



Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants

A Council of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference



Emigrant Parish Resource Pack 2011

Contents

1. Contents
2. Introduction to Emigrant Resource Pack
3. Prayer of the Faithful
4. Insert for parish bulletin
5. Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants
6. Emigration Statistics
7. Homily Notes
8. The SIA Campaign
9. Prayers for Emigrants
10. Poster

Introduction to Emigrant Parish Resource Pack

A Phobal Dé,

As a consequence of the serious downturn in the economy, increasing numbers of Irish men and woman are again leaving our shores in the hope of making a new life for themselves and their families. Their departure leaves a void in our lives - as families and parish communities. It is important that we as Church come together to remember and pray for our emigrant population.

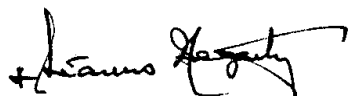
We hope this Resource Pack will assist you in raising awareness of the issues affecting Irish emigrants and to ask for the prayers and support of parishioners. It is also an opportunity for the Church to inform the laity of the good work being done and show solidarity with those who have 'lost' loved ones to emigration.

I encourage you to make use of the resources contained in this pack in reaching out to the people of your parish on the issue of emigration and the various challenges it brings with it.

If the Council for Emigrants can be of any assistance to you in your ministry, please contact our office in Maynooth. I also encourage you to visit our website www.catholicbishops.ie/migrants.

With every good wish

Yours sincerely,



†Séamus Hegarty
Bishop of Derry
Chair of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction *(by the Presider)*

Let us bring our petitions before God, confident that our prayers are always heard.

Intercessions *(announced by the deacon, cantor or another person)*

1. We pray that the leaders of the Church will be guided by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, hear us.

2. We pray that young people, inspired by the example of Patrick, may courageously take up the missionary challenges of our age as joyful witnesses of the gospel. We pray that Ireland and its people may always treasure their Christian heritage.

Lord, hear us.

3. We pray that those who have travelled from other lands to make Ireland their home may be warmly welcomed into our communities and may they enrich us with their presence and their gifts.

Lord, hear us.

4. We pray for Irish people all over the world, that they may enjoy God's favour. We remember especially those who are lonely and those who cannot return home.

Lord, hear us.

5. We pray for families, who are without a loved one through emigration.

Lord, hear us.

6. We pray that those who have died receive the crown of righteousness that is reserved for them. We remember in a special way all our Irish brothers and sisters who have died far from their homeland.

Lord, hear us.

Conclusion *(by the Presider)*

Heavenly Father, we thank you for our faith and the life and example of St Patrick. Hear the prayers we now make, in the name of Jesus, your Son, who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

Insert for Parish Bulletin

Today we are asked to remember in our prayers those who have emigrated. Many of you reading this will no doubt have been touched by the sense of loss that comes with a loved one emigrating.

While much has changed in recent decades, the cycle of emigration continues, and approximately 1,000 Irish men and women are now emigrating each week.

We ask you to remember in a special way those emigrants whose journey has been a difficult one, particularly the elderly Irish in Britain, our undocumented in the United States and Irish prisoners overseas.





Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants

The Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants (IECE) was founded in 1957 and is the response of the Irish Bishops' Conference to the needs of emigrants prior to and following departure. It shows the caring face of the Church and is particularly committed to the needs of the vulnerable involuntary emigrant. It strives to be a significant voice on behalf of emigrants - seeking to develop and initiate services which will give practical expression to their concerns for the vulnerable emigrant; research the ongoing needs of Irish emigrants; and create awareness of these needs, at home and abroad.

The plight of Irish emigrants in Britain was brought to the attention of the Irish Bishops in the mid 1950's by a group of Columban priests working in Manchester. Following their appeal and the obvious need - the Irish Bishops' Conference asked that priests be released to minister to this wave of Irish emigrants. Initially the work involved celebrating the Sacraments; however more and more attention was paid to the living and working conditions of these emigrants, many of whom were on the verge

of destitution. The response was formalised by the Irish Bishops' Conference in 1957 when it set up the Irish Chaplaincy Scheme in Britain. This response was replicated in the United States in the mid eighties when large numbers of young Irish left Ireland in the hope of a brighter future and again in Australia in more recent times.

