

EMIGRANT INFORMATION PACK 2013



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Disclaimer: The Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants (IECE) is affiliated with the Irish Chaplaincy in Britain, the Irish Apostolate USA and the Irish Chaplaincy in Sydney. The IECE is not affiliated with any other organisation or website mentioned in this publication and cannot be held responsible for the content or material contained within.



Introduction to the Emigrant Information Pack 2013

Between April 2011 and April 2012 over 87,000 people left our shores in the hope of making a new life for themselves abroad. This amounts to almost 250 people a day, over half of them (46,500) Irish nationals.

These figures highlight the dramatic effect emigration has on Irish society today. We have returned to a situation where many people are forced to travel abroad in search of new opportunities. These emigrants leave behind loved ones, many of whom find the pain of separation very difficult to cope with.

Of course, for many people, living abroad will be a positive experience, allowing them to gain valuable life and work experience. Many of today's Irish emigrants are well-educated, highly skilled and eager to take on the challenge of building a new life overseas.

Sadly, the experience will not be so enjoyable for everyone and some emigrants may struggle to fit in to a new culture and find it difficult to cope with feelings of loneliness and isolation. It is essential that emigrants are prepared for the experience, and the importance of remaining within the legal system of the host country cannot be emphasised enough. We hope that the practical information in this pack will assist emigrants in making informed decisions and support them while they are away.

This information pack also aims to raise awareness of the effect of emigration on Irish communities. To that end we have focused on the small village of Cooraclare in County Clare, which has been significantly affected by the current wave of emigration. We would like to thank members of this community who kindly shared their experiences with us.

This year is set to be an interesting one in relation to issues affecting Irish emigrants. It appears that significant immigration reform will be achieved in the United States, hopefully providing pathways to citizenship for thousands of undocumented Irish. The Gathering Ireland offers an opportunity for us to connect with our diaspora and to reflect on what emigration has meant for Ireland, past and present.

For over fifty years the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants (IECE) has responded to the needs of Irish emigrants around the world. In 2013 we will continue to offer important support to emigrants and their families.

Message from Bishop John Kirby

CHAIR OF THE IRISH EPISCOPAL COUNCIL FOR EMIGRANTS

Emigration is an issue that sadly affects most Irish families. As a priest and bishop who ministers in the west of Ireland, I have repeatedly witnessed the pain and grief families suffer when a loved one is forced to leave their home to seek a better life abroad. While the experience of emigration has improved in many ways, the sense of loss remains the same.

As we prepare to celebrate St Patrick's Day, we remember and pray for those who have left Ireland for the first time and those who have been away for many years. In particular, we remember those who may be struggling as they adjust to life in a foreign land. We also remember in prayer families who suffer the pain of separation and may find it difficult to cope with the loneliness.

We also pray for an improvement in the difficult economic situation we currently face. While some Irish people may choose to work abroad, the reality is that many people currently facing emigration have no other employment option. Our new emigrants are forced to leave behind their loved ones because of circumstances outside of their control.

The loss of so many intelligent, well-educated, enthusiastic young people creates a void in Irish families and communities. It is our hope that as the economy recovers, those who were forced to emigrate will have the opportunity to return home if they so wish.

As a Church we need to do all we can to remember and support our emigrants, particularly those who find themselves vulnerable, isolated and alone. I commend those who are committed to caring for Irish emigrants abroad, particularly the Irish Chaplaincy in Britain, the Irish Apostolate USA, the Irish Chaplaincy in Sydney and the Irish Chaplaincy in Paris. The pastoral support they provide is essential for Irish emigrants of all generations.

We should not underestimate the challenges facing Irish emigrants today and we must continue to reach out to these emigrants and their families to remind them they are not forgotten or alone.

Críost linn.



John Kirby
Bishop of Clonfert
Chair of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants
March 2013

The Irish Episcopal 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 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 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 IECE 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. During the Supporting Irish Abroad (SIA) campaigns of 2004, 2005 and 2006, the donations made by many Irish people provided funding for various front-line, outreach services. Funding has been primarily focused on the most vulnerable categories of Irish emigrants. The generosity of parishioners throughout Ireland helps sustain the work of the IECE today, as we continue to highlight the longstanding problems facing generations of Irish emigrants.



The Supporting Irish Abroad (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 homeland: '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 SIA campaign was to reach out to our brothers and sisters abroad through awareness, prayer and funding. The campaign was launched by Bishop Séamus Hegarty, Bishop of Derry and Chair of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants, on 21 February 2004. The SIA campaigns of 2004, 2005 and 2006 raised much-needed funds (approximately €1.6 million), which were 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, owes a deep debt of gratitude to the parishes and dioceses that supported the SIA campaign and subsequent emigration collections.

Here are some examples of how SIA funding has been used over the last year:

ICAP (IMMIGRANT COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY)

ICAP provides high-quality counselling and psychotherapy to help people heal their lives and deal with emotional trauma, depression and risk of suicide. Originally founded to meet the needs of Irish immigrants in Britain, ICAP continues to support the Irish community as well as people from other communities. It operates two clinical centres and also provides therapy at partner organisations and through a network of therapists across Britain.

A grant from the SIA fund will assist ICAP in establishing a new, innovative service specifically for the next wave of Irish immigrants in Britain.

CHICAGO IRISH IMMIGRANT SUPPORT

Chicago Irish Immigrant Support (CIIS) aims to help immigrants and seniors adjust to life in the United States with a specific focus on Chicago, Illinois and the twenty states that make up the United States Midwest. CIIS achieves this through its three-tiered focus: (1) to deliver direct immigration and legal services; (2) to advocate for immigration reform; and (3) to offer social services and crisis management for elderly citizens in distress.

A grant from the SIA fund will allow CIIS to deliver a series of immigration workshops to the newest wave of Irish immigrants.

Emigration Statistics

A report released by the Central Statistics Office in September 2012 estimates that between April 2011 and April 2012 overall emigration increased to 87,100, and 53% (46,500) of those who emigrated were Irish nationals.

During this period there was an increase in emigration to the US and the 'Rest of World', while there was a small decrease in emigration to the UK. An estimated 19,000 people emigrated to the UK; 8,600 emigrated to the US; 24,000 emigrated to the EU; and 35,600 emigrated to the 'Rest of World'.

Preliminary CSO figures show that 35,800 of those who emigrated were in the 15–24 age group and 39,500 were in the 25–44 age group. The number of Irish men emigrating increased from 24,500 to 26,000 and the number of Irish women emigrating increased from 17,500 to 20,600.

In the United Kingdom, 15,900 National Insurance numbers were granted to Irish citizens in the twelve months to March 2012.

The quota for Irish participants in the 2013 International Experience Canada initiative is 6,350 and this quota was filled less than four days after applications opened. The quota for participants will increase to 10,700 in 2014.

