

## GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

**Subject:** Human Sexuality in the Context of Christian Belief (Amendment to Bishops motion)

**Proposed by:** Andrew McNeile (Dublin)

**Seconded by:** Very Revd Nigel Dunne (Cork)

That the fourth paragraph of the motion be replaced with the following:

The Church of Ireland recognises for itself and of itself, only its inherited understanding of marriage as is provided for in the totality of Canon 31:

1. The Church of Ireland affirms, according to our Lord's teaching that marriage is in its purpose a union permanent and life-long, for better or worse, till death do them part, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side, for the procreation and nurture of children, for the hallowing and right direction of the natural instincts and affections, and for the mutual society, help and comfort which the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.

2. Every member of the clergy who is approached with a view to solemnising a marriage is required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the state in which the marriage is to take place and must comply also with such Church of Ireland Marriage Regulations as may be provided.

3. (a) Any member of the clergy who is approached with a view to solemnizing a marriage between parties either of whom has been party to a ceremony of marriage with another person still living shall, if unwilling to perform the ceremony, so inform the parties immediately.

(b) No member of the clergy shall agree to solemnize a marriage between parties either of whom has been a party to a ceremony of marriage with another person still living unless such member of the clergy has first sought the bishop's opinion as to the advisability of solemnizing the marriage of the couple concerned.

(c) The member of the clergy concerned shall consider and take into account the opinion of the bishop in exercising the discretion, vested in members of the clergy by law, as to whether or not to solemnize the marriage concerned.

4. It shall be the duty of the member of the clergy concerned to make available to the bishop, in such a form as may be prescribed by regulation, all the information, in so far as the member of the clergy shall obtain it, which the bishop shall require in order to form an opinion.

5. The bishop shall be entitled to seek and take into account such pastoral or other advice from such persons and in such manner as the bishop may think fit. The bishop shall at least consult, and take into account, the advice of the incumbent of the parishes to which either of the parties to the proposed remarriage belongs, and also the incumbent of the parish in which it is proposed to conduct the ceremony of remarriage. The advice of such person or persons shall be confidential to the bishop.

6. The opinion of the bishop shall as soon as practicable be communicated by the bishop to the member of the clergy concerned. In cases where a decree of nullity has been granted on grounds acceptable to the Church of Ireland, the bishop shall declare that the applicant is ipso facto free to marry in church. In other cases, in which the bishop shall

give a favourable judgement, the bishop shall prescribe that the member of the clergy concerned conduct a private service of preparation for remarriage in church with the parties involved (in such a form as may be provided by regulation) before the solemnization of matrimony may take place.

The Church of Ireland teaches therefore that faithfulness within marriage is the only normative context for Sexual Intercourse. Members of the Church of Ireland are required by the Catechism to keep their bodies in ‘temperance, soberness and chastity’. Clergy are called in the ordinal to be ‘wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Jesus Christ.’

Signed (proposer) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (seconder) \_\_\_\_\_

Decision of Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

This \_\_\_\_ day of May 2012.