherently dangerous. Others said the answer was to preach the gospel and see a new UK revival.

Mr Gil Williams, Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance, said, "Part of the problem is our own greed... If we allow money to control our lives, it will bite us very hard. In the gospels, we're challenged to see how much we can give, rather than how much we can accumulate."

Mr MacRow-Wood also spoke on Credit Unions and the proposed creation of an Anglican Mutual Credit Union benefitting CofE clergy, workers, staff and their families, and later the wider population. Mrs Christine Corteen added her recommendation.

The agenda then moved to the debate and vote on the Anglican Communion Covenant. The Bishop of Sherborne proposed that the Covenant be adopted, since it would reflect Christian community, be Anglican in character, give shape to innovation and prevent disunity.

Opposing the motion, The Dean of Salisbury set out three main arguments: that it would add an unnecessary level of bureaucracy, that differences would continue to exist and even be exacerbated, and that ultimately it would have a divisive effect.

A number of delegates spoke in favour of the Covenant, recommending it as a helpful tool in building relationships and breaking deadlocks, providing an Anglican indaba framework rather than coercion.

Delegates opposing the measure mentioned a focus on uniformity rather than unity in diversity; unity should be foremost in Christ; that a new structure would not solve interpersonal issues; and that it might result in a two-tier membership.

The Bishop of Sherborne, summing up, likened the differences between federation and Communion approaches to loose marbles in a bag and an organic bunch of grapes. Delegates then voted: the motion was defeated by 48 votes to 31, with two abstentions.

After lunch, the Archdeacon of Sherborne presented DAC awards to Fifield Bavant St Martin and Little Langford, St Nicholas of Mira. The Dean of Salisbury presented the Cathedral's annual report, pointing to a 5% increase in visitors, 25% more takeup for Education courses, increased visibility of arts and seasonal events and a £775,000 surplus as evidence that Cathedral life and ministry was moving in the right direction.

Just ahead of the blessing, Bishop Holtam thanked delegates for their heartfelt contributions and high quality of relationship, and passed diocesan thanks on to Mr MacRow-Wood for his work on Credit Unions.