Between July 2010 and July 2011 there was a net loss of 3,200 people leaving Northern Ireland (21,700 in and 24,900 out).



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Emigrating to the United Kingdom

Despite a small decrease in the number of people who emigrated to the United Kingdom last year, it remains the most popular destination for Irish emigrants.

VISA

One of the biggest advantages of moving to the UK is that you do not need a visa to live and work there; however, it is necessary to obtain a National Insurance number if you wish to work or claim benefits in the UK. A National Insurance number is a reference number for the whole social security system. It ensures that the National Insurance contributions and tax you pay are properly recorded. You will need to give your National Insurance number to your employer. Call Jobcentre Plus on +44 845 600 0643 to apply for a National Insurance number. Lines are open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday.

ACCOMMODATION

One of the biggest challenges people face in moving to the UK, and to London in particular, is trying to find good accommodation at an affordable price. Landlords often request two references – a personal reference and a reference from a previous landlord. You should have these documents and a deposit ready so you can act quickly when you find a property you like. Tenants are usually required to pay a deposit of one month's rent. You should ask to see a tenancy agreement before paying out any money. It is recommended that people do not arrive in the UK with the intention of applying for social housing as it may take months just to get on a waiting list.

EMPLOYMENT

If possible, you should begin your job search before you leave for the UK. Start by sending out your CV to get an idea of the jobs available in your sector. Recruitment agencies may be useful depending on the industry. There are many job websites and this can be a good place to begin your search.

HEALTH INSURANCE

If you are ordinarily resident in the UK you will be entitled to free National Health Service (NHS) hospital treatment. You are ordinarily resident in the UK if you are lawfully entitled to be in the UK and you usually live there. You will also have the right to be registered with a GP, but it is up to a GP to decide whether to accept someone onto their list of NHS patients. You may be asked to show that your stay in the UK has a degree of permanence.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU GO

- » Research job opportunities and begin sending out your CV;
- » Identify several areas where you may find suitable accommodation;
- » Bring sufficient funds to live on until you get paid and to cover additional expenses like rent deposits;
- » Bring several forms of identification – passport, driving licence, birth certificate;
- » Bring references from previous employers and landlords;
- » Read the London Irish Centre's guide for people moving to London. It is available on their website: www.londonirishcentre.org



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- » Contact Jobcentre Plus to arrange an interview to get a National Insurance number;
- » Make contact with a local Irish advice service as they can assist with problems relating to housing and employment;
- » Register with employment agencies;
- » Register with a local GP;
- » Open a bank account – this may take some time if you do not have proof of address and you need to check what form of ID will be accepted by a particular bank;
- » Meet people by getting involved in a local activity like a sports team or theatre group;
- » Register with your local parish and ask if there are other Irish people in the area.

USEFUL CONTACTS

The Irish Chaplaincy in Britain

50–52 Camden Square, London NW1 9XB

Phone: +44 20 7482 5528

Website: www.irishchaplaincy.org.uk

Irish Embassy in London

17 Grosvenor Place, London SW1X 7HR

Phone: +44 20 7235 2171

Website: www.embassyofireland.co.uk

The Federation of Irish Societies

Phone: +44 20 7697 4081

Website: www.irishinbritain.org

The London Irish Centre

50–52 Camden Square, London NW1 9XB

Phone: +44 20 7916 2222

Website: www.londonirishcentre.org

ICAP (Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy)

96 Moray Road, Finsbury Park, London N4 3LA

Phone: +44 20 7272 7906

Website: www.icap.org.uk



Emigrating to the United States of America

It is hoped that significant immigration reform will be achieved in the United States this year, thereby creating pathways to citizenship for thousands of undocumented Irish people. Another priority for Irish lobbyists is the introduction of an E3 visa, which would allow 10,500 Irish people to work legally in the US for two years.

VISA

Obtaining a visa is one of the most challenging parts of emigrating to the US. It is vital that you have a valid visa and only remain in the US as long as your visa permits. Working without a visa may lead to arrest, detention, deportation and a bar from re-entering the US.

NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS

A non-immigrant visa allows you to visit, work or study in the US for a temporary period of time. The Visa Waiver Program allows an Irish citizen to travel to the US without a non-immigrant visa provided you are travelling for business, pleasure or transit only and you are staying in the US for 90 days or less.

There are a number of non-immigrant visas available, including the following:

- » Student (F-1 Visa): a student who wishes to attend a university or other academic institution in the US requires an F-1 Visa;
- » Summer Work Travel Program (J Visa): this programme allows college students enrolled in a full-time course of study to come to the US to work and travel during their summer holidays;
- » Intern Work and Travel Program (J Visa): this programme allows Irish students and recent graduates to participate in internships and travel in the US for up to 12 months.

You must apply through an approved sponsoring organisation;

- » Temporary Worker (H Visa): the US does not issue work visas for casual employment. To take up a pre-arranged temporary job in the US you must get a petition-based temporary worker visa.

IMMIGRANT VISAS

If you wish to live in the US permanently you will need to obtain an immigrant visa. This applies even if you do not plan to work in the US. Usually you can only receive an immigrant visa if someone (an employer or family member) files an immigrant visa petition on your behalf. There are several categories of immigrant visa:

- » Sponsorship by an Immediate Relative: applies to a spouse of a US citizen; an unmarried child under 21 years of age of a US citizen; an orphan adopted abroad by a US citizen; an orphan to be adopted in the US by a US citizen; and a parent of a US citizen who is at least 21 years old;
- » Sponsorship by a Family Member: applies to brothers and sisters of US citizens; adult or married sons and daughters of US citizens; and a spouse of a US permanent resident;
- » Sponsorship by a Prospective Employer: this begins with the potential US employer filing a Form I-140 immigrant visa petition for the worker.



ACCOMMODATION

The price of accommodation can vary dramatically depending on where you are living. Big cities like New York, Chicago and Boston can be expensive. Apartments are generally rented unfurnished so you will need to include money for furniture in your budget. Many landlords will require you to pay the first month's rent and a deposit in advance.

EMPLOYMENT

When looking for a job you should contact any friends or family you have in the US. Making contact with the local Irish community is also a good way of networking. You should prepare a one-page résumé specifically for the American market. Make sure your résumé is simple and clear and can be understood by American employers.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Medical treatment can be very expensive in the US so it is important that you have adequate health insurance. If possible try to get a job that includes healthcare coverage. Visit www.healthcare.gov for information about insurance options.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU GO

- » Learn about the visa categories and apply well in advance for the appropriate visa;
- » Contact an Irish immigrant support centre as they will be able to provide advice on visa categories and eligibility;

- » Bring sufficient funds to live on until you get paid and to cover additional expenses like rent deposits;
- » Bring several forms of identification – passport, driving licence, birth certificate;
- » Bring references from previous employers and landlords;
- » Arrange temporary health cover;
- » 'Americanise' your CV and cover letter and bring proof of your qualifications.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- » Contact an Irish immigrant support centre in your area for advice and support;
- » Get involved with the local Irish community through Irish clubs and organisations;
- » Arrange adequate health insurance;
- » Open a bank account – you may be asked for two forms of identification, proof of address and your Social Security number;
- » Register with your local parish and ask if there are other Irish people in the area.





