

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

GENERAL SYNOD 2015

BILL No 5

To amend the Statute, Chapter VI of 2011

The Very Revd Gregory Dunstan
Diocese of Armagh

Embargoed until Delivery

Bishop,

Since at least 1201, the Diocese of Armagh, like every diocese of the Church of Ireland, has had an archdeacon. As in other dioceses, the Archdeacon of Armagh is a member of the Cathedral Chapter and has a stall in the Cathedral.

Last year, the Armagh Diocesan Synod resolved to establish a second archdeaconry; to which Standing Committee has consented. The archdeaconry is named after the ancient monastic site of Ardboe, on the western shore of Lough Neagh, which contains the finest Celtic figure-carved cross in Ulster. We now have, therefore, an Archdeacon of Armagh and an Archdeacon of Ardboe – but only the former has a stall in the Cathedral. As the Cathedral is governed by a Statute of General Synod, we ask General Synod to amend it to remedy the deficiency.

This is about more than avoiding discrimination between archdeacons, colleagues in ministry. A cathedral chapter's origins lie in the ancient bishop's *'familia'*, his 'household', his staff of clergy. As diocesan responsibilities grew, the liturgical and administrative life of the Cathedral was devolved to a dean and chapter, but with the archdeacon, the senior cleric in the diocesan administration, retaining a stall. A cathedral chapter, then, is a body of senior clergy, appointed by the bishop, often with significant roles in the diocese themselves. (Until recently, ours included the Provincial and Diocesan Registrar, both honorary clerical secretaries of Diocesan Synod, four rural deans, and the Diocesan Director of Ordinands.) With the bishop, the members of the chapter represent the unity of the diocese; they are a resource in the mission of the diocese. As the bishop's deputy in the diocese, the archdeacon must be among them. We therefore ask General Synod to amend the Armagh Cathedral statute, so that the Archdeacon of Ardboe may be given a stall in the Cathedral and a voice in the Chapter.

One consequential adjustment is necessary. The Armagh Cathedral Board consists of the Dean and Chapter, and one other cleric, ten in total, balanced by ten lay members. Of the laity, six are elected by the Cathedral Vestry, four by the Armagh Diocesan Council. If we add to the membership of the Chapter, we must also add another lay member to the Cathedral Board. As an archdeacon's responsibilities are primarily in the diocese, we believe that the appointment of the additional lay member of the Board should be by the Diocesan Council.

Bishop, I propose that the Bill be given a second reading.

Gregory Dunstan
30th April 2015