



CHURCH of IRELAND GENERAL SYNOD
CHURCH in SOCIETY COMMITTEE

CHAIRPERSON'S RESPONSE TO THE DEATH SENTENCE OF SADDAM HUSSEIN

When a dictator is finally convicted, the death sentence can seem to many the only adequate conclusive punishment. The crimes for which Saddam Hussein stands condemned are in all probability not the only crimes committed by him and his regime deserving adequate punishment. It is important that the justice process continue in what is still a fledgling democracy and that other sufferers and victims are not deprived of visible justice. The impact of death by hanging of Saddam Hussein on wider efforts to create and sustain a stable infrastructure in Iraq needs to be weighed seriously. So also does its impact on those who hitherto have supported him. They too must be participants in the new future.

The Role of the Church Committee in 1990, reporting to General Synod, warned against vengeance as sufficient motivation in punishment. My own view is that the death sentence denies the dignity of the human person, no matter how degraded a human individual has become through his or her own actions. I therefore do not agree with its being applied in the case of Saddam Hussein.