USEFUL CONTACTS

Support & Assistance

Irish Apostolate USA

Email: administrator@usairish.org
Website: www.usairish.org

Irish Embassy in Washington

2234 Massachusetts Ave NW,
Washington DC 20008
Phone: +1 202 462 3939
Website: www.embassyofireland.org

US Embassy in Dublin

42 Elgin Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
Phone: +353 1 668 8777
Website: www.dublin.usembassy.gov

Irish Immigration Centres

Irish Pastoral Center Boston

15 Rita Road, Dorchester, MA 02124
Phone: +1 617 265 5300
Website: www.ipcboston.org

Chicago Irish Immigrant Support

4626 N. Knox Avenue, Suite 301,
Chicago, IL 60630
Phone: +1 773 282 8445
Website: www.ci-is.org

Irish Immigration Pastoral Center San Francisco

5340 Geary Blvd, Suite 206,
San Francisco, CA 94121
Phone: +1 415 752 6006
Website: www.sfipc.org

Aisling Irish Community Center, New York

990 McLean Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10704
Phone: +1 914 237 5121
Website: www.aislingcenter.org

Irish Outreach San Diego

2725 Congress Street, Suite 2G,
San Diego, CA 92110
Phone: +1 619 291 1630
Website: www.irishoutreachsd.org

Seattle Immigration Support Group

Website: www.irishseattle.com

Irish Immigrant Service of Milwaukee

2133 W. Wisconsin Ave,
Milwaukee, WI 53233-1910
Phone: +1 414 345 8800
Website: www.ichc.net

Irish International Immigrant Center

100 Franklin Street, Suite LL-1,
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: +1 617 542 7654
Website: www.iiicenter.org

Emerald Isle Immigration Center

59–26 Woodside Avenue, Woodside,
NY 11377
Phone: +1 718 478 5502
Website: www.eiic.org

New York Irish Center

10–40 Jackson Avenue,
Long Island City, NY 11101
Phone: +1 718 482 0909
Website: www.newyorkirishcenter.org

Irish Immigration Center of Philadelphia

7 South Cedar Lane, Upper Darby, PA 19102
Phone: +1 610 789 6355
Website: www.icphila.org

Irish Student Outreach Center

1603 Philadelphia Avenue,
Ocean City, MD 21842
Phone: +1 410 520 0344

Emigrating to Australia

Good employment opportunities make Australia an attractive destination for Irish emigrants, but people should be aware that the cost of living can be quite high in certain areas.

VISA

You will need to apply for a visa before leaving for Australia. The Working Holiday visa is a popular option. This visa allows people between the ages of 18 and 30 to spend up to 12 months travelling and working in Australia. The primary purpose of this visa is to travel so you can only work with each employer for a maximum of 6 months. This visa can be extended for another year if you have worked in regional Australia for three months on your first Working Holiday visa.

If you plan to apply for a second Working Holiday visa you are advised to do your three months in regional Australia as soon as possible after arriving. If you delay this you may not be able to fulfil the three-month requirement in time. You should also be sure to renew your travel insurance for your second year in Australia.

Another option is to apply for an Employer Sponsored visa. This can be a temporary or permanent visa. The temporary 457 visa allows employers to hire overseas workers to fill skilled positions in Australia. This visa is valid for up to four years.

It is extremely important that you maintain your legal status at all times during your stay in Australia.

ACCOMMODATION

The cost of accommodation may vary but can be high in Sydney, Perth and Melbourne. When

you sign a lease you may be asked to pay the first month's rent and a rental bond which will be around four to six weeks' rent. Apartments are often rented unfurnished so you will need to include money for furniture in your budget. Landlords often request two character references, a letter from a previous landlord, photo identification, a letter confirming you have an Australian bank account and proof of employment. You should have these documents and a deposit ready so you can act quickly when you find a property you like.

EMPLOYMENT

If possible, you should begin searching for jobs online before you leave. Update your CV (called a résumé in Australia) so it is appropriate for the Australian market. When you arrive you should apply for your Tax File Number (TFN) as you will need to provide this to your employer. Visit www.ato.gov.au for more information about applying for your TFN.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Australia has a reciprocal healthcare agreement with Ireland which allows Irish residents visiting Australia to use the public health system for immediately necessary treatment during their stay. This includes any ill-health or injury that occurs while in Australia and requires treatment before you return home. This agreement does not cover those in Australia on a student visa.

There are many expenses that won't be covered by the reciprocal health agreement so you should also invest in private health insurance. For more information about the healthcare system in Australia visit www.humanservices.gov.au

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU GO

- » If using a migration agent, look for one registered with the Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA);
- » Bring sufficient funds to live on until you get paid and to cover additional expenses like rent deposits;
- » Bring several forms of identification – passport, driving licence, birth certificate;
- » Bring references from previous employers and landlords;
- » Research job opportunities and start applying for jobs online;
- » Arrange temporary health cover;
- » If you are emigrating with children, research school fees as these can be quite high;

- » Update your CV so it is suitable for the Australian market and bring proof of your qualifications.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- » Register with recruitment agencies;
- » Get involved with the local Irish community through Irish clubs and organisations;
- » Arrange adequate health insurance;
- » Open a bank account – you should bring your Tax File Number and identification. Usually if you open a bank account within six weeks of your arrival you only need your passport as identification;
- » Register with your local parish and ask if there are other Irish people in the area.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Support & Assistance

Irish Chaplaincy Australia

Rev. Tom Devereux

Parish of St Patrick's, 2 Wellington Street,
Bondi, NSW 2026

Phone: +61 2 936 51195

Email: stpatbon@bigpond.net.au

Irish Embassy in Canberra

20 Arkana St, Yarralumla, ACT 2600, Australia

Phone: +61 2 6214 0000

Website: www.embassyofireland.au.com

Consulate General of Ireland in Sydney

Level 26, 1 Market Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Phone: +61 2 92649635

Website: www.irishconsulatesydney.net

Australian Embassy in Ireland

7th Floor, Fitzwilton House,

Wilton Terrace, Dublin 2

Phone: +353 1 664 5300

Website: www.ireland.embassy.gov.au

Australian High Commission in London

(which handles visa services for Irish residents)

Australia House, Strand,

London WC2B 4LA, UK

Phone: +44 207 379 4334

Website: www.uk.embassy.gov.au

Link Irish Australia

Brisbane – Irish Australian Support Association of Qld Inc.

