

Address to the Sydney Synod

19<sup>th</sup> October 2010

by

Archbishop Dr Peter Jensen

To my mind, this has been a good Synod and I want to thank you for making it so. I think that you have taken ownership of our problems and you have entered into the whole task of reconstruction, which we need to undertake together.

Let me explain by speaking of the past, the present and the future.

First, there is the past. In my Presidential Address I said that we ought to eschew recrimination, but we needed to be intellectually acute and morally clear in our review of the past. Only in this way will we learn again to trust one another. At this point I want to thank all of you who have asked questions. They have been an indispensable way of establishing where we are and how we got there. They have been thoroughly uncomfortable – and so they should be. At the same time I want to thank those who have prepared the answers. I don't just mean that it has been incredibly hard work. I mean that the commitment of our people, led by Mr Wicks, has been to answer all questions with nothing less than the truth. That is what I would expect and that is what we have received. Thank God for that.

Such clarity is no always to our short term advantage. We are discussing our failures in a very public way. I grieve that it has given cause for some people to scoff. But I would rather have clarity and honesty than secrecy and

dissembling. If we are asking the Synod to make decisions, the information must be at hand. Truth is the foundation of faith. Faith in God, of course, but faith in each other as well.

Second, there is the present. The suggestion that we sell Bishopscourt came as one sensible way in which to help repair the damage caused by our financial losses. In its wisdom, the Synod has chosen not to take that path. Let me congratulate you for the way in which you debated this issue with so much commitment and passion last night. I am particularly grateful to those who led the debate on either side. You are the servants of the Synod and you served us well.

Now, however, you the Synod have to continue to help us find our way forward. As a Diocese we need central services. I can assure you that I will be doing all I can to make sure that we are budgeting wisely and well. We have made very significant cuts to expenditure. More will need to be made – but I am aiming to make savings which will leave us even better placed to do the work which God has called us to accomplish. We are not going to retreat from the service we owe to God and the Diocese. But there will be changes. The Synod has taken responsibility; you have decided that the sale of Bishopscourt is not the way to meet the budget. Now we will be seeking your further help to do what still needs to be done by the central organs of the Diocese for all our sakes. Frankly, we cannot manage in the coming year on what is now available to us. Extra funding will be needed.

Third, the future. A person looking on last night could say that in deciding to retain Bishopscourt you have voted for the past. Sentiment has over-ruled

reality. For my part, I think you could say that you have voted both for the present and the future. I think you said, in making this vote – we are here in this city for the long haul. We wish to remain connected. We recognise the very serious problems we have at this moment; in the long term we are confident we will overcome them. We do not think that disposing of this asset in this way at this time is the right path into our future. You may view Bishops court in financial terms as an asset; you may view it as a statement of who we are and what we do. Either way, in voting how you have, you have said we are voting for the future of our place in this city.

On the other hand, the Synod is saying, we want to see more clearly how the future is to be secured and that the lessons we have learned will be permanent. I think what you have said the Archbishop's Commission is this: thank you for raising the issue in this way and giving us the chance to debate it. But now we have become involved we do not wish you to rush your work. There is much that needs to be done, not least in looking carefully at the governance, ethos and structural questions which have entangled us. As well, there is more imaginative thinking to be done. Are there new ways of organising our financial life which will help? As we demonstrated last Tuesday night, we retain confidence in Mr Kell and his fellow members, but we want them to have the chance to do the necessary work in a slightly less urgent way so that they can do the work really well. I think that was behind Professor Bellenger's well supported amendment for example and several of the other speakers were calling for the same thing.

For myself, I am not daunted by these challenges. God is still on the throne. But my courage in facing them has been much strengthened by the Synod,

its good humour and its good wisdom. I have nothing but thanks to you for your fellowship in all these matters, your partnership in the gospel is supremely important to me. Kanishka's ministry of the word has pointed us so magnificently to the all sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ and I confess to you and to the world, I have no other recourse but to look to him and to put all my hopes in him. To God be the glory.