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GENERAL SYNOD – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I find out where and when General Synod takes place?

Each year, the Standing Committee report to General Synod (contained in the Book of Reports and available <https://www.ireland.anglican.org/synod/2017/book-of-reports>) lists the dates and venue for the next year's Synod. The information is also available at www.synod.ireland.anglican.org, where details of the Synod service, directions to the venue, car-parking arrangements, etc., will be posted.

I won't be able to attend General Synod – can a supplementalist go in my place?

No – unlike diocesan synods, the regulations do not allow a supplementalist to attend General Synod if a member cannot be there. A supplementalist attends only if a member has resigned his or her place.

I won't be able to attend General Synod but would like to keep up with developments. How do I do this?

The General Synod website www.synod.ireland.anglican.org will regularly be updated with details of the debates and decisions of the General Synod, and contains a link to an audio stream of the proceedings of Synod.

How do I propose a motion at General Synod?

You will find a form for proposing a motion in advance of General Synod at the Synod website at www.synod.ireland.anglican.org. This should be filled out and sent by post or email to the Honorary Secretaries at Church of Ireland House, Rathmines, Dublin 6, to arrive one month before the opening day of General Synod. It is also possible to propose a motion while General Synod is in session under Standing Order 31 (d). In this case a different form should be filled out (also on the Synod website) and should be presented to the Honorary Secretaries at the Synod at the top table. If a motion is proposed while General Synod is in session, it may only be heard with the unanimous approval of the Synod.

What should I be aware of when proposing a motion?

Apart from the deadlines above you should be aware that when drafting the text, a motion should propose an action. If a motion does not propose an action, it shall not be moved unless the permission of the Synod has been previously obtained. Members should also be aware that under SO52 no motion relating to the allocation of money in the hands of the Representative Church Body (with certain exceptions) shall be put to the Synod until a report on the subject shall have been first obtained.

I have a proposal for legislation at General Synod – what should I do?

Unless you have experience with legislative drafting it might be helpful to put your proposal to the Legislation Committee at Church of Ireland House, Rathmines, Dublin 6, who consider proposals and may be able to assist with drafting. Any proposed legislation for discussion at General Synod should be sent to the Honorary Secretaries six weeks (at least) before the first day of Synod so that it can be sent to members with their Synod papers. A late Bill can be sent to the Honorary Secretaries up one week before General Synod. The Bills Committee will examine all proposed legislation (including late Bills) for legal and drafting issues and report their conclusions on the first day of the General Synod.

I was looking at the Bills paper and I want to suggest an amendment to Bill No. X – How do I do this?

All amendments to Bills must be presented to the Honorary Secretaries in writing. A proposed amendment must not seek to overturn the purposes of the Bill. A form for proposing an amendment is available on the Synod website at www.synod.ireland.anglican.org. Most amendments are discussed at the Committee stage of the Bills procedure.

How do I request information from the Chairperson of X Committee?

Under Standing Order 51 a member of the General Synod can seek information concerning the business of any committee of the General Synod or the Representative Church Body. One day's notice is required. The Chairperson of the Committee or the Chief Officer/Secretary of the Representative Church Body or some other appropriated person is required to answer the request at 2pm at each day of the Synod or as soon as practicable thereafter. Questions can be asked at the General Synod or submitted in advance and in the latter case should be sent to the Honorary Secretaries to arrive not later than one week before General Synod. At Forms for requests for information are available at the General Synod website: www.synod.ireland.anglican.org

INTRODUCTION

The General Synod is the supreme legislative (law-making) authority of the Church of Ireland. In normal circumstances, the General Synod meets once a year – in May – and it is made up of elected clergy and lay members representing the twelve dioceses of the Church of Ireland, along with the Archbishops and Bishops. This Guide aims to help members contribute effectively to the work of the General Synod. For fuller detailed information, members should consult the **Constitution of the Church of Ireland**. Copies of the Constitution are available at cost from the Synod Department. The Constitution can also be viewed online at www.ireland.anglican.org.

Chapter 1 of the Constitution sets out the structure and basis for membership of the Synod and outlines the procedure followed at meetings. In addition, proceedings of the Synod are governed by **Standing Orders**. These are appended to Chapter 17 of the Constitution and are also included as an appendix at the end of this Guide. References to the Standing Orders in this Guide are made by number - for example 'SO 43'. The Guide refers to the Constitution by Chapter and section - for example 'Chapter 1 section 4'

STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Synod consists of three Orders: the **Bishops, Clergy and Laity**. These sit together as two Houses: the **House of Bishops** and the **House of Representatives**. The Archbishops and Bishops comprise the House of Bishops. The diocesan synods elect the members of the House of Representatives, both clergy and laity, who hold office for a three-year period known as a **triennium** (Constitution Chapter 1 section 4). A list of members' names is available at meetings of the Synod.

The representation from each diocese is as follows:

Diocese	Clerical	Lay
Armagh	18	36
Clogher	14	28
Derry and Raphoe	20	40
Down and Dromore	30	60
Connor	32	64
Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh	13	26
Tuam, Killala and Achonry	7	14
Dublin and Glendalough	22	44
Meath and Kildare	11	22
Cashel and Ossory	21	42
Cork, Cloyne and Ross	14	28
Limerick and Killaloe	14	28
Total	216	432

The numbers of representatives from each diocese is designed broadly to reflect the Church of Ireland population and numerical make-up of each diocese.

Some **Ecumenical Guests** are invited to attend the Synod, representing other Churches. They may address the Synod, but not on bills, and they do not have voting rights.

The Archbishop of Armagh is **President** of the General Synod. The Synod elects four **Honorary Secretaries** of the General Synod, two clerical and two lay, from the House of Representatives at the beginning of each triennium. At the start of each meeting of the Synod the President appoints an **Assessor** to assist with procedural matters.

MEETINGS OF THE SYNOD

Ordinary Meetings

An **ordinary meeting** or session of the Synod is held each year in May over three days, usually a Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The hours of business are as follows (SO 3), although the Synod may extend these if necessary to complete the business on the agenda:

First Day	11.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 6.30pm*
Second Day	10.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 6.30pm
Third Day	10.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 4.30pm

*Standing Committee can set a later time for the start of General Synod on the first day. This has become common practice in recent years, to allow the Synod Service to take place on the morning of the first day, so please ensure you check the start time in the papers sent to members (see below).

