

Bill No 4**Explanatory Memorandum**

Although wordy, this Bill has a very simple purpose, namely to ensure that those who act as parochial nominators at a time of vacancy have within their ranks a measure of gender balance. One of the aspirations of the Hard Gospel process was to increase the participation of women in the counsels of the church, and this Bill would ensure that at a time of great importance in the life of a parish neither gender was left unrepresented. At present all of the parochial nominators could be male or (less frequently) all female and this Bill aims to eliminate such a situation which would not be permitted in modern appointment procedures in any other professional context. Priests who are female should not encounter parochial nominators who are all men, and priests who are male should not encounter nominators who are all female. This adjustment to the method of selecting nominators should not cause inconvenience even in extensive parochial groups, where for the specific purpose of appointing nominators a group of parishes functions as a single unit and is deemed to be akin to a union in accordance with Chapter III section 29 of the Constitution.

THE BISHOP OF CASHEL, FERNS AND OSSORY
THE VENERABLE ANDREW ORR

BILL

To amend Chapter IV of the Constitution

WHEREAS it is desirable that the parochial nominators for each cure should include at least one woman and at least one man;

AND WHEREAS for this purpose it is necessary to amend Chapter IV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland;

BE IT ENACTED by the Archbishops and Bishops and by the clergy and laity of the Church of Ireland in General Synod assembled in Dublin in the year 2014 and by the authority of the same, as follows: -

1. In this Statute, 'Chapter IV' means Chapter IV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland.

2. In Chapter IV, section 5 (1) shall be amended to read;

5 (1) At the Easter vestry in the year 2017 and in every third year thereafter, the registered vestry members of each parish, parochial district or union or group of parishes under one incumbent, and, in the case of chapels without districts, the registered vestry members of such chapels

- (a) shall elect the requisite number of qualified persons to be parochial nominators for the said parish, of whom at least one shall be a woman and at least one shall be a man, and
- (b) shall then elect by ballot an equal number of persons to be supplemental nominators, of whom at least one shall be a woman and at least one shall be a man. The names of the supplemental nominators so elected shall be placed in order on a list in accordance with the number of votes received; in any case of equality of votes the order upon the list shall be determined by lot. Any vacancy in the number of parochial nominators shall be filled by the person whose name stands highest on the list of supplemental parochial nominators unless such action would result in the parochial nominators all being men or would result in the parochial nominators all being women, in which case the qualified person whose name stands nearest to the top of the list shall fill the vacancy.

3. In Chapter IV, section 6 (1) shall be amended to read

(1) Upon the occurrence of a vacancy, by death or otherwise, in the number of the parochial nominators during their period of office which cannot be filled by a supplemental nominator, the registered vestry members shall, at a special general vestry duly convened in accordance with the provisions of Chapter III, elect a qualified person to fill such vacancy and shall also fill any vacancies in the list of supplemental nominators provided only that the parochial nominators must at all times include at least one man and at least one woman, as must the list of supplemental nominators.

4. In Chapter IV, section 7, shall be amended to read

7. In the event of a general vestry failing to elect nominators, or to supply a vacancy in their number within two months after its occurrence, it shall be competent for the diocesan council to appoint nominators, or to supply such vacancy; provided that the person or persons so appointed shall hold office only until the next Easter vestry, when the registered vestry members shall be at liberty to fill the vacancy, and provided also that at all times at least one of the nominators shall be a man and at least one a woman.

5. In Chapter IV, section 8 (3) shall be amended to read

(3) If a nominator or supplemental nominator fails to comply with the provisions of sub-section (2) of this section, the bishop shall order a new election for a nominator or supplemental nominator as the case may be; Provided that the bishop shall have power to extend the time for such compliance if it be certified to the bishop that the failure to comply has been caused by absence or other unavoidable circumstances; and Provided also that in ordering any fresh election the bishop shall ensure that at least one parochial nominator shall be a man and at least one a woman, and at least one supplemental nominator shall be a man and at least one a woman.

6. In Chapter IV, section 9 shall be amended to read

9. Whenever a vacancy in a cure of souls shall occur, if the bishop, after communicating or endeavouring to communicate with the parochial nominators, has reason to believe that any one or more of them is unable, by reason of illness, absence or other reasonable cause, to take part in the proceedings for filling the said vacancy, the bishop shall direct that a supplemental nominator shall be summoned and shall act in the place of each absent parochial nominator in such proceedings, until the said vacancy has been filled. The supplemental nominators shall be summoned in their order as returned by the vestry, unless the effect of such action would result in all those acting as parochial nominators being men or if such action would result in all of those acting as parochial nominators being women, in which case the bishop shall summon the qualified supplemental nominator whose name stands highest on the list returned by the vestry.

7. Nothing in this statute shall affect the parochial nominators and supplemental nominators elected at the Easter Vestry of 2014 who shall remain in office until the Easter Vestry of 2017. Any vacancies that occur in the parochial nominators and supplemental nominators elected at the Easter Vestry of 2014 shall be filled in the manner provided for had this statute not been adopted.