5 Abingdon Street, Woolloongabba QLD 4102

Phone: +61 7 3391 1300

(After Hours: +61 432 087 328)

Website: www.iasaq.com.au

Sydney – Irish Australian Welfare Bureau and Resource Centre NSW Inc.

2 Wellington Street, Bondi NSW 2026,

P.O. Box 346, Bondi 2026

Phone: +61 2 9300 8019

Website: www.iawb.org.au

Melbourne – Australian Irish Welfare Bureau

440 A High Street (Cnr Langwells Parade),
Northcote 3070

Phone: +61 3 9482 3865

(After Hours: +61 407 317 539)

Email: aiwbmel@iinet.net.au

Perth – The Claddagh Association Inc.

Phone: +61 8 9344 7204

(After Hours: +61 403 972 265)

Website: www.claddagh.org.au

Emigrating to New Zealand

With a mild climate and relatively low cost of living, New Zealand has become another popular destination for Irish emigrants.

VISA

There are a number of visas available which will allow you to live and work in New Zealand. The Working Holiday visa is available to Irish citizens between the ages of 18 and 30 and allows you to travel and work in New Zealand for 12 months. You must have a minimum of NZ\$4,200 to meet your living costs while you're there.

Temporary Work visas are available for people who have a job offer from a New Zealand employer or are skilled in occupations that are in demand. There are several visa options available for people who want to live in New Zealand permanently. The Skilled Migrant Category offers the opportunity to move permanently to people who have the skills, qualifications and experience New Zealand needs. If you're aiming for residency and your talents are needed by New Zealand employers, you can apply under the Work to Residence category.

For more information about applying for a visa, visit the Immigration New Zealand website at www.immigration.govt.nz

ACCOMMODATION

The price of accommodation will vary widely depending on where you are living. You will be asked to pay a bond of up to four weeks' rent. Apartments are generally rented unfurnished so you will need to include money for furniture in your budget.

EMPLOYMENT

Immigration New Zealand has an Immediate Skill Shortage List and a Long-Term Skill Shortage List, which show the occupations that are given priority for visas. When you arrive in New Zealand you should register with local recruitment agencies and search for jobs online. You will need to register with Inland Revenue and obtain an IRD (Inland Revenue Department) number. Visit www.ird.govt.nz for information about applying for an IRD number.

HEALTH INSURANCE

In New Zealand, publicly-funded healthcare is available to citizens, residents and work-permit holders who have been issued with a work permit for a minimum of 2 years. Visitors to New Zealand must pay for health services unless they are needed as a result of an accident. For more information visit www.health.govt.nz

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU GO

- » Bring sufficient funds to live on until you get paid and to cover additional expenses like rent deposits;
- » Bring several forms of identification – passport, driving licence, birth certificate;
- » Bring references from previous employers and landlords;
- » Research job opportunities and start applying for jobs online;
- » Arrange temporary health cover;
- » Update your CV so it is suitable for the New Zealand market and bring proof of your qualifications.



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- » Register with recruitment agencies;
- » Get involved with the local Irish community through Irish clubs and organisations;
- » Arrange adequate health insurance;
- » Open a bank account – you will need photo identification and proof of address. Some banks will allow you to open an account before you arrive in New Zealand;
- » Register with your local parish and ask if there are other Irish people in the area.

USEFUL CONTACTS

New Zealand High Commission in London

New Zealand House, 80 Haymarket,
London SW1Y 4TQ

Phone: +44 20 7930 8422

Website: www.nzembassy.com/uk

Honorary Consul General in Auckland

Phone: +64 9 977 2252

Email: consul@ireland.co.nz

Auckland Irish Society

Website: www.aucklandirish.co.nz

Wellington Irish Society

Website: www.wellingtonirishsociety.com

Christchurch Irish Society

Website: www.christchurchirishsociety.co.nz

Emigrating to Canada

Canada has become a very popular destination for Irish emigrants and the quota for participants in the 2013 International Experience Canada (IEC) programme was filled in less than four days. While the majority of people settle in Toronto and Vancouver, there are also good job opportunities in other provinces.

VISA

A large number of Irish people travel and work in Canada through the International Experience Canada (IEC) initiative. This allows people between the ages of 18 and 35 to travel and work in Canada for up to 2 years. To be eligible to participate in this working holiday programme you must have medical insurance for the duration of your stay and have C\$2,500 to help cover expenses at the beginning of your stay.

If you have at least 12 months full-time skilled work experience in Canada you can apply for the Canadian Experience Class visa. Under the Family Sponsorship Program, Canadian citizens and permanent residents can sponsor certain relatives.

It is extremely important that you maintain your legal status during your time in Canada. If you are planning to stay in Canada long term, you may need to apply for your next visa long before your current visa expires. If you are found without a valid visa you risk deportation and having an exclusion order made against you.

ACCOMMODATION

The price of accommodation can vary depending on where you are in Canada. The cost of living in Toronto and Vancouver is very high. Apartments are generally rented unfurnished so you will need to include a budget for furniture when you first arrive. Tenants will usually be asked for references and you may also be asked for employment and income details.

EMPLOYMENT

While people tend to gravitate towards the bigger cities in Canada, it is worth considering employment opportunities in other parts of the country. The provinces have their own immigration programmes for people who want to stay long term. Examining these programmes may give you a good idea of the jobs that are available in different provinces. You will need to prepare a Canadian-style résumé.

HEALTH INSURANCE

All Canadian citizens and permanent residents are eligible for public health insurance. Each province has its own health insurance plan and in some provinces temporary workers may also be eligible for healthcare coverage. To find information about healthcare in Canada visit www.hc-sc.gc.ca

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU GO

- » Research job opportunities in all provinces, not just in the bigger cities;
- » Update your CV so it is suitable for the Canadian market and bring proof of your qualifications;
- » Arrange temporary health cover;
- » Bring sufficient funds to live on until you get paid and to cover additional expenses like rent deposits;
- » Bring several forms of identification – passport, driving licence, birth certificate;
- » Bring references from previous employers and landlords;
- » Consult www.moving2canada.com for advice on visas, finding accommodation and employment, obtaining your Social Insurance number and opening a bank account.



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- » Get involved with the local Irish community through Irish clubs and organisations;
- » Contact the Irish Canadian Immigration Centre for help and advice;
- » Research health insurance options and arrange private health insurance if necessary;
- » Apply for your Social Insurance number;
- » Open a bank account – you may need to present proof of identity, proof of address and your Social Insurance number;
- » Register with your local parish and ask if there are other Irish people in the area.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Irish Embassy in Ottawa

Embassy of Ireland, Suite 1105 (11th Floor),
130 Albert St, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5G4
Phone: +1 613 233 6281
Website: www.embassyofireland.ca

Irish Canadian Immigration Centre

Phone: + 1 416 603 9549
Website: www.irishcdn.org

Canadian Embassy in Ireland

7–8 Wilton Terrace, Dublin 2
Phone: +353 1 234 4000
Website: www.ireland.gc.ca

Canadian High Commission in London

(which handles visa services for Irish residents)
38 Grosvenor Street, London W1K 4AA, UK
Phone: +44 207 258 6699
Website: www.unitedkingdom.gc.ca



Emigrating to the United Arab Emirates

The UAE offers a high standard of living and the chance to earn a tax-free income, making it an increasingly popular destination for Irish emigrants.

