**BOUNDARIES BILL**

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM – DRAFT 23 March 2016**

By Statute Chapter II of 2012, the General Synod established the Commission on Episcopal Ministry and Structures to prepare proposals for the provision of episcopal ministry and structures adequate for the needs, and compatible with the resources, of the Church of Ireland. The Statute Chapter II of 2014 extended the time available for the Commission to do its work until the termination of the ordinary meeting of the General Synod in 2016.

Section 5 of the 2012 Statute stated that, "For the purposes of the final scheme presented to the General Synod, as provided by this Statute, there shall be vested in the General Synod as regards all dioceses affected by the scheme, all the powers and functions of the respective diocesan synods concerned under section 31 of Chapter I of the Constitution."

Having consulted widely and considered all aspects of its remit carefully and prayerfully, the Commission now proposes this Bill providing for alterations in the territorial arrangements of provinces and dioceses and for the establishment of an Implementation Committee to assist in bringing the new arrangements into operation. This is the final scheme presented to the General Synod by the Commission.

The Bill proposes changes in provincial and diocesan boundaries, summarised as follows:

- There will be eleven dioceses rather than twelve, six in the Province of Armagh and five in the Province of Dublin.
- In accordance with section 31 of Chapter I of the Constitution, the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin have given their consent to the alterations in provinces: the transfer of the Dioceses of Tuam and Killala from the Province of Armagh to the Province of Dublin.
- The Dioceses of Tuam and Killala (without Achonry) will be united with the Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe to form a new diocese in the West, under one bishop who shall be based in Limerick. This union will come into effect when either the See of Tuam, Killala and Achonry or the See of Limerick and Killaloe is or becomes vacant after the end of the meeting of the General Synod in 2017, with the remaining Bishop assuming episcopal duties for the newly united dioceses at that date. This diocese will be in the Province of Dublin.
- At the same date, the Diocese of Achonry will be separated from the United Dioceses of Tuam, Killala and Achonry (as it now is) and will be joined with the United Dioceses of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh. This diocese will be in the Province of Armagh (as are its constituent parts at present).
- Six cures – Leixlip and Lucan; Celbridge and Straffan with Newcastle-Lyons; Blessington and Manor Kilbride with Ballymore-Eustace and Hollywood; Donoughmore and Donard with Dunlavin; Narraghmore and Timolin with Castledermot and Kinneigh; and Athy, Kilberry and Fontstown with Kilkea) – will be separated from the Diocese of Glendalough (Dublin and Glendalough) and join the Diocese of Kildare (Meath and Kildare). This will come into effect on or after the end of the meeting of the General Synod in 2017, on a date to be determined.

***Bill to alter the existing territorial arrangements of the two provinces under the government of their respective Archbishops and of the several dioceses under the government of their respective Bishops and for associated matters.***

WHEREAS by Statute of the General Synod, Chapter II of 2012, the Commission on Episcopal Ministry and Structures was appointed to prepare proposals on episcopal ministry and structures for submission to the General Synod;

AND WHEREAS for the purposes of the final scheme presented to the General Synod, as provided by section 5 of that Statute, there are vested in the General Synod as regards all dioceses affected by the scheme, all the powers and functions of the respective diocesan synods concerned under section 31 of Chapter I of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland;

AND WHEREAS the said final scheme comprises the arrangements and associated matters contained herein;

AND WHEREAS the Archbishop of Armagh and the Archbishop of Dublin have consented to the transfer of the dioceses of Tuam and Killala from the Province of Armagh to the Province of Dublin;

BE IT ENACTED by the Archbishops and Bishops and the Clergy and Laity of the Church of Ireland, in General Synod assembled in Dún Laoghaire in the year 2016, and by the authority of the same, as follows:-

PART 1

1. In this Statute, "the effective date" shall mean such date after the termination of the ordinary meeting of the General Synod held in the year 2017 upon which a vacancy shall exist in either the See of Tuam, Killala and Achonry or the See of Limerick and Killaloe.

2. On the effective date, the Diocese of Achonry shall be separated from the United Dioceses of Tuam, Killala and Achonry and joined with the United Dioceses of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, under one Bishop.

3. On the effective date, the Dioceses of Tuam and Killala shall be transferred from the Province of Armagh to the Province of Dublin.

4. (1) On the effective date, the Dioceses of Tuam and Killala shall be united with the United Dioceses of Limerick, Ardfert, Aghadoe, Killaloe, Kilfenora, Clonfert, Kilmacduagh and Emly under one Bishop who shall be the remaining Bishop of the two former united dioceses, that is to say, the Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe and the Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry.
   (2) Subject to any agreement to the contrary by the diocesan synod or synods concerned, the See constituted under subsection (1) of this section shall be generally known as "Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe".

5. (1) If the See of Limerick and Killaloe shall become vacant before the termination of the ordinary meeting of the General Synod held in 2017, the Archbishop of Dublin shall make such arrangements as he may deem necessary for the supervision and pastoral care of the vacant dioceses until the succession of the Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry on the effective date

in accordance with section 4 of this Statute, and no episcopal election for the See of Limerick and Killaloe shall be held pending that succession.
(2) If the See of Tuam, Killala and Achonry shall become vacant before the termination of the ordinary meeting of the General Synod held in 2017, the Archbishop of Armagh shall make such arrangements as he may deem necessary for the supervision and pastoral care of the vacant dioceses until the succession of the Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe on the effective date in accordance with section 4 of this Statute, and no episcopal election for the See of Tuam, Killala and Achonry shall be held pending that succession.

6. (1) On a date to be determined in accordance with subsection (2) of this section, the following parishes and cures in the Diocese of Glendalough shall be transferred from that Diocese to the Diocese of Kildare: Leixlip and Lucan; Celbridge and Straffan with Newcastle-Lyons; Blessington and Manor Kilbride with Ballymore-Eustace and Hollywood; Donoughmore and Donard with Dunlavin; Narraghmore and Timolin with Castledermot and Kinneigh; and Athy, Kilberry and Fontstown with Kilkea.
(2) The date of transfer for the parishes and cures named in subsection (1) of this section shall be such date after the termination of the ordinary meeting of the General Synod held in 2017 as may be determined by the Standing Committee, having consulted with the Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough and the Bishop of Meath and Kildare.

7. (1) An Implementation Committee ("the Committee") shall be established to provide assistance and advice to the Standing Committee and to Bishops, diocesan synods and diocesan councils affected by the provisions of this Statute.
(2) The Standing Committee shall draw up terms of reference and appoint the members of the Committee and the Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod shall convene the first meeting of the Committee as soon as may be practicable.
(3) Casual vacancies on the Committee shall be filled by the Standing Committee.
(4) The Committee shall report to the ordinary meeting of the General Synod held in 2017 and at such meeting the General Synod may reappoint, reconstitute or dissolve the Committee.

PART 2

8. From the effective date, each Province of the Church shall contain the following dioceses or groups of dioceses and each such diocese or group of dioceses shall be united under the jurisdiction of a single bishop:

*Province of Armagh*

Armagh
Clogher
Derry and Raphoe
Down and Dromore
Connor
Kilmore, Elphin, Ardagh and Achonry.

*Province of Dublin*

Dublin and Glendalough
Meath and Kildare

Cashel, Waterford, Lismore, Ossory, Ferns and Leighlin
Cork, Cloyne and Ross
Tuam, Killala, Limerick, Ardfert, Aghadoe, Killaloe, Kilfenora, Clonfert, Kilmacduagh, and Emly.