The Synod often meets in Dublin or Armagh but also in other venues. Members arrange their own travel and accommodation.

Special Meetings

The Archbishop of Armagh may, at his own discretion, convene a **special meeting** of the General Synod. A special meeting can also be called on the written application of not less than one-third of the members of any one order of the Synod (bishops, clergy or laity). A special meeting must be held within two months of the application at a venue chosen by the Archbishop of Armagh. Only the business specified in the notice convening the special meeting of Synod may be transacted at that meeting. Such special meetings are quite rare.

General Synod Papers Sent to Members

Every member receives the following papers three weeks before the session of the Synod:

- Notice of meeting
- Bill Pamphlet (includes text of Bills and an explanatory memorandum for each)
- Notices of Motion
- Member's badge – to be worn throughout the session
- Invitation card for each day – to be placed in box at reception desk as a record of attendance
- Voting card
- Venue information – including location map, 'housekeeping' notes, details of lunch
- Book of Reports to be considered by General Synod.

BUSINESS OF THE SYNOD

The Synod **agenda** is available on the first day of the session and a detailed **timetable** is submitted as a motion for agreement at the beginning of the first day. If additional items arise during the session a **supplemental agenda** is issued.

The business of the Synod includes consideration of **bills, reports, motions, requests for information** and **petitions** (each of these is explained in more detail below). The first and second stages of bills are taken on the first day before consideration of the reports of the committees and boards of the Synod begins. Reports and motions are considered throughout the session. The final stages of bills are taken on the third day.

PROCEDURE

Chair

The Archbishop of Armagh, as President of the Synod, chairs the meeting but may invite any member of the House of Bishops to take the chair for part of the meeting (Constitution Chapter 1 section 18).

Speeches

Members wishing to speak on a matter under debate during the Synod proceedings must attract the attention of the President (generally by making one's way to the podium; in busy debates members may have to queue). The President decides the order in which those wishing to speak may address the Synod. The speaker must confine his/her speech to the subject matter of the debate in hand (SO 15-21).

SO 18 restricts the length of speeches to **5 minutes** with some exceptions. The proposers of the reports of the Standing Committee and Representative Body may speak for 15 minutes each, while the seconders of those reports and the proposer of any other report or of any bill may speak for 10 minutes. The President has discretion to waive the restrictions.

Enforced Closure of Debate

At any time after a motion has been proposed, any member of the Synod may move 'that the question be now put' (in other words, put to a vote). The Synod votes on the **closure motion** unless the President considers that it is an abuse of Standing Orders (SO 41(a)).

Similarly, any member who considers that a vote on a motion is undesirable may move 'that the Synod do now pass from this question to its next business' (SO 41(b)) or propose the **adjournment** (postponement) of a debate (SO 42).

Voting by clerical and lay representatives

Voting on Motions and Ordinary Bills requires a **simple majority** of members present with both orders in the House of Representatives (clergy and laity) voting together. A **vote by orders** is taken if ten members of either order request it, in which case clerical and lay votes are counted separately and there must be a simple majority of each order (SO 44(d)). Special Bills require a **two-thirds majority** of each order (Constitution Chapter 1 section 26 – see below).

Most votes are counted by show of hands. Members hold up their voting cards and **tellers** appointed from the House of Representatives take the count. If a vote is very close the President may call for a **division**, in which case members leave the hall through the 'Ayes' exit (voting for) or 'Noes' exit (voting against) in order to register their vote. Twenty members of the Synod may also request a division (SO 44(c)).

Voting by Bishops

Bishops vote separately from representatives. If they wish to vote this is done after the result of the votes of representatives is announced. They may withdraw from Synod to do so and they may reserve the declaration of their voting until the following day. If the majority of representatives vote for a proposal but the Bishops vote against it, then it is not passed. If it is affirmed at the next year's Synod by not less than two-thirds majority of representatives, then it is carried unless two-thirds of Bishops oppose it, giving their reasons in writing.

BILLS

Introduction

Laws of the Church of Ireland start their life as **Bills** at the General Synod. They are presented at a full meeting of the Synod and have to go through several stages and be passed. Most Bills are Ordinary Bills but some are Special Bills, subject to different, more demanding, rules as explained below. Special Bills are Bills seeking to modify or alter the articles, doctrines, rites, rubrics or formularies of the Church.

The **Bills Pamphlet** sent to members with their Synod papers contains the Bills submitted for consideration and an **Explanatory Memorandum** for each Bill explaining why it is being presented. A Bill once passed becomes a **Statute** or **Act** of the General Synod and is referred to by the year in which it was passed. The *Journal of the General Synod* contains a chronological list of Statutes passed since 1870.

Preliminary Stages

A copy of a Bill is lodged with the Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod not less than six weeks before the first day of the General Synod. Advice on the preparation of Bills may be sought from the Legislation Committee through the Synod Department. The Legislation Committee is best able to assist when matters are drawn to its attention with several months' notice to facilitate a meeting of the Committee and the completion of any work necessary.

The Bill is considered by the Bills Committee. The Proposer of the Bill is notified of the time and place of the meeting of the Committee and s/he (or his/her nominee) is entitled to attend that meeting and to take part in the consideration by the Bills Committee of the legal and drafting aspects of the Bill.

The Bill is printed and sent to all members of General Synod. The name of the proposer of the Bill is printed on the Bill.

Written notice of any proposed amendment is sent to the Honorary Secretaries on or before the Friday next before the General Synod in case of Ordinary Bills, or within one month of the first reading in the case of Special Bills. (That means one month after the end of the Ordinary session at which the Special Bill was introduced.)

Late Bills

A member may notify the Honorary Secretaries of intention to present a Bill not less than one week prior to Synod. (SO 22) Such notice must be accompanied by a text of the Bill. The Bill will be included on the agenda but will not be circulated to members before Synod meets.

