

Statute of the General Synod

Chapter XV of 2003

**THE CONSTITUTION
OF THE
CHURCH OF IRELAND**

AS SET OUT IN THE FIRST SCHEDULE TO THE SAID
STATUTE
and
AN APPENDIX

comprising

The standing orders of the General Synod,

The provisions relating to the constitution, duties and powers of the Standing Committee and the Board of Education of the General Synod,

Section twenty of the Irish Church Act, 1869 (as operative),

Sections two, three, four, five and eight of the Glebe Lands, Representative Church Body, Ireland, Act 1875,

Sections one to five of the Trustee Churches (Ireland) Act, 1884, and

Index to the provisions of the Constitution

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PREFACE

In the fifteen years since the last consolidation of the Constitution in 1988 there have been substantial changes not least in respect of clergy pensions where ten statutes have effected further improvements in the scheme for the provision of pensions for clergy and for the surviving spouses of deceased members of the Clergy Pensions Fund.

Probably the single most significant change in the Constitution since 1988 has been that effected in 1990 when provision was made to permit the ordination of women to the priesthood and to the episcopate. It is appropriate, therefore, that this edition of the Constitution should be drafted in inclusive language.

The Standing Committee of the General Synod decided that a consolidation Bill should be submitted to the General Synod of 2003; this Bill was passed and became the Statute Chapter XV of 2003. It has followed the precedent of earlier such statutes; the former edition of the Constitution is repealed with effect from 1st October 2003 and the new edition of the Constitution, as contained in the First Schedule to the Statute, will come into effect on that date. The provisions of the Constitution are preceded, as before, by the Preamble and Declaration adopted by the General Synod in 1870.

As the consolidation Bill could not include any change of substance the Standing Committee, in anticipation of this consolidation, authorised the introduction of two other Bills to make miscellaneous amendments to the provisions of various Chapters of the Constitution; these are Statutes Chapter IX of 2002 and Chapter XIV of 2003 and their provisions have been incorporated into the text. Hence the text as it appears in the First Schedule is up to date.

Each of the last five editions of the Constitution contained an Appendix which included the Standing Orders of the General Synod, the Constitutions of the Standing Committee and the Board of Education and extracts from certain relevant Statutes. This, the thirteenth edition of the Constitution, contains a similar Appendix revised in inclusive language.

The index has been revised and simplified.

The process of adopting inclusive language throughout the Constitution entailed painstaking work. While responsibility in the Parliamentary sense rests with the Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod and the Legislation Committee, they wish recognition to be given for their work and commitment to Mr John Buttimore, Miss Elaine Whitehouse and Mr Derek Phillips, Synod Officer, and to Mrs Claire Burrows, whose legal expertise proved invaluable

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STATUTE

To consolidate enactments in regard to the Constitution.

WHEREAS it is expedient to consolidate enactments of the General Synod in regard to the Constitution of the Church of Ireland and for that purpose to repeal the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, 1988 (save as regards the Preamble and Declaration prefixed thereto and the Rules annexed to Chapter XIII thereof), as amended by subsequent Statutes of the General Synod.

BE IT ENACTED by the Archbishops and Bishops and the Clergy and Laity of the Church of Ireland in General Synod assembled in Dublin in the year 2003, and by the authority of the same as follows:

1. From and after 1st October 2003 the several provisions contained in the first Schedule to this Statute shall be in force in the Church of Ireland and the said Schedule shall be read and construed as part of this Statute.

2. In the said Schedule and in any Statute amending the same

the term "Constitution" shall mean the said Schedule with such amendments thereof as from time to time for the time being shall be in force;

the term "Statute" shall mean a Statute of the General Synod;

the term "Representative Body" shall mean the Body to represent the Church of Ireland and to hold property for the uses and purposes thereof called in the Irish Church Act, 1869, the Representative Body of the said Church;

wherever the context so admits the word "diocese" shall include any diocese or united diocese or united dioceses under the jurisdiction of one bishop;

the term "member of the clergy" or "clergy" shall, unless otherwise specifically provided, mean a deacon or priest of the Church of Ireland or of a church in full communion with that Church.

3. From and after 1st October 2003 the several Statutes and portions of Statutes mentioned in the second Schedule to this Statute shall be and the same are hereby repealed: Provided always that such repeal shall not invalidate or affect any act or thing heretofore done or any right or liability heretofore acquired or incurred under or in pursuance of the provisions hereby repealed.

FIRST SCHEDULE

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

PREAMBLE AND DECLARATION

ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL CONVENTION IN THE YEAR 1870

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen: Whereas it hath been determined by the Legislature that on and after the 1st day of January, 1871, the Church of Ireland shall cease to be established by law; and that the ecclesiastical law of Ireland shall cease to exist as law save as provided in the "Irish Church Act, 1869", and it hath thus become necessary that the Church of Ireland should provide for its own regulation:

We, the archbishops and bishops of this the Ancient Catholic and Apostolic Church of Ireland, together with the representatives of the clergy and laity of the same, in General Convention assembled in Dublin in the year of our Lord God one thousand eight hundred and seventy, before entering on this work, do solemnly declare as follows:

I

1. The Church of Ireland doth, as heretofore, accept and unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as given by inspiration of God, and containing all things necessary to salvation; and doth continue to profess the faith of Christ as professed by the Primitive Church.
2. The Church of Ireland will continue to minister the doctrine, and sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded; and will maintain inviolate the three orders of bishops, priests or presbyters, and deacons in the sacred ministry.
3. The Church of Ireland, as a reformed and Protestant Church, doth hereby reaffirm its constant witness against all those innovations in doctrine and worship, whereby the Primitive Faith hath been from time to time defaced or overlaid, and which at the Reformation this Church did disown and reject.

II

The Church of Ireland doth receive and approve **The Book of the Articles of Religion**, commonly called the Thirty-nine Articles, received and approved by the archbishops and bishops and the rest of the clergy of Ireland in the synod holden in Dublin, A.D. 1634; also, **The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the use of the Church of Ireland; and the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons**, as approved and adopted by the synod holden in Dublin, A.D. 1662, and hitherto in use in this Church. And this Church will continue to use the same, subject to such alterations only as may be made therein from time to time by the lawful authority of the Church.

III

The Church of Ireland will maintain communion with the sister Church of England, and with all other Christian Churches agreeing in the principles of this Declaration; and will set forward, so far as in it lieth, quietness, peace, and love, among all christian people.

IV

The Church of Ireland, deriving its authority from Christ, Who is the Head over all things to the Church, doth declare that a General Synod of the Church of Ireland, consisting of the archbishops and bishops, and of representatives of the clergy and laity, shall have chief legislative power therein, and such administrative power as may be necessary for the Church, and consistent with its episcopal constitution.

SECOND SCHEDULE

STATUTES REPEALED

Statutes of 1988:	Chapter III (save as regards the Preamble and Declaration prefixed to the first Schedule).
Statutes of 1989:	Chapters II and III.
Statutes of 1990:	Chapters III, IV, V and VI.
Statute of 1992:	Chapter III.
Statute of 1993:	Chapter I.
Statutes of 1994:	Chapters I and II.
Statutes of 1995:	Chapters I and II.
Statutes of 1996:	Chapters III and IV.
Statute of 1997:	Chapter I.
Statutes of 1998:	Chapters I and II.
Statutes of 1999:	Chapters III, IV and V.
Statute of 2001:	Chapter V.
Statute of 2002:	Chapter IX.