VISA

Irish passport holders will be granted a 'visit' visa on arrival in the UAE. This visa is valid for 30 days but can be renewed once for a fee. As a visitor you should have a valid return ticket and a passport which is valid for a minimum period of 6 months.

To work in the UAE you will need to be sponsored by an employer who will obtain work and residence permits for you. The work permit will be issued for the duration of your job contract. The Department of Foreign Affairs advises that if you are planning to reside in the UAE you should get all relevant Irish documents attested at the Consular Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs before you travel.

ACCOMMODATION & EMPLOYMENT

It is important to be aware that in the UAE it is against the law to live with or share a hotel room with someone of the opposite sex to whom you are not married or closely related. Business is done through English so language is not a barrier to employment. As in all Muslim countries, Friday is a day of rest so the working week is Sunday to Thursday.

HEALTH INSURANCE

There is no free healthcare for foreigners in the UAE so you will need to obtain travel insurance which will cover all medical expenses. If possible, try to get a job that includes medical insurance. Some prescribed and over-the-counter medicines available in Ireland are controlled substances in the UAE and you will require prior permission from the UAE Ministry of Health to bring these medications into the UAE. A list of restricted and controlled drugs can be viewed at www.uaeinteract.com/travel/drug.asp

It is recommended that visitors contact the UAE Ministry of Health drug control department to check whether their medication is on the list of controlled medicines.

LOCAL LAWS & CUSTOMS

It is very important to respect local laws and customs at all times in the UAE. Public displays of affection such as kissing and holding hands are considered disrespectful and may lead to a police caution or arrest. There is a zero tolerance approach to drink driving, and while alcohol is served in licensed hotels and clubs, it is a punishable offence to drink or be drunk in public. There are also serious penalties for possession of drugs and the presence of drugs in the body constitutes possession. The non-payment of bills and fraud (which includes writing a cheque that bounces) are also serious offences which can result in imprisonment or a fine.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Irish Embassy in Abu Dhabi

1 and 2 Khalifa Al Suwaidi Development,
19th Street (off 32nd Street), Al Bateen,
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Phone: +971 2 4958200
Website: www.embassyofireland.ae

Abu Dhabi Irish Society

Website: www.irishsocietyabudhabi.com

Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Ireland

45–47 Pembroke Road, Dublin 4
Phone: +353 1 660 0000
Website: www.uae-embassy.ae/ie

Irish Business Network Dubai

Website: www.irishbusinessnetwork.me

Emigrating to Europe

Irish citizens can live and work in most EU member states without a visa. These countries are: Austria, Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany, France, Sweden, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Italy, Finland, Denmark, Netherlands, the UK, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Cyprus and Malta. EU citizens can also work in Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Iceland and Norway.

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) allows EU citizens to access public healthcare services in member countries. Applications for the EHIC are processed through Local Health Offices in Ireland. Forms can be downloaded from www.citizensinformation.ie

USEFUL CONTACTS

Contact Numbers of Irish Embassies Throughout Europe

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Czech Republic (Prague) . . . | +420257530061 | Greece (Athens) | +302107232771 |
| Poland (Warsaw) | +48228496633 | Spain (Madrid) | +34914364093 |
| Slovakia (Bratislava) | +421259309611 | Portugal (Lisbon) | +351213308200 |
| Bulgaria (Sofia) | +35929853425 | Italy (Rome) | +39065852381 |
| Romania (Bucharest) | +40213102131 | Malta | +35621334744 |
| Denmark (Copenhagen) . . . | +4535473200 | Slovenia | +38613008970 |
| Estonia | +3726811888 | Belgium | +3222823400 |
| Finland (Helsinki) | +35896824240 | Luxembourg | +3524506101 |
| Hungary | +3613014960 | Netherlands (The Hague) . . | +31703630993 |
| Latvia (Riga) | +37167039370 | France (Paris) | +33144176700 |
| Lithuania (Vilnius) | +37052629460 | Germany (Berlin) | +4930220720 |
| Sweden (Stockholm) | +46854504040 | Austria (Vienna) | +4317154246 |
| Cyprus (Nicosia) | +35722818183 | | |

Emigrating from Northern Ireland

This section provides additional information for those who are emigrating from Northern Ireland and hold British passports.

EMIGRATING TO THE UNITED STATES

The Visa Waiver Program allows a British citizen to travel to the US without a non-immigrant visa provided you are travelling for business, pleasure or transit only and you are staying in the US for 90 days or less.

There are a number of non-immigrant visas available for British citizens, including the following:

- » Exchange Visitor (J-1 Visa): anyone wishing to take up prearranged employment, training or research in the US under an officially approved programme must obtain a J-1 Visa. There are several exchange visitor programmes available, including summer employment programmes, intern programmes for university students and au-pair programmes;
- » Student (F-1 Visa): a student who wishes to attend a university or other academic institution in the US requires an F-1 Visa;
- » Temporary Worker (H Visa): the US does not issue work visas for casual employment and, in general, work visas are based on a specific offer of employment.
- » Family-Based Visa: applies to brothers and sisters of US citizens; adult or married sons and daughters of US citizens; and a spouse of a US permanent resident;
- » Employment-Based Visa: there are five categories – (1) priority workers; (2) members of 'the professions' and persons with exceptional ability in the sciences, arts and business; (3) professionals; (4) special immigrants, including religious workers; and (5) investors.

If you wish to live in the US permanently you will need to obtain an immigrant visa. As of 1 February 2013, all individuals who are issued immigrant visas at the US Embassy in London must pay a \$165 Immigrant Fee before travelling to the US. There are several categories of immigrant visa:

- » Immediate Relative Visa: applies to the spouse, parent, step-parent, child and step-child under the age of 21, of a US citizen and the spouse of a deceased US citizen;

USEFUL CONTACTS

Consulate General of the United States in Belfast

Danesfort House, 223 Stranmillis Road,
Belfast, BT9 5GR
Phone (from within the UK): 09042 450 100
Website: <http://belfast.usconsulate.gov/index.html>

US Embassy in London

24 Grosvenor Square, London W1A 2LQ
Phone: +44 20 7499 9000
Website: <http://london.usembassy.gov/ukaddress.html>

British Embassy in Washington

3100 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20008
Phone: +1 202 588 6500
Website: <http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en/>

British Consulate General in Boston

One Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02142
Phone: +1 617 245 4500

British Consulate General in New York

845 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022
Phone: +1 212 745 0200

British Consulate General in Chicago

625 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 2200,
Chicago IL 60611
Phone: +1 312 970 3800

EMIGRATING TO AUSTRALIA

The Working Holiday visa allows British citizens between the ages of 18 and 30 to spend up to 12 months travelling and working in Australia. The primary purpose of this visa is to travel so you can only work with each employer for a maximum of 6 months. This visa can be extended for another year if you have worked in regional Australia for three months on your first Working Holiday visa.