Ordinary Bills: First Reading

On the first day of General Synod, the proposer asks for the Synod's permission to introduce the Bill. At this stage it is unnecessary to say more but s/he may make a brief introductory statement (no more than 10 minutes). This is generally a formality. The permission is usually only refused where, for instance, the Bill seems to the majority of members to be repugnant in its nature, or frivolous. However, where, unusually, the First Reading is opposed only one speech (no more than

10 minutes) in opposition is permitted and the question is then put without amendment or further debate.

Where leave is given to introduce the Bill, the Bill is ‘read’ the first time, without debate, and Synod moves to the Second Reading.

Ordinary Bills: Second Reading

The proposer of the Bill makes a short speech (no more than 10 minutes) summarising the purpose of the Bill and its content and moving ‘that the Bill be now read a second time’. There is no need to second the motion if the Bill is brought at the request of the Synod, the House of Bishops, the Standing Committee, the RCB or the Pensions Board. At this second stage (reading) of the Bill the main principle and thrust of the Bill are introduced and debated (in other words, not the fine detail).

At the end of the debate the proposer is entitled to reply to any questions or points made before formally moving again that the Bill be read a second time.

If the Synod passes the Bill at this reading, detail is discussed at the next stage.

Ordinary Bills: Committee Stage

The whole Synod becomes a ‘committee’ in order to debate the bill clause by clause and amendment by amendment. Having done that, the Synod fixes a day for the next stages – usually the third day of that session.

Ordinary Bills: Final Stages

The Bill with amendments agreed at Committee stage is considered “on report” from Committee. At this stage, only amendments to correct drafting, grammatical or clerical errors may be made without prior notice. The final stage, third reading, is on the motion ‘that the Bill be read a third time and passed’. At this stage debate is confined to what is provided in the Bill and no further amendments may be made.

Special Bills

Where a Bill is introduced that seeks to modify or alter the articles, doctrines, rites, rubrics or formularies of the Church a longer process is required. Therefore, a two-year Special Bills procedure is adopted. This is designed to give time for mature consideration and reflection so that decisions on such weighty matters are not made lightly or hastily.

For Special Bills voting is by Orders and a two-thirds majority of each is required. This two thirds majority rule applies to (i) leave to introduce the Bill, (ii) second reading and (iii) the motion that the Bill be read a third time and passed.

Special Bills: Year One

Special Bills: First Reading

The proposer asks for the Synod’s permission to introduce the Bill and makes an introductory speech in support of the resolution. Unlike the procedure for Ordinary Bills this is not a formality.

A full debate takes place on the resolution and the principle of the proposed Bill. If the resolution is passed, it becomes a Bill and is deemed to have passed its first reading (stage).

Proposed amendments must be sent to the Honorary Secretaries within one month of the end of that session of the Synod. Otherwise, there is no scope for amendment of Special Bills, except for omissions, grammatical or clerical errors.

Special Bills: Year Two

Special Bills: Second Reading

At this second stage (reading) of the Bill the main principle and thrust of the Bill are again introduced and debated in the same way as for an Ordinary Bill but voting on the motion that the Bill be given a second reading is by orders and a two thirds majority is required. If the Synod passes the Bill at this reading, details are discussed at the next stage.

Special Bills: Committee Stage

The whole Synod becomes a ‘committee’ in order to debate the bill clause by clause and amendment by amendment. Only amendments of which notice has been given at the First Reading (i.e. within one month - see above) may be considered at this stage, apart from any dealing with omissions, grammatical or clerical errors.

The ‘Committee’ reports the Bill as amended in committee, and Synod moves back into full session to fix a date (usually the third day of the Synod meeting) to consider the Bill on report and Third Reading.

Special Bills: Final Stages

The Bill as amended in Committee is considered on report. At this stage, only amendments to correct drafting, grammatical or clerical errors may be made without prior notice.

The Synod then moves to the final stage on the motion ‘that the Bill be read a third time and passed’. The Bill is given its final reading and put to a vote, again with voting by orders and a two thirds majority. Debate at this stage is confined to ‘what is provided in the Bill’ and no further amendments may be made.

REPORTS TO THE GENERAL SYNOD

Prior to the meeting of the General Synod members receive a **Book of Reports** which includes reports from the Representative Church Body (RCB), the Standing Committee, the Board of Education and other permanent committees and boards of the Church as well as any select or other committees set up by the Synod for a particular task (see information on Standing Committee below).

At the meeting each report is presented for consideration. A **proposer** and a **seconder** of each report are entitled to make a short speech before the Synod debates the contents of each report. The timetable motion agreed at the start of the session dictates the allocated time provided for debate for each report.

Most reports are **received** by the Synod but those that contain measures requiring the consent of the Synod are **adopted**. The Synod can reject a report or part of a report but cannot amend it.

MOTIONS

A **motion** is usually a proposal for action to be considered by the Synod and must be signed by the person moving the motion or by some member on their behalf. It may be submitted by a member of the Synod (a **Private Member’s Motion**) or on behalf of a Committee or Board of the Synod. Before the Synod can consider a motion it must be seconded and once this has happened the motion can only be withdrawn with the Synod’s consent.

If the motion does not propose any action by the Synod beyond its publication or transmission to certain persons, the approval of the Synod is required before it can be considered (SO 33).

A report from the Representative Church Body must be obtained before certain motions with financial implications are put to Synod (SO 52).

If a motion is passed by a simple majority it becomes a **resolution** of the Synod.

Submitting a Motion

Normally a **Notice of Motion** must be sent to the Honorary Secretaries at least a month before the first day of the session and it is included in the list of motions sent to members with the Synod papers (SO 31). The closing date for motions is published on the synod website www.synod.anglican.org or may be obtained from the Synod Department. A form for submitting a motion appears on the Synod website and in Appendix III on page 15. A Notice of Motion may be submitted during the session but may only be considered at that session if it meets the conditions set out in SO 31(d). If it does not meet those conditions it is considered at the next session of the Synod.

A motion relating to the business of a particular committee is usually considered immediately following the report of that committee (SO 32).

AMENDMENTS

Amendments, which must be delivered in writing to the Honorary Secretaries, may add, delete or alter words, but they must not completely negative the question at issue (SO 35). All amendments, except those considered in Committee, must be seconded but if seconded can only be withdrawn with the leave of the Synod. With the agreement of the Synod the mover of an amendment may alter it before any vote is taken upon it.