The IECE is particularly concerned for those emigrants whose journey has been a difficult one. During the Supporting Irish Abroad (SIA) campaigns of 2004, 2005 and 2006, the donations made by so many Irish people, provided funding for various front-line, outreach services. We are especially mindful of the elderly-Irish emigrant community, our undocumented in the United States and Irish prisoners overseas. Funding has been primarily focused on these most vulnerable categories of Irish emigrants. The generosity of parishioners throughout Ireland has helped sustain the work of the IECE today, as we continue to highlight the longstanding problems facing generations of Irish emigrants.

Emigration Statistics

- Much attention has been given to the sharp rise in the rate of emigration – particularly amongst young people – after the Central Statistics Office announced that the number of people leaving Ireland had risen 81 per cent in four years.
- Outward migration is now at its highest level since the 1980s according to the CSO's September 2010 report and Irish people account for approximately 42 percent of emigrants between April 2006 and April 2010. Recent estimates have indicated that Ireland has one of the highest emigration rates in the EU with a net outflow of nine per cent per 1000 inhabitants.
- The equivalent of the entire population of Galway city will emigrate from Ireland over the next 12 months.
- Net outward migration is forecast to be 100,000 over the two year period April 2010 to April 2012. The highest rate of net outflow in the 1980s occurred in 1989 when the rate reached 44,000. Hence, the forecast for an average annual net outflow of 50,000 is high in historic terms, albeit against a larger population base. *ESRI, Quarterly Economic Commentary, Winter 2011.*
- Canada issued 4,229 one year working visas to Irish people in 2010. It is expected that this figure will reach 5,000 or possibly 6,000 in 2011.
- There are approximately 50,000 undocumented Irish living in the United States.

Homily Notes

We come together today to pray for those close to us who have emigrated – be they newly departed or those who emigrated many years ago. While their absence has left a void in our lives, may we draw strength and comfort from one another. There is an old Irish proverb which holds “Ar scath a cheile a mhaireas na daoine.” – translated it means: “It is in the shelter of each other that the people live.”

Our National Patron, Saint Patrick shared something in common with many of the great prophets in Sacred Scripture. Abraham, Elijah, Moses and Saint Paul all experienced revelations of God’s mysterious and unfathomable love while on journeys. Today, we pray for all who travel in search of hope and blessing. We think particularly of our own people who have found new lives in far flung shores. May they, like so many people in Scripture, and in the previous generations before them, discover the rich mystery of God’s salvific purpose and know the peace and support that Saint Patrick found for his life. May they be sustained and nourished and may they enrich those they come in contact with. We also thank God for the blessings that are bestowed on our land by the presence of so many people from the many countries, backgrounds and traditions that we are privileged to witness in everyday life but more particularly when we worship together.

As we come together to pray for our relatives and friends who have emigrated, let us reflect on some of the journeys people take.

We know that many of today's emigrants are, in some ways, better equipped than those of previous generations. They are media and technology savvy. They have mobile phones, laptops, iPods and iPads, they can Skype, email and text. Also, comparatively speaking, travel is much cheaper than in years gone by.

However, it would be incorrect to think that such technological advances could in some way address the needs of the whole person. A person’s faith can take on a special role when living far from home. It provides a wonderful opportunity for migrants to come together with others to worship, it creates a strong bond and a supportive network to soften the isolation of emigration. While their circumstances and locations may change, God’s love is a constant for them to hold on to.

Also, we must never lose sight of, or forget, those emigrants whose journey has been a difficult one. For a multitude of reasons, some Irish emigrants today can still find themselves isolated, vulnerable and alone. Mindful of their generosity to their homeland in years past, it is right that we, as a State, a Church and a people, look to support them and to travel with them on all stages of their emigrant journey. May these vulnerable emigrants tangibly benefit from Pope Benedict XVI 2009 invitation to all God’s people to: ‘love to the full without making any kind of distinction and without discrimination, in the conviction that any one who needs us and whom we can help is our neighbour (cf. Deus Caritas Est, n. 15). May the teaching and example of St Paul, a great and humble Apostle and a migrant, an evangelizer of peoples and cultures, spur us to understand that the exercise of charity is the culmination and synthesis of the whole of Christian life.’

When one of our family members emigrate, it can be difficult for those of us left behind. It is at times like this we are reminded of the importance of family. We pray that despite the distances, we can share in our loved one’s journey and that the strong bonds of family will be nurtured and maintained.

The SIA Campaign

I was a stranger and you welcomed me - Matthew 25:35

A major part of our Biblical history focuses on God's people exiled from their home land - 'How can we sing a song to the Lord in a foreign land?' Ps 137:4.