Another option is to apply for an Employer Sponsored visa. This can be a temporary or permanent visa. The Temporary 457 visa allows employers to hire overseas workers to fill skilled positions in Australia. This visa is valid for up to four years.

Australia and the UK have a reciprocal healthcare agreement and UK residents visiting Australia are entitled to the following health or injury treatments: (1) free treatment as a public in-patient or out-patient in a public hospital; (2) subsidised medicine under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS); and (3) Medicare benefits for out-of-hospital treatment provided by a doctor. If you are in Australia on a student visa from the UK you will be covered by Medicare.

EMIGRATING TO NEW ZEALAND

A Working Holiday visa is available to British citizens between the ages of 18 and 30. Applicants can select either a 12-month or 23-month stay in New Zealand. To be eligible you must be permanently living in the UK, have a British passport that is valid for at least three months after your planned departure from New Zealand, and meet certain health and character requirements.

Temporary Work visas are available for people who have a job offer from a New Zealand employer or are skilled in occupations that are in demand. There are several visa options available for people who want to live in New Zealand permanently. The Skilled Migrant Category offers the opportunity to move permanently to people who have skills, qualifications and experience New Zealand needs. If you're aiming for residency and your talents are needed by New Zealand employers you can apply under the Work to Residence category.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Australian High Commission in London

Australia House, Strand, London WC2B 4LA

Phone: +44 207 379 4334

Website: www.uk.embassy.gov.au

British High Commission in Canberra

Commonwealth Avenue, Yarralumla, ACT 2600

Phone: +61 2 6270 6666

Website: www.ukinaustralia.fco.gov.uk/en/

British Consulate General in Sydney

Level 16, Gateway Building, 1 Macquarie Place, Sydney, NSW 2000

Phone: +61 2 9247 7521

British Consulate in Perth

Level 12, 251 Adelaide Terrace, Perth

Phone: +61 8 9224 4700

British Consulate General in Melbourne

17th Floor, 90 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria

Phone: +61 3 9652 1600

British Consulate in Brisbane

Level 9, 100 Eagle Street, Brisbane QLD 4000

Phone: +61 7 3223 3200

USEFUL CONTACTS

New Zealand High Commission in London

New Zealand House, 80 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4TQ

Phone: +44 20 7930 8422

Website: <http://www.nzembassy.com/uk>

British High Commission in Wellington

44 Hill Street, Wellington 6011

Phone: +64 4 924 2888 (This number is not for passport or visa enquiries)

Website: www.ukinnewzealand.fco.gov.uk/en/

British Consulate General in Auckland

Level 17, 151 Queen Street, Auckland 1010

Phone: +64 9 303 2973



EMIGRATING TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

British passport holders will be granted a 'visit' visa on arrival in the UAE. This visa is valid for 30 days but can be renewed for a fee. As a visitor you should have a valid return ticket and a passport which is valid for a minimum period of 6 months. Holders of British Overseas Citizens Passports who do not have the right of abode in the UK will need a visa to enter the UAE. To work in the UAE you will need to be sponsored by an employer who will obtain work and residence permits for you.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in London

30 Prince's Gate, London SW7 1PT
Phone: +44 20 7581 1281
Website: www.uae-embassy.ae/uk

British Embassy in Abu Dhabi

22 Khalid bin Al Waleed Street,
PO Box 248, Abu Dhabi
Phone: +971 2 610 1100
Website: www.ukinuae.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/our-embassy-abu-dhabi/

British Embassy in Dubai

Al Seef Street, PO Box 65, Dubai
Phone: +971 4 309 4444
Website: www.ukinuae.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/our-embassy-dubai/

EMIGRATING TO CANADA

British citizens between the ages of 18 and 30 are eligible for the International Experience Canada (IEC) programme. This allows people to travel and work in Canada for up to 12 months. To be eligible to participate in this working holiday programme you must be a citizen of the United Kingdom and be able to demonstrate habitual residency in the UK for at least three years directly prior to your application. You must also have medical insurance for the duration of your stay and have C\$2,500 to help cover expenses at the beginning of your stay. If you have at least 12 months full-time skilled work experience in Canada you can apply for the Canadian Experience Class visa. Under the Family Sponsorship Program, Canadian citizens and permanent residents can sponsor certain relatives.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Canadian High Commission in London

38 Grosvenor Street, London W1K 4AA, UK
Phone: +44 207 258 6699
Website: www.unitedkingdom.gc.ca

British High Commission in Canada

80 Elgin Street, Ottawa ON K1P 5K7
Phone: +1 613 237 1530
Website: www.ukincanada.fco.gov.uk/en/

British Consulate General in Vancouver

1111 Melville Street, Suite 800, Vancouver, British Columbia V6E 4H7
Phone: +1 604 683 4421

British Consulate General in Toronto

777 Bay Street, Suite 2800, Toronto, Ontario M5G 2C8
Phone: +1 416 593 1290

British Consulate General in Montreal

2000 McGill College Avenue, Suite 1940, Montreal, Quebec H3A 3H3
Phone: +1 514 866 5863

British Consulate General in Calgary

3000-150 6 Ave SW, Calgary, Alberta T2P 3Y7
Phone: +1 403 705 1755

Effect On Irish Communities

Cooraclare, a small parish in County Clare with a population of approximately 1,500, has been significantly affected by the current wave of emigration. The departure of many young people in recent years affects not only the loved ones they leave behind, but the community as a whole.

EFFECT ON THE PARISH COMMUNITY

The absence of young adults in Cooraclare is very noticeable to those left behind and the pain suffered by parents and families as a result of this separation is clear. People in the parish are encouraged to remain in contact with those who have emigrated as much as possible.

In November 2012, a special Mass for emigrants was held at the request of parents and relatives of emigrants from the parish.

B. May Murphy, Chairperson of the Parish Pastoral Council, says the response to the Mass was one of great joy: 'I'd say it will definitely be held again because it was so well received. It made such an impression; it struck a chord ... it broadened out in people's minds from merely the current situation on emigration to emigration in general.'

A register of emigrants was prepared in advance of the Mass. Pupils in the three schools in the parish were invited to write the names of relatives and neighbours who have emigrated and for whom they wished to pray. Lists were also prepared in the parish churches. This register was then presented at the altar before the Mass.