If amendments have been made, the amended motion becomes the substantive provision and further amendments may then be proposed before the substantive provision is put to the Synod for approval.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Under SO 51 members may ask for information about the business of a committee of the Synod or the Representative Church Body. There must be a clear day's notice of the question. The chairperson or other member of the committee replies to the request, or in the case of the RCB, the Chief Officer responds. Questions received over a week before the session are printed on the agenda and those received later are printed on a supplemental agenda. Questions should be handed to the Honorary Secretaries on a question form, or similarly, submitted in advance via the Assistant Secretary for inclusion in the Agenda. Question forms may be downloaded from the synod website or obtained from the Synod Department (a sample form also appears on page 17).

PETITIONS

A **petition** may be made by any member or members of the Church of Ireland who are at least 18 years old. It must be sent to the Honorary Secretaries not later than one week before the first day of session. SO 65 states that a petition must be presented to the Synod by a member and is then referred to the Petitions Committee, which considers it and reports its findings to the Synod. The form for a petition is available on the Synod website.

STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

The **Standing Committee** carries out the functions of the General Synod delegated to it by the Synod while the Synod is not in session. The **Constitution of the Standing Committee** and its **Powers and Duties** are appended to the Constitution of the Church of Ireland.

The Committee normally meets six times a year – in Church House, Dublin – with occasional special meetings. Its business is varied, including consideration of state legislation affecting the Church, financial matters, appointment of delegates to conferences, appointments to sub-committees, consideration of reports from sub-committees, Anglican Communion matters and inter-church business.

Membership of Standing Committee

The Standing Committee consists of 71 members taken from the membership of the General Synod. The members are:

- The Archbishop of Armagh (Chair)
- The Archbishop of Dublin
- The ten Bishops
- The four Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod
- Two clerical and two lay representatives from each of the twelve dioceses
(one under 45 and one 45 or over in each category)
- Seven co-opted members

The Synod elects the Standing Committee triennially by postal ballot. Clerical representatives for each diocese are elected by the clerical Synod members representing that diocese, and lay representatives by the lay members. The election results are reported to the Synod at the first session of the triennium and the co-opted members are elected at the first meeting of the new Committee.

Committees of the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee elects several **permanent committees** which report directly to it annually. These include:

- Central Communications Board and its two sub-committees: Broadcasting Committee and Literature Committee
- World Development – Bishops’ Appeal Advisory Committee
- Priorities Fund Committee
- Finance and Arrangements Sub-Committee
- Budget Sub-Committee
- Legal Advisory Committee

The Standing Committee also appoints **ad hoc committees** for specific tasks.

Annual reports of bodies reporting to the Standing Committee are included in the Book of Reports.

COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

Several **committees and boards** report directly to the Synod each year, including:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue | Church of Ireland Youth Department |
| Liturgical Advisory Committee | Church of Ireland Marriage Council |
| Commission on Ministry | Church and Society Commission |
| Board of Education | Secondary Education Committee |
| Council for Mission | Covenant Council |

The Synod may also appoint a **select committee** to carry out a particular task. Such committees are appointed for a specific period and must report to the Synod each year. One example of such a committee is the Select Committee on Human Sexuality in the Context of Christian Belief, which concluded its work in 2017.

REPRESENTATIVE CHURCH BODY (RCB)

The **Representative Church Body**, the main trustee body of the Church of Ireland, submits a report including audited accounts to the General Synod each year. The RCB's principal function is to hold property on behalf of the Church and to administer funds in accordance with the underlying trusts. Membership comprises the Archbishops and Bishops, one clerical and two lay representatives from each diocese and twelve co-opted members.

CHURCH OF IRELAND PENSIONS BOARD

The **Pensions Board** is responsible for the administration of the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Fund. The powers and duties of the Board are set out in the Constitution (Chapter XIV section 16). Membership of the Pensions Board includes representatives from the House of Bishops, the General Synod, the Representative Body and members or spouses of members of the Fund. The Board submits a report to the Synod each year, which is incorporated into the report of the Representative Church Body.

JOURNAL OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

Published annually, the *Journal of the General Synod* contains:

- Lists of Synod and committee members
- Standing Orders of the General Synod
- Proceedings of the General Synod
- Bills submitted to the Synod
- Resolutions and statutes adopted by the Synod
- Book of Reports

The *Journal* is published each autumn and copies are available from Church of Ireland House, Dublin. A full set of Journals published from 1870 to the present is available for inspection in the RCB Library in Braemor Park, Dublin 14.

APPENDIX

FORM FOR THE PROPOSAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO A BILL

GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

Amendment to Bill

To: The Honorary Secretaries

I propose the following amendment to Bill No. (insert number of Bill)

In Clause ____ (clause number)

(Details of amendment/removal/insertion/addition)

Proposer: _____ (name in block capitals)

Signed: _____ Diocese: _____ Date: _____

Seconder: _____ (name in block capitals)

Signed: _____ Diocese: _____ Date: _____

Notes:

1. An amendment must not have the effect of overturning the purposes of the Bill.
2. Amendments to the text of a Bill may only be moved at Committee Stage and the Report Stage.
3. A seconder is not required if the amendment is being moved at the Committee Stage.

APPENDIX

FORM FOR A PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION TO BE PRESENTED IN ADVANCE OF GENERAL SYNOD

GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

Private Member's Motion

Proposed by: _____ Diocese: _____

To the Honorary Secretaries:

I propose the following motion for the consideration of the General Synod in _____ from _ to _ May 201_:

Signed by (Proposer): _____ Date: _____

Please return this to the Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod, Church House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6

Please do not use this form for submitting motions while General Synod is in session.

It is not required for a motion to have a seconder for it to be proposed (though it may be helpful). The President may seek a seconder when the motion is put to the Synod.

APPENDIX

FORM FOR THE PRESENTATION OF A MOTION DURING GENERAL SYNOD

GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

Private Member's Motion

Proposed by: _____ Diocese: _____

To the Honorary Secretaries:

I propose the following motion for consideration under S31(d) of the Standing Orders of the General Synod:

Signed: _____ Diocese: _____

Date: _____

We the undersigned support the motion moved above:

Name: _____ Diocese: _____ Date: _____

NB: This form should be used for a motion being proposed while the General Synod is in session.

