

GENERAL SYNOD 2018

Bill No.6

Proposer: Mr Joc Sanders

**Embargoed Against Delivery
Check Against Delivery**

The two United Dioceses of Limerick and Killaloe and Tuam, Killala and Achonry have continued their conversations exploring unification since General Synod 2017.

Progress has been good. Both diocesan councils have affirmed their desire to unite subject to (a) a satisfactory conclusion to the discussions, (b) agreement of General Synod and (c) subsequent ratification by both diocesan synods. We now expect to progress to a Bill to unite the dioceses at General Synod 2019, subject to subsequent ratification by both diocesan synods. The union would take effect when next there is an episcopal vacancy in either united diocese.

If an episcopal vacancy were to arise between now and General Synod passing such a Bill, and the two diocesan synods ratifying the act arising from the Bill, the Constitution would require an episcopal election, which could delay progress to the uniting of the dioceses. We want to avoid this possibility.

We have been assured that neither bishop intends to depart anytime soon – but none of us knows the day nor the hour.

The purpose of this Bill is to be an insurance policy against such an unexpected episcopal vacancy. If passed, it will temporarily suspend the constitutional requirement for an episcopal election in either united diocese until September 2019. It also permits Standing Committee to extend the suspension at the request of both dioceses, but not beyond September 2020. I suggest this Bill should be seen as uncontroversial, and I propose that it should be read a second time.