

EMIGRANT COLLECTION

Supporting Vulnerable
Irish People Overseas



**IRISH EPISCOPAL
COUNCIL FOR EMIGRANTS**

A Council of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference

A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP PAUL DEMPSEY

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 are recently departed and those who left our shores many years ago. We remember the families they have left behind and pray they will find strength and comfort as they cope with the pain of separation. We also think of those who have travelled from foreign lands to begin new lives in Ireland and pray that they receive the same welcome that we would wish for our own emigrants far from home.

Since 1957, the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants (IECE) has been responding to the needs of Irish emigrants around the world. It continues to do so through the work of its pastoral centres in the United States and the UK, which provide myriad services to the most vulnerable members of the Irish emigrant community. It also does so by providing grants to other like-minded organisations that provide targeted and specialist support to discrete categories of vulnerable emigrants – from the aged and lonely to those with addiction and mental health problems.

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 organisations providing pastoral, practical outreach to the most marginalised and vulnerable groups of Irish people, many of whom are living lives of quiet desperation.

+ Paul Dempsey

Bishop of Achonry
Chair of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants



1. In a couple of sentences, tell me about your organisation.

ICAP offers counselling and psychotherapy to the Irish community in Britain. We have teams in London and Birmingham and a network of therapists working across the country. Each week we see two hundred people across all our services. Of all those using our services, 66 per cent are unemployed, retired or unwell and would not otherwise be able to afford therapy. In 2020–21, we provided 7,082 hours of therapy.

2. What project did you seek a grant from the Emigrant Collection for?

The Emigrant Collection is supporting our helpline for Irish people in distress across Britain. The helpline is a free and confidential service and is staffed by therapists.

3. Who was it aimed at?

Helpline support is aimed at the Irish community across Britain. This includes vulnerable and excluded members of the community. It includes our Ask Clare service – a specialist service for those affected by mother and baby homes.

4. How will it help them?

The helpline will enable callers to access free culturally sensitive support at a time of acute distress. Those who need further help and advice can be referred to other agencies. Those in need of therapy will be able to access this through our therapy services.

5. If you have received Emigrant Collection grants before for similar projects, what difference did they make to you and the people you support?

Grants from the Emigrant Collection have enabled us to develop innovative services to support vulnerable members of the Irish community in Britain. A previous grant for our Hearth project enabled us to offer therapy at home for those at the end of life and unable to attend for face-to-face therapy.

‘Having someone to regularly offload anxieties to; having helpful responses, feedback, empathy, reflections; having a private, personal space and person who listened; trusting someone to be in my corner; knowing I had to get through only one week at a time; getting to know and be at ease with a therapist.’

‘I was very ill for a lot of the year and having the Zoom therapy space was a godsend in helping me through it. Missing all the opportunities to engage in conversations throughout a normal, active day was very challenging for me as I live alone and have no family in London.’

‘I have found it very helpful to discuss my worries and fears with someone who wasn’t judging me, who would listen and not interrupt but often made suggestions which helped me to look at things differently. Also, my mom passed away in January – very difficult.’

1. In a couple of sentences, tell me about your organisation.

The Irish Apostolate (IAUSA) was founded in 1987 in collaboration with the archdioceses of Boston and New York. IAUSA, incorporated in 2004, is a faith-based, pastoral organisation that strives to provide for the needs of the whole person in the spirit of the gospel and pastoral outreach. 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 Bishops' Conference, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers (CIIC), the Irish government, other Catholic organisations, and other immigration entities.

2. What project did you seek a grant from the Emigrant Collection for?

The development of pastoral and liturgical resources for our website.

3. Who was it aimed at?

Members of the Irish community in the US, particularly those interested in supporting its most vulnerable members.

4. How will it help them?

This grant will expand our ability to share important and useful information. Specifically, we are developing:

- » Prison and detention outreach resources
- » Online resources for liturgical and faith development
- » Online best practices to develop programmes for our Irish senior population
- » Online bereavement outreach to families

5. If you have received Emigrant Collection grants before for similar projects, what difference did they make to you and the people you support?

It meant we could support the work of Irish chaplains in caring for members of the Irish community at times of crisis and otherwise.