APPENDIX

GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

FORM FOR REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

To: The Honorary Secretaries

Under Standing Order 51, I request that the Chairperson of _____ supply the following information:

Signed: _____ Diocese: _____

Date: _____

NB: Under Standing Order 51, information can be requested with regard to the business of any committee either of the General Synod or of the Representative Church Body. It shall be the duty of the Chairperson of that committee (or another member) or the Chief Officer/Secretary of the Representative Church Body, to reply.

APPENDIX

STANDING ORDERS

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MAY, 1965

(amended 1970, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1979, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2009, 2011, and 2017)

GENERAL

1. The Holy Bible and the Book of Common Prayer shall lie on the table of the Synod Hall.
2. Each day's proceedings shall open with a reading from Holy Scripture and prayer, during which time the doors shall be closed.
3. The hours for the Synod when in ordinary session shall be as follows:

First day: 11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.; 2.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. or, if the first and second readings of all Bills sent to the members with the summonses have not then been concluded, until such later hour as the Synod shall determine.

Second day: 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.; 2.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.

Third day: 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.; 2.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. or such other hour as the Synod may determine.

Provided that:

- (a) The Standing Committee may by Resolution determine that –
 - i. the number of days of the Synod; and/or
 - ii. the hour at which the Synod shall commence on any day shall be otherwise than as stated above.
- (b) The Synod by Resolution assented to by at least two-thirds of the members of the House of Representatives present and voting thereon may (unless the Bishops present by a majority object) prolong the period of any sitting to such hour as may be named in such Resolution.

The hours for the Synod when in special session shall be specified in the notice convening the meeting.

4. (a) Notice of each ordinary meeting of the General Synod shall be sent by post to every member thereof at least 21 days before the day fixed for such meeting.
(b) Notice of each special meeting of the General Synod shall be sent by post to every member thereof at least 7 days before the day fixed for such meeting.
5. Every member shall be furnished with a card of admission by the honorary secretaries, to be presented at the door of the house: and without such card no person, save members of the Representative Body and its Chief Officer and Secretary, the assessors, and other officers of the Synod, and representatives of Churches invited by the General Synod or by the Standing Committee, shall be admitted to the body of the Synod Hall. Strangers may, on the introduction of a member, be admitted to the gallery, subject to such conditions in this behalf as may be laid down by the Synod. They shall not be admitted to the body of the Synod Hall unless by leave of the house.
6. Reporters shall be admitted to such part of the Synod Hall as the Synod may appoint except when the Synod shall exclude them by standing order or by an express vote.
7. Four honorary secretaries, two clerical and two lay, shall be elected by their respective orders from among their own members. Any casual vacancy may be filled by the Standing Committee provided always that the clerical or lay representative so elected by the Standing Committee shall be deemed to hold office only until the day previous to the next meeting of the General Synod.

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8. On the first day of each ordinary session the President shall appoint as Assessor a person having legal qualifications and experience of the form of government of the Church. The Assessor shall hold office until immediately prior to the following ordinary session and shall be eligible for re-appointment.
9. When the President shall have taken the Chair, no member shall continue standing, except when addressing the Chair.
10. No member shall pass between the Chair and a member who is speaking.
11. If it appear on notice being taken that a quorum is not present, the President shall thereupon adjourn the Synod, without question put, until an hour to be named by the President, or until the next day of meeting, as the President shall think fit.
12. A motion to suspend Standing Orders may be moved without notice and to be passed such motion shall require the consent of three-fourths of the members present and voting.
13. All questions of order and relevance shall be decided by the President.
14. The President shall regulate the proceedings of the Synod in all matters not provided for in these Orders by analogy to parliamentary practice.

RULES OF DEBATE

15. Every member desiring to speak shall rise and address the Chair, and when two or more members shall rise simultaneously to address the Chair the President shall decide which of them shall speak.
16. The President shall confine each speaker to the subject-matter of debate; it shall not be in order for any member to interrupt the speaker, except through the medium of the President.
17. Whenever the President rises during a debate, any member speaking or offering to speak shall sit down so that the President may be heard without interruption.
18. No speech of more than five minutes' duration shall be permitted except
 - (a) the proposer of the reports of the Standing Committee and the Representative Body, who may speak for fifteen minutes each; and
 - (b) the seconder of the reports of the Standing Committee and the Representative Body and the proposer of any other report or of any bill, who may speak for ten minutes;

provided that the President, having regard to the circumstances, including the gravity or complexity of the subject of the debate and the time available for the disposal of business, may decide that compliance with the above restrictions ought to be waived in regard to a particular speech.

19. The President shall leave the Chair when desiring to take part in a debate.

(Note - Appointment to the Chair - see appendix)

20. The proposer of a motion shall have a right of reply, but otherwise a member shall not be permitted to speak more than once on the same question except on the committee stage of a bill. The seconder of a motion or amendment may reserve the right to make a speech to any period of the debate.
21. Members of the Representative Body and its Chief Officer and Secretary shall be entitled to address the House on any question before it. Ecumenical guests shall be entitled to address the House on reports and motions, but shall not be entitled to address the house on bills. Only those who are members of the House shall be entitled to vote.'
22. Notice of motion for leave to bring in bills for specified purposes may be sent to the honorary secretaries of the Synod with the proposed bill at any time not less than one week before the day appointed for the opening of the session of the Synod, and shall appear on the Agenda for the first day of such session; provided that any bill which is lodged with the honorary secretaries not less than six weeks before the first day of the session shall be printed and sent to the members with the summonses.
23. On leave being asked to bring in a bill, the name or names of the member or members proposing to bring in the bill shall be stated and the name or names shall be printed with the bill.