Other items considered to be important for communicating with loved ones who have emigrated were also presented at the altar. These items included a mobile phone and computer, postcards and letters, a framed photograph and a gift parcel. Two candles were also presented, one to represent all who have emigrated, including our missionaries, and the other to represent all who have died abroad.

EFFECT ON FAMILIES

The current wave of emigration has affected many families in Cooraclare, particularly Martin and Anne Tubridy, whose four sons have emigrated to Australia over the past four years. They were forced to emigrate to find work and Gerald (30) and Michael (27) are now living in Melbourne, while Mark (29) and Dermot (23) are working in the mining town of Karratha in Western Australia.

Their departure has been very difficult for Martin and his wife: 'It's tough to see them going away ... the coming home is grand, but every time they're going it's the same old trauma.' Martin and Anne run a local pub, Tubridy House, and with all their children on the other side of the world they have to work very long hours to keep the business going. While much is made of the availability of technologies like Skype, for Martin this actually makes it harder: 'They're there, they're within your reach, but they're not.'



Martin believes that most young people are emigrating because they have no other option: '90 per cent of the kids who've left the Clare area, it isn't their choice, it's necessity ... It'll be a long time before there's something here for them.'

While Martin doesn't think emigration has affected Cooraclare more than any other small parish, the loss to the community is clear: 'On New Year's Day, thirty friends of Michael were here in the bar and I said to someone, look at those young boys, they'll all be gone in a week's time.'

Despite this, Martin believes that there is a lot to be thankful for: 'There are families out there who've lost kids in tragedies who they'll never see again. The most important thing is that these kids come home safe, irrespective of when.'

At the recent emigrant Mass, Martin was amazed at the number of families who have been affected by emigration: 'It's only when you looked around the church that you realised ... that brought it home to us.'

He hopes that someone will begin to generate employment so young emigrants can come home and bring with them the valuable experience they've gained: 'We're quite content that they're happy doing what they're doing in Australia. The most important thing is that they come home safe and be part of the parish they grew up in ... They all want to live somewhere in Ireland and make a life for themselves, but I can't see it happening for the next three or four years.'

EFFECT ON THE GAA

Around ten members of Cooraclare's GAA club have emigrated in recent years: seven or eight have gone to Australia, a few more to the US or other countries.

'That's a lot, considering the size of the club and the parish,' says a local man who's been involved with the GAA for many years. He describes the club as a way of bonding the community and bringing together different people who have a common interest: 'It creates a community spirit, a community focal point.'

The recent wave of emigration has had a dramatic effect on the club, which has existed for over one hundred years. Successive generations of many families have been involved with the club in that time.

The departure of these players creates a void and they cannot be easily replaced. He points out that it is very noticeable when you take even eight to ten young people out of a small rural community: '[You lose] the group of people who would have had the most energy in a community. It leaves a big gap.'

At least many will be able to keep in touch with home through the GAA: many emigrants traditionally become involved with GAA clubs overseas because they provide a focal point and a way to meet people from your own area, he says. It also allows people to keep in contact with one another and with home.

Organisations in Ireland That Can Help



IRISH COUNCIL FOR PRISONERS OVERSEAS

While for most people emigration will be a positive experience, some may find themselves in difficulty in a country where they are not familiar with local practices and customs.

If you get into difficulty abroad, the Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO) is here to help. The ICPO operates under the auspices of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants and works on behalf of Irish prisoners overseas to provide information and support to these prisoners and their families.

ICPO services include:

- » Providing information and support to prisoners and their families in relation to a wide range of issues, including repatriation, deportation, health and legal matters, discrimination and ill-treatment;
- » Keeping in contact with prisoners through letter writing, newsletters and cards for Christmas and St Patrick's Day;
- » Representing prisoners' interests to relevant parties (Irish embassies and consulates, welfare agencies, probation and legal officers);
- » Monitoring repatriation applications with the Department of Justice and Equality;
- » Providing assistance to prisoners in preparation for their release;
- » Visiting prisoners and assisting families with travel and accommodation for prison visits;
- » Holding a Family Information Day each year to provide families with information and support and to give them the opportunity to meet other people who have a relative in prison overseas.

ICPO

Columba Centre, Maynooth,
Co. Kildare, Ireland.

Tel: +353 1 505 3156

Email: icpo@iecon.ie

Web: www.icpo.ie

ICPO

50–52 Camden Square,
London NW1 9XB, England.

Tel: +44 207 482 4148

Email: prisoners@irishchaplaincy.org.uk

Web: www.irishchaplaincy.org.uk



CROSSCARE MIGRANT PROJECT

Crosscare Migrant Project is an information, advocacy and referral organisation for migrants in vulnerable situations. The Migrant Project is a project of Crosscare, the Social Care Agency of the Dublin Archdiocese. Crosscare Migrant Project works with intending, existing and returning Irish emigrants. It aims to enable migrants, especially those in vulnerable circumstances, to make informed choices and access their rights.

The Migrant Project provides information to and advocates on behalf of emigrants, returnees and immigrants through its walk-in, outreach, phone and email services, website, publications and support to generalist information services.

Crosscare Migrant Project produces comprehensive pre-departure factsheets for intending Irish emigrants and monthly emigration news bulletins, which are available on www.migrantproject.ie

CROSSCARE MIGRANT PROJECT

Drop-in Centre

2 Sackville Place, Dublin 1, Ireland.

Tel: + 353 (0)1 873 2844

Email: migrantproject@crosscare.ie

Web: www.migrantproject.ie

The Gathering Ireland 2013

The Gathering Ireland is a year-long celebration of Ireland and its people. It is the biggest tourism initiative ever staged in this country and invites anyone who has a link to Ireland to travel here for a series of events throughout 2013. For further information see www.thegatheringireland.com

TRADITIONAL IRISH ‘GATHERINGS’


In the 17th and 18th centuries, Irish people were prohibited from performing their traditional music, song and dance. The resourceful Irish were not to be put down however, and would meet on country roads, often where the roads crossed, bringing food, drink and music, while watching out for British soldiers. They danced their country dances – the céilí dances and set dances we dance now. The Crossroads Dance was a truly social event and a way for rural communities to meet up and exchange news. Many a lonely farmer met a wife at these dances, families brought picnics, and often hawkers sold their wares. Dancing at the crossroads was a great opportunity for young and old to meet and enjoy themselves on mild summer evenings in the countryside.

This practice was banned by the Public Dance Halls Act in 1935 and the Crossroads Dance was replaced by a céilí in a nearby town or village. The tradition has recently been revived in places throughout Ireland, and while there are no British troops to watch out for, and the horse and carts have been replaced by cars, it is still a great community gathering.

