

## **BILL NO. 6**

### **Explanatory Memorandum**

Following the withdrawal of the Bill of the Commission on Episcopal Ministry and Structures at the General Synod in 2016, the diocesan councils of both Tuam, Killala and Achonry and Limerick and Killaloe initiated conversations about the future patterns of episcopal ministry and structures in the West and South-west. Subsequently, and after extensive conversations, in February 2018 both diocesan councils passed identical resolutions affirming their desire to unite both dioceses at a future date subject to the satisfactory conclusion of these discussions and the approval of both diocesan synods.

Should agreement be forthcoming, a Bill for alteration of diocesan boundaries will be brought to the General Synod and its provisions will require the consent of the Archbishop of Armagh and the Archbishop of Dublin (as a change in provincial boundaries will be involved) and, if passed, the subsequent consent of the diocesan synods affected.

The purpose of the Bill being proposed this year is to allow for temporary suspension of the constitutional requirement for the calling of an episcopal electoral college within the prescribed time, in the event that a vacancy arises in either diocese (or in both) before 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The Bill further proposes that such suspension of an episcopal election could be extended by the Standing Committee at the request of both diocesan councils, but in any case not beyond 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

MR JOC SANDERS  
PROF PAUL JOHNSTON

## **BILL**

**To suspend temporarily the operation of provisions in Chapter VI of the Constitution in respect of constituting, convening and holding an electoral college in the case of a vacancy in the see of Tuam, Killala and Achonry or Limerick, Ardfert, Aghadoe, Killaloe, Kilfenora, Clonfert, Kilmacduagh and Emly**

WHEREAS the United Dioceses of Tuam, Killala and Achonry and the United Dioceses of Limerick, Ardfert, Aghadoe, Killaloe, Kilfenora, Clonfert, Kilmacduagh and Emly, are engaged in discussions which may possibly lead to uniting, dividing, or altering the boundaries of the two united dioceses at a future date in accordance with Section 31 of Chapter I of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland;

AND WHEREAS the respective diocesan councils of the two united dioceses are desirous that if a vacancy should arise in either or both of their sees whilst such discussions are continuing, there should be provision to defer the filling of such vacancy or vacancies so as to facilitate the said discussions;

AND WHEREAS section 3 and section 8 of Part I of Chapter VI of the Constitution would otherwise require an episcopal electoral college to be constituted, convened and held within certain time limits for the purpose of electing a bishop for the vacant see or sees;

BE IT ENACTED by the Archbishops and Bishops and the clergy and laity of the Church of Ireland in General Synod assembled in Armagh in the year 2018 and by the authority of the same as follows:

1. In this Statute “Chapter VI” means Chapter VI of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland and “the two united dioceses” means the United Dioceses of Tuam, Killala and Achonry and the United Dioceses of Limerick, Ardfert, Aghadoe, Killaloe, Kilfenora, Clonfert, Kilmacduagh and Emly.
2. Subject to Section 3, if the see of either or both of the two united dioceses shall become vacant on or before 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 the operation of the provisions in section 3 and section 8 of Part I of Chapter VI in relation to the constituting, convening and holding of an episcopal electoral college for the purpose of filling the said vacancy or vacancies shall be suspended until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.
3. The Standing Committee may from time to time, by resolution, extend the period of suspension of the operation of the said provisions by such period or periods as may be requested in writing by the diocesan councils of the two united dioceses, provided however that no such suspension of the operation of the said provisions may continue beyond 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

## **BILL NO. 7**

### **Explanatory Memorandum**

When the General Synod was established by the General Convention of 1870, diocesan representation in the House of Representatives was based on one clerical member for every 10 priests at that time and two lay members for each clerical member. The total number of representatives produced on this basis, 624, has remained largely unchanged since.

The last significant change to the diocesan allocation of seats took place in 1969 when 14 dioceses were re-allocated 648 House of Representative seats among them. With the exception of the merging of 14 dioceses into 12 this diocesan representation has remained static since 1969. In the almost 50 years since this last significant modification to the House of Representatives the change in totality and spread of the Church of Ireland population has created an imbalance in representation (see the table following).

This Bill seeks to amend Chapter 1 of the Constitution to achieve the following two aims:

1. To preserve the role of synod as a unifying, legislative and representative body for the whole of the Church of Ireland by establishing a proportional and representative formula to allocate seats each triennium.
2. To increase the flexibility and functionality of synod as a debating forum and administrative body by reducing synod membership in proportion to the reduced size of the Church of Ireland, thereby allowing for more choice of venue, reduction in costs and giving higher value to synod membership.

#### **Proportionality:**

To achieve the aim of a more proportional and equitable spread of membership across the House of Representatives, this Bill seeks to allocate one seat to each diocese or united diocese for every cure.

In keeping with the original constitutional requirement of two lay representatives to each clerical representative this Bill would allocate representative places to dioceses or united dioceses according to their number of cures provided that the number of cures was divisible by 3 or rounded up to the nearest figure divisible by three. Therefore, if a diocese had 32 cures it would be allocated 33 seats to allow for the 2:1 laity/clerical representation (see the table following).