24. (a) At the first ordinary session of each Synod a Bills Committee consisting of six members with the Assessor *ex officio* shall be elected to hold office until immediately prior to the first ordinary session of the following General Synod.
- (b) The Bills Committee shall meet prior to each session of the General Synod to consider legal and drafting aspects of the Bills being presented. The proposer of each Bill shall be notified of the date and place of meeting, and the proposer or the proposer's nominee shall be entitled to participate during the consideration of such Bill.
- (c) It shall be competent for the Synod to refer to the Bills Committee any amendments which may be proposed during the progress of a Bill through the Synod.
25. Bills shall be considered in the order of lodgement thereof with the honorary secretaries, save that bills introduced at the request of the Synod or the House of Bishops or the Standing Committee or the Representative Body or the Pensions Board shall have priority over other bills.
26. Where there are for consideration two or more bills dealing with the same subject matter, the President, if of the opinion that it is advisable so to do, may direct that the question be not put on the second reading of any such bills until there shall have been a debate on the second reading of the other or others.
27. Notice of any amendment proposed to a bill shall be given in writing to the honorary secretaries. (And see S.O.s Nos. 34 to 39.)
28. In the case of any Ordinary Bill which has been printed and sent to the members with the summonses, no amendment shall be considered, save with the leave of the Synod, unless it has been notified to the honorary secretaries on or before the Friday next preceding the session of the Synod; and in the case of such bill (not being a bill to which Standing Order 30 refers) the Synod, if it thinks fit, may proceed on the day of the first reading to the second reading and consideration in committee.
29. Procedure on Ordinary Bills (Ch. 1 sec. 25 of the Constitution) shall be as follows:
- (a) Introduction and First Reading
- The member moving for leave to introduce a bill shall be permitted to make a brief explanatory statement of not more than ten minutes' duration, and if the motion is opposed, a member opposing may make a statement in opposition of not more than ten minutes' duration. The member moving for leave may postpone making a statement until after the member opposing has spoken.
- Only the one speech in support of, and one in opposition to, the motion may be made, and the question shall then be put without amendment or further debate; provided that in the case of a bill proposed to be introduced at the request of the Synod or the House of Bishops or the Standing Committee or the Representative Body or the Pensions Board the resolution giving leave to introduce it shall be put without debate unless notice of intention to oppose the resolution has been given to the honorary secretaries of the Synod on or before the Friday next preceding the meeting of the Synod.
- Leave to introduce having been given, the bill shall be read a first time, without debate, and an order made fixing a day for the Second Reading.
- (b) Second Reading
- On the motion "That the bill be now read a second time", the debate, if any, shall be confined to the question whether the Synod approves the proposal in principle, matters of detail being postponed to the committee stage. The only amendment which may be moved to this motion is one proposing to delete all or some of the words after "That," and the substitution of words which state some reason against the bill being read a second time forthwith.
- The bill having been read a second time, an order shall be made fixing a day for consideration in Committee of the whole Synod.
- (c) Consideration in Committee
- The Committee of the whole Synod shall consider the bill, clause by clause, together with any relevant amendments which may be proposed, the preamble being taken last. The bill, with or without amendments, shall then be reported to the Synod and an order made fixing a day for consideration on report.

(d) Consideration on Report

On the order for consideration of a bill on report being read, the Synod may consider amendments which arise out of consideration on the committee stage and of which notice has been given the previous day: Provided that amendments rejected in committee shall not be in order. Amendments may also be made without notice if in the opinion of the President they involve merely matters of drafting or the correction of grammatical or clerical errors.

When the bill has received any relevant consideration, an order shall be made fixing a day for the third reading; provided that such order, together with that made under para. (c) above, must permit, unless the Synod otherwise direct, for a clear day being interposed between consideration in Committee and the third reading.

(e) Third Reading

On the motion “That the bill be now read a third time and passed,” any debate shall be confined to what is provided in the bill.

30. Procedure on Special Bills (Ch. 1 sec. 26 of the Constitution) shall be as for Ordinary Bills; provided that:

- (a) Leave to introduce such a bill may only be given at an ordinary session of the Synod; leave having been given, the bill shall be deemed to have been read a first time, but it shall not be processed further until the next ordinary session when it will come before the Synod for second reading. No amendment to such a Bill may be moved at the first reading stage, but notice of any such amendment must be given at this stage provided that written notice of any such amendment if received by the Honorary Secretaries within one calendar month of the end of this Ordinary Session shall be deemed to have been given at the first reading stage. Amendments, of which notice has been given at the first reading stage, may be moved at the committee stage, and no other amendment may then be moved except any dealing with omissions, grammatical or clerical errors.
- (b) Copies of the resolution giving leave to introduce shall be sent to each diocesan synod within one month after the ending of the session at which the resolution was passed.
- (c) The consent of not less than two-thirds of each order, present and voting, shall be required to pass the motions (i) for leave to introduce the bill, (ii) that the bill be now read a second time, and (iii) that the bill be now read a third time and passed, and
- (d) Debate on the motion that leave to introduce be given shall be governed by the rules of debate without the limitations imposed by S.O. 29(a).

MOTIONS

- 31.** (a) A notice of motion (other than a notice of motion referred to in (d) or (e) of this Order) shall be delivered to the Honorary Secretaries not less than one month before the day appointed for the opening of the session of the Synod at which the motion is to be moved.
- (b) A notice of motion duly delivered to the Honorary Secretaries in accordance with (a) of this Order shall be sent to the members of the Synod with the Summons for the Synod at which the motion is to be moved. Such notice shall also be printed on the agenda for the 1st day of such Synod, and may be taken into consideration without further notice.
- (c) A notice of motion shall be signed by the intended mover or by some member on the mover’s behalf.
- (d) A notice of motion received during a session of the Synod shall be read to the Synod by one of the Honorary Secretaries on such day as the President shall direct, but such motion shall not be taken into consideration until the next following session unless:
 - (i) it arises out of business already transacted at the session at which it is received, or
 - (ii) The President and a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting consent to its being taken into consideration at the session at which it is received.

If a motion is taken into consideration under (i) or (ii) it shall be taken into consideration on such day as the President shall direct.