Irish people do ‘gathering’ very well. When they were denied the right to practice their faith in Penal times, they gathered in a hidden spot in a remote area and attended Mass which was said at a Mass rock. Mass rocks are scattered all over the country. Some have been retained as a holy place and Mass is regularly celebrated on them, but many have been lost.

PARISHES: ENGAGING WITH THE GATHERING

- » Parishes might consider holding a parish day for emigrants. This can be a day when returning emigrants visit their parish or the parish from which their ancestors came and attend an emigrant Mass and learn about the history of the parish.

- 
- » Parishes might consider researching whether there is a Mass rock or a holy well* in their area and mark a day to celebrate Mass there, remembering our ancestors who worshipped there in Penal times. AIRO (the All-Island Research Observatory) in collaboration with the *Irish Times* recently mapped all the holy wells in the country and these can be accessed through an interactive map on <http://airomaps.nuim.ie/flexviewer/?config=PictureofIreland.xml>
 - » Father Alan Hilliard (Former Director of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants) has written a paper exploring the possibilities for the growth and development of religious faith during The Gathering. He recommends that any group undertaking a project to coincide with The Gathering should follow five guidelines set out by the Migration Policy Institute:
 1. It is essential that projects have a clear set of realistic goals;
 2. Reliable information about the diaspora from the local area is critical, general diaspora ideas are not sufficient;
 3. A communication system for diaspora engagement is of vital importance;
 4. It is important that when members of the diaspora make contact that there is evidence of coordination between local bodies;
 5. There must be something concrete offered in the engagement.

The full text of this paper will be printed in the March 2013 edition of *The Furrow*.

*There are approximately 3,000 holy wells throughout Ireland and many are still in use. They vary greatly in appearance – some are adorned with statues and trees holding beads and cloths, while others have been virtually forgotten. Holy wells can be found on all sorts of land and in some cases date from pre-Christian times when they were believed to be sacred.





Parish Resources

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 for the leaders of the Church and for all who are called to spread the good news. May they be granted wisdom and right judgement and may they be guided by the Holy Spirit. Lord, hear us.
2. We pray for our young people. That they may be guided and protected from the dangers that are ever-present in our world today. May they be given the courage and strength to make the right decisions as they journey through life. Lord, hear us.
3. We pray for those who have made their home in Ireland. May they be warmly welcomed into our communities and may we treat them with the kindness and goodness we wish for our own emigrants overseas. Lord, hear us.
4. We pray for Irish people all over the world. That they may be kept safe from all harm, evil and danger. We pray especially for those who are unable to come home for whatever reason and those who are in trouble and lonely in a faraway land. Lord, hear us.
5. We pray for the people of Ireland. May our faith be renewed and new life breathed into us. May we treasure the gift of faith given to us by St Patrick. May those who have left our shores to preach the good news of the Gospel be guided and blessed; may they find peace and know the value of their labour and the satisfaction in knowing they glorify you in sharing your word. Lord, hear us.
6. We pray for all who have died. May those we love who have died be blessed and granted peace and eternal rest in your presence. We remember especially people who died alone or away from family and friends and Irish people who died abroad in tragic circumstances. May their families be comforted and reunited together in your love forever. 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.



HOMILY NOTES

The entrance antiphon has a great definition of emigration: 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house.'

Abram's reason for leaving was unusual – a command from God. Patrick had no choice, he was abducted. The hardest form of emigration is the forced one – as experienced by millions of Irish down the years, the result of famine, unemployment and lack of opportunities.


In exile, Abram became Abraham and father of a great nation. Patrick brought the good news not only to Ireland but through those who followed him to all the corners of the world – the small mustard seed of today's gospel becoming a tree so that words of the first reading become true: 'his (Patrick's) memory will not disappear – generations after his name will live. Nations will proclaim his wisdom.' All over the world, all the celebrations, all the parades are part of keeping alive the memory of this man and indeed of keeping alive the name of this small country. God's ways are not our ways – all of this celebration, this achievement stemmed from what, for Patrick, looked like disaster, but as we say in Irish, *An rud is measa le duine ná a bás ní fheadair sé ná gurb é lár a leasa é* (that which seems for a person worse than death could be the centre of his welfare).

While not forgetting all the heartbreaks of emigration, for those who left and for those left behind, we give thanks today for all the new lives and opportunities it gave to so many; for all the good families it gave rise to and indeed for the growth of the Church in Britain, in the United States and other places. We remember the thousands of missionaries, those other exiles; emigrants who brought the faith, hope and practical help to the poor in all parts of the world.

Just as our songs capture the reality of emigration – and there are hundreds of them – so too do our prayers. The following are prayers imagined by me in *Intercom* twelve years ago and sadly relevant even now. There is a phrase in the third Eucharistic prayer which has to mean more in Ireland than in any other country: 'In your compassion, O merciful Father, gather to yourself all your children scattered throughout the world.' How evocative that 'scattered throughout the world' is. How much salt and zest it adds to the prayers.

Our knees may be anchored in a church in Donnycarney or Dunmanway, but our minds are with sons and daughters in Sydney, or with a long-lost uncle in Birmingham, or with the men and women we knew in Boston or London when we ourselves were emigrants. There will be no family at Mass on St Patrick's Day who will not make that prayer for real people since 1.2 million of those born here now live abroad and one in nine of the congregation have lived more than a year away.





A mother in suburban Dublin will be praying: 'Lord, remember my Sally in Australia, taking her year out. May she find joy and fun in it without becoming a hedonist. Keep her safe from the dangers of youth, fast cars and alcohol; remind her to think of You now and then and to say thanks for all of this time.'

Joe in Mayo is remembering his younger brother Sean who left when Joe inherited the farm: 'Lord, you know that Sean is the real "scattered throughout the world" man. Help us to find him again, safe and happy. And let him know he can always come home, in case he feels too ashamed at what he thinks is his failure.'

Mary in Tyrone is praying: 'Lord, thank you for my sister who has been a marvellous aunt to all my children, returning home with presents for all, remembering their birthdays. Only you and I, Lord, know how that cheerfulness hides the deep sadness in her life, her homesickness, her loss of identity in a big city. Comfort her, Lord.'

Paddy's prayer is that of the rememberer: 'Lord, St Patrick's day reminds me of all the fellas I worked with on the buildings in Birmingham forty years ago. I thank you for Mary who I met there and who gave me the sense of purpose to make something of my life. We were young and strong then but I know that many of them lost strength and health and are in a bad way in England's cities. I pray for them and those who help them.'

Bridie, at Mass in Dublin's inner city, prays: 'Father, as I look around me and see the faces of those who are obviously immigrants, I remember that I too was an immigrant. I remember the prejudice against me once I opened my mouth. Help us as a people to be hospitable to the stranger, as so many countries were to the Irish.'

Fr Paul Byrne OMI

Former Director of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants

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!
Amen.
(Prayers of an Irish Mother)

Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants

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