

GENERAL SYNOD 2017

Motion No.8: Inter-Diocesan Conversations Seconded: The Rt Revd Dr Kenneth Kearon

**Embargoed Against Delivery
Check Against Delivery**

I wish to second this motion, and to endorse all that the Bishop of Tuam has said. This has been a valuable and positive process in both dioceses, as we explored how to provide sustainable and effective episcopal ministry in the West and South West of Ireland.

The text of the motion before you is the fruits of a working party set up by both dioceses. Diocesan councils have been kept informed, but it will only be when we discuss these at our respective diocesan synods that we will uncover the mind of the dioceses. Before that we need to know your opinion as General Synod on two proposals – C and B.

Both dioceses are open to change, but we do not believe that effective ministry can continue in this vast area without an episcopal presence in both of the existing united dioceses.

In proposal B everything remains the same, except that the Bishop of Tuam is also an incumbent in the diocese – a part-time Bishop. This would be workable, though there could be boundary issues for that person when there are tensions between being a fellow incumbent and also serving as the Bishop of the diocese.

While proposal B has support, proposal C has greater support – one diocesan Bishop for the whole area, with the assistance of a suffragan Bishop who is also an incumbent in Tuam diocese. In that situation, administration and committee issues would remain separate initially, with exploration of sharing possibilities taking place in situ.

In my opinion, proposal C has greater flexibility and is more open to evolution and change. The question behind this motion before you is simple – if we come back next year to Synod with a proposal for a part-time suffragan Bishop, will Synod accept that? If we come back next year with a proposal for a part-time diocesan Bishop will you support that?

We really do need to know the mind of General Synod on this before we begin to consult our diocesan synods on possible ways forward. I wish to second this motion.