- (iii) A Notice of Motion received during a Session of the Synod shall be signed by the intended mover with a written indication of support signed by five other members.
 - (iv) The full text of such a Motion shall be submitted in writing to the Honorary Secretaries, shall be read to the Synod by one of the Honorary Secretaries on such day as the President shall direct and printed copies of such Motion shall be made available for consideration by all members of the Synod as soon as possible after receipt from the person proposing the Motion and in any event not later than 12 noon on the final day of the Session unless in exceptional circumstances the President directs otherwise.
 - (v) All amendments to any such Motion shall be delivered in writing to the Honorary Secretaries and copies of such amendments shall be made available for consideration by all members of the Synod as soon as possible after receipt from the person tabling the amendment and in any event not later than 1.00 p.m. on the third day of the Synod unless the President shall direct otherwise.
 - (vi) Any such Motion which is not taken into consideration under (i) or (ii) above shall be sent to the members of the Synod with the Summonses for the next following Session.
- (e) A motion may be moved without notice by the unanimous leave of the Synod.
- 32.** Motions shall be set down in the order in which the notices were given, provided that motions relating to the same subject shall be taken consecutively and provided that motions relating to any committee or board or commission shall be taken in conjunction with the report of such committee or board or commission.
- 33.** A motion which does not propose that action be taken beyond its publication or transmission to certain persons shall not be moved unless the permission of the Synod has been previously obtained. When such a motion has been submitted the President shall put the question that leave be given to the member desiring to propose the motion to do so, and a vote shall be taken on this question without debate.
- 34.** No motion or amendment, except in Committee, shall be taken into consideration unless it be seconded; but, if seconded, it shall not be withdrawn without the leave of the Synod.

AMENDMENTS

- 35.** A question having been proposed may be amended (a) by leaving out specified words or (b) by inserting in lieu of specified words included therein other specified words, or (c) by adding or inserting specified words; provided that an amendment which is in effect a direct negative to the question may not be moved.
- All amendments shall be delivered in writing to the honorary secretaries.
- 36.** All amendments shall be put according to the priority of the words proposed to be inserted in or omitted from the clause under consideration, and, except by leave of the Synod, no amendment may be proposed in any part of a question after a later part has been amended.
- 37.** The question to be put in regard to any proposed amendment shall in all cases be whether the proposed amendment be made.
- 38.** (a) At any time before the question has been put in regard to any proposed amendment the mover thereof may with the leave of the Synod alter the terms thereof, but no other amendment to a proposed amendment shall be in order.
- (b) When an amendment has been made, the question thus amended becomes the substantive question and further amendments may then be proposed.
- 39.** Where amendments have been made, the main question as amended shall be put and where no amendments have been made the question shall be put as originally proposed.
- 40.** The Synod may order a complicated question to be divided.

ENFORCED CLOSURE OF DEBATE

- 41.** (a) At any time after a question has been proposed in the Synod, or in a Committee of the whole Synod, a member may claim to move "that the question be now put," and, unless it shall appear to the President that such a motion is an abuse of Standing Orders, it shall be put forthwith and decided without amendment or debate.

- (b) At any time after a question has been proposed in the Synod a member who considers that a vote on the question is undesirable may claim to move “that the Synod do now pass from this question to its next business,” and, unless it shall appear to the President that such a motion is an abuse of Standing Orders, it shall be put forthwith and decided without amendment or debate.
- (c) The proposer of a closure motion under (a) or (b) above may not interrupt a speaker to do so, and the President, before putting such motion, shall read the original motion (or the motion as amended as the case may be) which was being debated.
- (d) If a closure motion under (a) or (b) above is negated this shall not of itself preclude the proposal of (i) further amendments and (ii), at the discretion of the President, further closure motions, upon the subject in debate.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT OF DEBATE OR OF THE SYNOD

- 42. No discussion shall be permitted on a motion for adjournment; but the question shall be put immediately from the Chair, and decided by a show of hands on such motion, or by a division, if called for.
- 43. No adjournment of a debate or of the Synod may be moved if a similar motion on the same subject has been made within the preceding hour.

VOTING PROCEDURE

- 44. (a) When any question is to be put to the Synod or to a Committee of the whole Synod, the President shall rise and announce that “The question is that ...”, thereupon reading or stating the question, and shall require that as many as are of that opinion shall say “Aye” and as many as are of the contrary opinion shall say “No”. The President shall judge from the answers to such requests and state the result, as an opinion, of the putting of the question.
 - (b) After the President shall have stated the result, as an opinion, of the putting of any question, any member may call for a vote upon that question. If a vote is not called for, the President shall forthwith declare the result to be that which had been previously expressed as an opinion.
 - (c) When a vote is called for, it shall be taken by show of hands unless 20 members request a division; and the President, before calling for a show of hands, shall afford sufficient opportunity for requests to be made for a division or for a vote by orders.
 - (d) A vote by orders shall be taken if ten members of either order or the provisions of Ch. 1 sec. 25 of the Constitution so require, and such vote shall be by show of hands unless a division is requested by the requisite number of members.
 - (e) When a division is to be taken, an interval of five minutes shall be allowed after which the doors shall be closed and the question put a second time. The President shall appoint two tellers for each side and order the House to divide; whereupon every member of the House of Representatives present, and wishing to vote, shall record an opinion by passing into the lobby with the “Ayes” or with the “Noes”. At the conclusion of the voting the tellers, having added their own votes, shall report the result to the President, who shall communicate it to the Synod.
 - (f) No question shall be deemed to be carried in the House of Representatives unless, in the case of both orders voting together, there is a majority in favour of the same of the representatives voting thereon, or in the case of the votes being taken by orders there is a majority in favour of the same of the representatives of each order voting thereon. (But see S.O. 29(c) in the case of Special Bills.)
- 45. When a division is called for, it shall be taken, notwithstanding that the time may have arrived at which, according to standing orders, the Synod ought to adjourn, or proceed to some other business.

(Note - Voting by bishops in Synod - see appendix)

COMMITTEES OF THE SYNOD

- 46. All committees of the Synod appointed at one session, and ordered to report at the following session of the Synod, shall lay their report upon the table within the first two days of the session, accompanied by such resolutions as may be necessary.