The acronym SIA is a Gaelic word meaning 'longer' or 'farther'. The aim of the campaign was to reach out to our brothers and sisters abroad through awareness, prayer and funding. The migrant chaplains and agencies, working daily with the Irish community abroad were well aware of the needs of Irish emigrants. The campaign was launched by Bishop Séamus Hergarty, Bishop of Derry and Chair of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants (IECE) on 21st of February 2004, at a function in the London Irish Centre, Camden Town. The SIA campaigns of 2004, 2005 and 2006 raised much needed funds (approx €1.6 million) which are channelled through chaplaincies and agencies to pastoral outreaches that are always overstretched. The vast majority of this fund has now been utilised. The IECE on behalf of those chaplaincies and agencies owe a deep debt of gratitude to the parishes and dioceses that supported the SIA campaign and subsequent emigration collections.

These are just a few examples of how SIA funding was used:

Irish Chaplaincy in Britain – Older Persons Project

There are approximately 44,530 older Irish people in London alone. There is no other ethnic group in London with a higher age profile. The Chaplaincy's Older Person's Project supports and cares for some of the most vulnerable and isolated of these older Irish people.

SIA grants have enabled the Project to continue to provide its important outreach in challenging financial times; to acquire match funding, to increase the number of elderly Irish visited and the number of visits made, through the use of volunteer visitors.

London Irish Centre - Youth Resettlement Project

Within the London Irish Centre's range of services, the Youth Resettlement Project provides vital safety and support for the growing numbers of young Irish people forced to leave Ireland for economic or other reasons. Too many young people arrive in London ill-prepared for life there. They often do not have the means to sustain themselves for an initial period before obtaining work and accommodation.

The SIA grant has been used to support the employment of a full-time Youth Resettlement Worker. This post-holder helps vulnerable young emigrants in a variety of ways, including; accessing emergency housing, setting up National Insurance numbers and bank accounts, accessing training and employment, accessing health services, achieving benefit entitlements, and sometimes by returning them to safety in Ireland.

The Hibernian Society, Reading, UK

The Hibernian Society operates a Day Centre based at the Reading Irish Centre, providing lunches and other services to the elderly Irish community living in Reading. It also provides transport to and from the Centre for those unable to access public transport. Between July 2009 and June 2010 they provided 4141 lunches.

The SIA grant subsidises the rent payable to the Reading Irish Centre and funds other services such as a Chiropodist and a hairdresser. This is of particular benefit to those elderly Irish who would not otherwise be able to access these services – due to mobility and financial issues. The SIA grant enables the Hibernian Society to continue to provide emotional support and ongoing social outlets for the elderly Irish community in Reading.

Prayers for Emigrants

Lord,
Some may know the bleakness of life,
its capacity to disappoint,
the waning of energy or health.
Yet they have a place in the soul which time cannot touch,
a wisdom and beauty from lives deeply inhabited.
May all of them know the warmth of their soul,
the natural shelter around their lives.
In dignity and freedom may they return home to themselves.

Lord,
Bless all those who have left our country and now live in other lands.
Give them a strong faith so that they will always put their trust in you and make you known
by the example of their lives.
Console those who are lonely because they are separated from those they love.
Help all missionaries who are working far from home to make your love known.
Bless our people overseas who are sick or in prison.
We pray for foreigners living in our country that they may experience our hospitality.
Grant your eternal welcome to our emigrants who have died and to all the dead.

Leckpatrick Parish, Derry Diocese

Prayers of an Irish Mother

Here is a short prayer from the classic collection 'Prayers of an Irish Mother'. Prayers for emigrants were an integral part of Irish prayer books during the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. Prayers of an Irish Mother is still in print.

For our loved ones far away

St. Colmcille,
who suffered the pain and grief of exile,
watch over the children of Ireland,
scattered throughout the world.
Obtain for them solace and courage,
and keep them true to God
in every trial and temptation.



“Ar scath a cheile a mhaireas na daoine.”

It is in the shelter of each other that the people live



Remembering our Emigrants:

Those close to us who have emigrated
Those whose journey has been a difficult one
Those who died far from their homeland



Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants

Columba Centre, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

Phone: 00 353 (0) 1 5053155

Email: emigrants@iecon.ie Web: www.catholicbishops.ie/migrants

