

# Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants Emigrant Collection 2017



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## A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP JOHN KIRBY

Emigration continues to have a significant effect on our society as thousands of people travel abroad in search of new opportunities, leaving behind loved ones and creating a void in Irish families and parish communities.

Over 150,000 Irish citizens left Ireland in the last four years and more than 300,000 people of all nationalities left our shores during that time.

As a Church and a people we must continue to reach out to those who are affected by emigration. We remember and pray for all Irish people overseas, those who have left our shores for the first time and those who have been away for many years. We remember the families they have left behind and pray that they will find strength and comfort as they cope with the pain of separation. We also remember those who have travelled from foreign lands to begin new lives in Ireland and pray that they will receive the same welcome that we would wish for our own emigrants far from home.

Since 1957 the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants has been responding to the needs of Irish emigrants around the world. We remain committed to the needs of vulnerable emigrants and remember in particular the elderly Irish community overseas and the undocumented Irish people living in the United States. We also remember those who are imprisoned abroad and the work of the Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas, which helps to ease the burden facing prisoners and their families.

In addition to practical assistance, emigrants need spiritual and emotional support. I commend those who work tirelessly to assist Irish emigrants of all generations, particularly the Irish chaplaincies in Britain, Australia, France and the United States. They provide essential pastoral outreach to Irish emigrants as they strive to build a new life far from home.

I wish to thank all those who generously support the collection for emigrants each year. This funding allows us to offer essential support to those providing pastoral outreach to the most marginalised and vulnerable groups of Irish emigrants.

Críost linn

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Kirby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Kirby  
Bishop of Clonfert  
Chair of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants

## **THE COUNCIL FOR EMIGRANTS**

The Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants (IECE) was founded in 1957 and is the response of the Irish Catholic 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, researching the ongoing needs of Irish emigrants, and creating 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-1950s by a group of Columban priests working in Manchester. Following their appeal and the obvious need, the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference asked that priests be released to minister to this wave of Irish emigrants. Initially the work involved celebrating the sacraments; however, over time, 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 Catholic 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-1980s and again in Australia in more recent times.

The Council for Emigrants is particularly concerned for those emigrants whose journey has been a difficult one. We are especially mindful of the elderly Irish emigrant community, our undocumented in the United States and Irish prisoners overseas. Donations made by many Irish people over the years have provided funding for various front-line, outreach services. Funding has been primarily focussed on the most vulnerable categories of Irish emigrants. The generosity of parishioners throughout Ireland helps sustain the work of the Council for Emigrants today, as we continue to highlight the long-standing problems facing generations of Irish emigrants.

## **EMIGRATION STATISTICS**

The number of Irish people leaving Ireland remains high, despite improvements in the economy and a fall in unemployment.

Figures published by the Central Statistics Office in August 2016 show that 35,300 Irish people emigrated in the twelve months prior to April 2016, a drop of 2,100 on the previous year.

A total of 76,200 people of all nationalities left Ireland during the same period, 4,700 fewer than the year before.

With the improvement in the Irish economy the numbers of emigrants returning to Ireland is increasing – up by 8,900 on the previous year.

Irish nationals continue to experience net outward migration, although at a much lower level than in the previous year, falling from 23,200 to 10,700, while net inward migration among non-Irish nationals grew for the fourth year in a row.

The UK continues to be the most popular destination for emigrants of all nationalities leaving Ireland, with 16,600 choosing to make it their new home – a decrease of 2,600 on last year.

Coinciding with the changes in the visa application process, 10,700 Irish citizens availed of Canadian work visas. This equates to nearly a 40 per cent increase in the number of visas issued in the past twelve months.

Conversely, Australia yet again experienced a drop in popularity amongst Irish emigrants, with just 6,200 moving there from Ireland, down from 7,500 the previous year.

The number of Irish women emigrating outnumbered men by 40,300 to 35,900.

## **EMIGRANT COLLECTION**

Funds raised through the emigrant collection are used to support the work of the Council for Emigrants and other projects that provide pastoral outreach to Irish emigrants of all generations.

What follows is some examples of organisations awarded grants by the Council of Emigrants last year.