#### **Weighting:**

This Bill will also allocate 6 extra seats to every diocese or united diocese to increase proportionally the representation of smaller dioceses.

#### **Formula:**

The effect of the proposed legislation is that the table in section 4(2) of Chapter I of the Constitution will no longer appear. Every middle year in the triennium the number of representatives will be reviewed by the Honorary Secretaries, reported to the General Synod and communicated to the dioceses. This will inform dioceses of any changes to synod allocation in good time for elections in the final year of the triennium.

#### **Synod Size:**

The highest attendance on any given day at Synod since 2003 is 507 and the average attendance by each diocese over the last 10 years can be seen in the table following. This Bill would, in initial effect, reduce the House of Representatives by 117 seats from the current 648 to 531.

If the Bill is adopted the effect of the initial changes in membership might be seen in the table following but it should be noted that the Bill will see seats proportioned to the number of cures at the last day of General Synod 2019 and triennially afterwards. Therefore this table is only for illustrative purposes.

Diocese	C of I population - 2011 Rep of Ireland census & NISRA	2013 C of I Census. Sunday Attendance	Current Number of General Synod places	CURES	Synod members as per No. of cures (adjusted up to allow for 1/3 to 2/3 clergy/lay)	Probable effect of the Bill on General Synod places for the 2021 triennium  (Including weighting of extra 6 places per diocese)	Difference on current allocation of synod places	Average diocesan attendance at General Synod over the last 10 years
Armagh	34,420	7,102	54	43	43 (45)	51	-3	30
Clogher	17,780	3,951	42	32	32 (33)	39	-3	26
Derry and Raphoe	36,480	6,066	60	48	48 (48)	54	-6	32
Down and Dromore	84,290	12,731	90	75	75 (75)	81	-9	57
Connor	85,540	10,815	96	74	74 (75)	81	-15	61
Kilmore, Elphin & Ardagh	9,950	2,343	39	25	25 (27)	33	-6	21
Tuam, Killala & Achonry	6,710	612	21	9	9 (9)	15	-6	13
Dublin & Glendalough	46,930	7,252	66	52	52 (54)	60	-6	52
Meath and Kildare	10,750	1,463	33	17	17 (18)	24	-9	20
Cashel, Ferns & Ossory	19,230	2,520	63	32	32 (33)	39	-24	41
Cork, Cloyne and Ross	13,990	2,197	42	22	22 (24)	30	-12	33
Limerick and Killaloe	10,310	1,205	42	16	16 (18)	24	-18	25
<i>Totals</i>	<i>376,380</i>		<b>648</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>449 (459)</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>-117</b>	

Number of Cures as of December 2017 and census population 2011 & 2013 from the CEMS presentation to Synod 2016

**BILL**

**To amend Chapter I of the Constitution**

WHEREAS it is desirable that the principles upon which the clerical and lay representatives to the General Synod to represent the several dioceses and united dioceses of the Church of Ireland be set out in the Constitution of the Church of Ireland;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient to establish a continuing review of the size and distribution of the membership of the House of Representatives;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable that the Table contained in Section 4(2) of Part 1 of Chapter I of the said Constitution be replaced;

AND WHEREAS for such purposes it is necessary to amend Chapter I of the Constitution;

BE IT ENACTED by the Archbishops and Bishops, and the clergy and laity of the Church of Ireland in General Synod assembled in Armagh in the year 2018, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. In this Statute “Chapter I” means Chapter I of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, “Chapter VI” means Chapter VI of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland and the term “cure” shall have the same meaning as contained in section 39 of Part V of Chapter VI of the Constitution.

2. For section 4(1) of Part 1 of Chapter I there shall be substituted:

‘4(1) (a) The House of Representatives shall consist of representatives of the clergy and representatives of the laity in the proportion of two lay members for each clerical member, to be elected as hereinafter provided.

(b) The number of representatives to be returned to the General Synod by each diocese or united diocese shall be in the proportion of one representative to every cure within that diocese or united diocese as the case may be. Provided that the total number of representative positions for each diocese or united diocese is divisible by three or rounded up to the next number divisible by three.

(c) Each diocese or united diocese shall be allocated a further 6 members on the House of Representatives.’

3. For section 4(2) of Part 1 of Chapter I there shall be substituted:

‘4(2) The number of representatives, clerical and lay, to be returned to represent the several dioceses and united dioceses shall be calculated by the Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod on the basis of the principles set out in 4 (1) as at the last day of the ordinary meeting of General Synod 2019 and shall be communicated to the dioceses or united dioceses within seven days of that date. This shall happen triennially thereafter.’

4. For section 4(3) of Part 1 of Chapter I there shall be substituted:

‘4(3) The synods of the several dioceses composing each united diocese may from time to time make such mutual arrangements as to them shall seem fit for apportioning among such dioceses respectively the number of representatives allotted to the several united dioceses in accordance with section 4. In default of agreement being reached the apportionment shall be made by the bishop, whose decision shall be final.