47. The Synod may order any resolutions, presented by committees upon the first day of the session, to be taken into consideration without further notice.
48. When a motion for the appointment of a committee is carried, the mover thereof shall then, or at the next meeting of the Synod, move the appointment of the members proposed to serve on the Committee, one of whom shall be named as convener. The name of the mover of the resolution for the Committee shall be included in the list of proposed members, provided that this shall not be obligatory when the resolution has been moved on behalf of the House of Bishops, the Standing Committee or the Representative Body.
49. No committee shall, without leave of the Synod, consist of more than fifteen members. Each Committee shall appoint its own chairperson.
50. Every report of a committee requiring action shall be accompanied by a resolution or resolutions for the consideration of the Synod, and the mere adoption by the Synod of a report of a committee shall not be an authority for the expenditure of money.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

51. If any member ask for information with regard to the business of any committee, either of the Synod or of the Representative Body, it shall be the duty of the chairperson of such committee, or of some other member thereof or of the Chief Officer and Secretary of the Representative Body, if so requested, to reply: Provided that at least one clear day's notice of such question shall have been given. The terms of all such requests received by the Honorary Secretaries not less than one week before the first day of a session of the Synod shall be printed on the agenda for the said first day. Any such requests shall be answered on each day of the session at 2 p.m. or as soon thereafter as may be practicable.

ALLOCATION OF MONEY IN THE HANDS OF THE R.C.B.

52. No resolution relating to the allocation of money in the hands of the Representative Body other than (a) money to the credit of the General Purposes Fund, or (b) for the payment of the expenses of the Synod and its committees shall be put to the Synod until a report from the Representative Body on the subject shall have been first obtained.

SEPARATE CONSIDERATION BY BISHOPS OF ANY MATTER IN DEBATE

53. When the bishops shall express their wish to consider separately any matter in debate, and upon such separate consideration shall think fit to communicate to the Synod their opinion upon such matter, the communication so made shall be inserted in the printed orders of the day, and shall come before the Synod in due course for its consideration.
54. If the communication so made shall relate to a bill previously discussed in committee, and then awaiting its third reading, the publication as aforesaid of such communication shall of itself have the effect of re-committing the bill for further consideration upon the subject of such communication, but for no other purpose.

(Note - Voting by bishops in Synod - see appendix)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

55. Prior to each session of the Synod the honorary secretaries shall prepare an agenda paper which shall include (a) all items required by the Constitution or Standing Orders to be discharged by the Synod, (b) all items which the Synod at a previous session has directed to be included, and (c) all bills, reports and notices of intention to propose motions or amendments which have been received by them by the appointed date. Motions relating to any committee, board or commission shall be placed on the agenda paper in conjunction with the report of the appropriate committee, board or commission.
56. On the first day at such time as the President shall deem appropriate and in any event not later than 12 noon, the Synod shall consider a motion or motions to be presented by the honorary secretaries with the approval of the President to allocate the time available under Standing Order 3 between the items listed on the agenda paper. In allocating the Synod's time the Honorary Secretaries shall bear in mind that the first priority of the Church of Ireland is spiritual not material. On the adoption of such motion or motions (with or without amendments) business shall be conducted in accordance therewith. Such motion or motions shall include provision of not less than two hours each for consideration of the reports of the Standing Committee and the Representative Body.

57. The minutes of the proceedings of the session as certified by the honorary secretaries shall be presented to the next meeting of the Standing Committee and shall be confirmed by the signature of the chairperson.

CONSIDERATION OF THE GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH

58. On any day of meeting it shall be open to any member, at an hour when motions have precedence, to move that in priority to all other motions the Synod shall proceed to take into consideration the general state of the Church, its progress, prospects and needs. Such motion shall be put without discussion.
59. On such motion being passed, any subject then brought forward by any of the bishops shall have precedence of all others.
60. During such consideration neither strangers nor reporters shall be admitted to any part of the Synod hall or gallery.
61. Such consideration, if not sooner concluded, shall automatically cease at the expiration of one hour, unless prolonged by a special vote.
62. It shall not be necessary for a member bringing forward any subject to conclude with a resolution.
63. A separate record of the proceedings during such consideration shall be kept, and shall be authenticated by the signature of the President before the resumption of the business of the Synod.
64. During such consideration the discussion shall be regulated by the President, whose decision shall be final in all matters not provided for in the foregoing orders.

PETITIONS

65. A petition in writing may be made by any person or persons of the age of 18 years or upwards being a member or members of the Church of Ireland. Such petition shall be sent to the honorary secretaries of the Synod not later than one week before the day appointed for the meeting of the Synod. Any such petition shall be presented to the Synod by a member thereof and shall be referred to the Petitions Committee which shall be elected at the first session of each Synod.

APPENDIX

VOTING BY BISHOPS IN SYNOD

Procedure relative to voting by the bishops at meetings of the General Synod is in accordance with the provisions contained in the following sections of Chapter I of the Constitution:

20. If at any time the bishops express their wish to consider separately any matter in debate, the further discussion of that matter shall be postponed until the bishops shall have had the opportunity of so doing.
21. The bishops shall vote separately from the representatives, and no question shall be deemed to have been carried unless there be in its favour a majority of the bishops present, if they desire to vote, and a majority of the clerical and lay representatives present voting conjointly or by orders: Provided always, that if a question affirmed by a majority of the clerical and lay representatives present and voting, conjointly or by orders, but in favour of which there shall not be a majority of the bishops, shall be re-affirmed at the next ordinary session of the General Synod, by not less than two-thirds of the clerical and lay representatives present and voting conjointly or by orders, it shall be deemed to be carried, unless it be negated by not less than two-thirds of the then members of the House of Bishops, the said two-thirds being present and voting, and giving their reasons in writing.
22. The bishops shall not vote until after the declaration of the votes of the clerical and lay representatives. If they desire to vote, the bishops may withdraw from the General Synod for that purpose, and may reserve the declaration of their vote until the following day.

APPOINTMENT TO THE CHAIR

Procedure relative to the appointment to the Chair at meetings of the General Synod is in accordance with the provisions contained in the following section of Chapter I of the Constitution:

18. The President may exercise discretion in inviting any member of the House of Bishops to take the Chair for such period during a session as the President may determine; and the person so taking the Chair shall have, and may exercise, all the powers and functions conferred by Standing Orders on the President.

VENUE FOR THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

In the Standing Orders of the General Synod the expression 'Synod Hall', wherever it occurs, shall be deemed to include the room in any building in which, for the time being, the General Synod of the Church of Ireland is meeting in Ordinary or in Special Session.