## **IMMIGRANT COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY (ICAP)**

icap was established in 1996 in response to a clearly identified need for counselling support for members of the Irish community in the UK. The charity began in the back room of St Mellitus Church in Finsbury Park, north London, before moving to a purpose-built clinical centre in 2007. icap then opened a second centre in Birmingham in 2008.

icap's main activity is the provision of individual and group counselling and therapy. They provide this service at their London and Birmingham clinical centres, and via their four satellite therapy services at partner agencies in London and Birmingham. They also provide a national therapy service for adult survivors of institutional abuse via a network of therapists around the UK. Secondary activities include the provision of supervision and training for other agencies within the Irish community, and awareness raising on issues of well-being and the impact of childhood adversity.

A grant from the Council for Emigrants enabled icap to continue and expand Hearth, their pilot programme of therapy at home for vulnerable Irish migrants in London and Birmingham, and to initiate a support programme for Irish people affected by memory loss, and their families.

## **IRISH APOSTOLATE USA (IAUSA)**

The Irish Apostolate USA is the response of the Irish and American Catholic Bishops to the needs of Irish immigrants in the United States.

The role of the Irish Apostolate USA is to be an umbrella organisation for the other Irish immigration, pastoral and outreach centres that liaises with the Irish Catholics Bishops, Conference, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Irish government, other Catholic organisations and other immigration entities. It

currently supports pastoral centres in Boston, San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Seattle, Maryland and San Diego.

Specific grants were provided to the IAUSA to help maintain, promote and oversee the mission and vision of the IAUSA and its member centres in caring for the needs of Irish emigrants in the United States.

The IAUSA provides support for two full-time chaplains as well as three part-time chaplains. An important goal of the IAUSA board is to extend pastoral supports to dioceses where centres do not exist currently, but where there is a significant population of Irish emigrants (e.g. Atlanta and Austin).

The IAUSA board also attends meetings of the US Conference of Bishops and other immigrant organisations to advance the needs of the undocumented Irish and to highlight the close cultural ties between the United States and Ireland.

## **OCEAN CITY IRISH STUDENT OUTREACH**

Ocean City Outreach provides assistance and support to Irish students who travel there on J-1 visas. A team of local volunteers offer a comprehensive orientation and a range of information supports and practical services including: social security numbers access and information, information leaflets, housing, employment, a hotline that students call to get assistance with urgent problems, legal services – information and referrals, practical assistance with incidental items for apartments and much more.

A grant from the Emigrant Collection allowed Ocean City Outreach to cater for the increase in students seeking their assistance, including responding to a number of emergency issues (health/medical, death at home) that arose during the summer.

## THE EMIGRANTS FAREWELL AND THE EMIGRANTS PRAYER

This poem and prayer was presented by Maria Tilley to her son John in Australia on 28 July 1854.

Fare thee well, dear Isle of Ocean,  
All ye weeping friends farewell;  
Oh, who can the wild emotion,  
Of our parting sorrow tell?  
Yet One above will safely guide,  
Our passage through that swelling tide.

Though we're called from home to sever,  
And to tread a foreign land;  
Though, dear Father, we for ever  
Lose thy kind and guiding hand –  
Parent and Guardian, staff and stay,  
The Lord shall guard and guide our way.

And, dear Mother, broken-hearted,  
When thy sheltering arms we leave;  
If, when far from thee departed,  
Even thou shouldst cease to grieve;  
Still, there is one who never yet,  
Absent, or distant, can forget.

Fare ye well, sweet sisters, nearest,  
Hath in kindred and in soul;  
Fare ye well, kind brothers dearest,  
Though the sea between us roll,  
Yet One there is at our side,  
Closer than brother will abide.

May God save thee, Isle of Ocean!  
Country of our birth, farewell!  
Although waves in wild commotion  
High around our vessel swell,  
The Lord shall keep his little band,  
Safe in the hollow of his hand.

O Jesu, Saviour! when we part  
Obedient to thy will,  
From friends and home with sinking heart  
Do thou be near us still!

Go with us Lord our vessel guide  
Across the pathless sea,  
And grant, whatever we leave beside  
We never part with thee.

Oh go with us!  
appoint our lot,  
And lead us on our way  
Companion in the loneliest spot,  
Light in the darkest day.

Go with us Lord, our labour bless  
Our basket and our store,  
And o'er the distant wilderness  
The streams of mercy pour.

If clothed and fed and sheltered there  
We rich abundance find,  
Oh, let, not withhold a share  
from those we leave behind.

And grant whenever our wanderings cease  
Wherever our home we raise  
That home may be a home of peace  
A home of prayer and praise.

Maria Tilley



### IRISH EPISCOPAL COUNCIL FOR EMIGRANTS

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