“The Irish Apostolate USA is able to provide pastoral care resources through our chaplains and the coordination of programmes and services offered through the generous funding of the Irish Bishops' Conference. As the national coordinator, it is a great relief to know that the finances are available to support our efforts.”

Sr Marie Prefontaine, SNDdeN





IRISH CHAPLAINCY

1. In a couple of sentences, tell me about your organisation.

Irish Chaplaincy is a leading and innovative charity, rooted in Catholic social teaching, that provides high-quality services and support to excluded, vulnerable and isolated Irish emigrants in Britain, including prisoners, Travellers and older Irish people.

2. What project did you seek a grant from the Emigrant Collection for?

Irish Chaplaincy Seniors Project.

3. Who was it aimed at?

The Irish Chaplaincy Seniors Project currently supports some 185 of London's most vulnerable and isolated older Irish, providing a unique service that offers emotional, physical and spiritual support, tailored to the personal needs of each individual.

4. How will it help them?

The grant will enable us to reach out to some of the most isolated and vulnerable older Irish in London and to provide regular visits and telephone calls, giving emotional and spiritual support, with reassurance and cultural understanding and sensitivity.

As society continues to grapple with the effects of Covid-19, we have found our work is more needed than ever. Knowledge of our work among social and health care providers in London has increased and our referrals continue to increase as well, often among seniors with complex emotional and physical health needs. For many of these older people, the pandemic and enforced isolation has triggered painful memories of childhood experience and trauma as well as cultural dislocation.

5. If you have received Emigrant Collection grants before for similar projects, what difference did they make to you and the people you support?

The grant enabled us to bring hope, companionship and connectivity to at least two hundred elderly Irish in London.

‘I know how supported Anthony felt by the Irish Chaplaincy. You offer an incredible service.’

‘Every moment you're here is precious to me.’





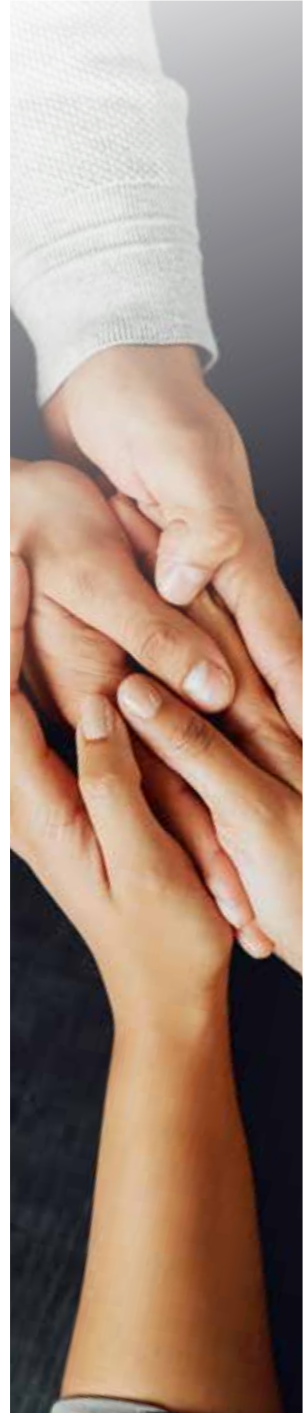
SISTERS CONNECT FOR HUNDREDDH BIRTHDAY

Mamie (above), who grew up in Dublin and moved to London in the 1960s, was one of the first people to receive an Irish Chaplaincy tablet and one of the first things she said was that she would be able to speak to her sister, a nun, in Dublin on her hundredth birthday. Mamie was true to her word and the sisters spoke on that day.

Mamie's sister has dementia and the manager of the convent, Sr Noreen, wrote, 'Sr Joseph's niece and the four Good Shepherd sisters who celebrated her hundredth birthday with her all agreed that the highlight for Sr Joseph was the video call that Joe from the Irish Chaplaincy facilitated with her only living sibling, Mamie Williamson. Sister Joseph (Rita to her family) became more animated when she saw Mamie and, though she did not speak it, it was evident that she was touched.'



‘I’ve got real friends for the first time in my life. It’s like I have a new lease of life. I’m so glad of the way the Irish Chaplaincy care for me.’

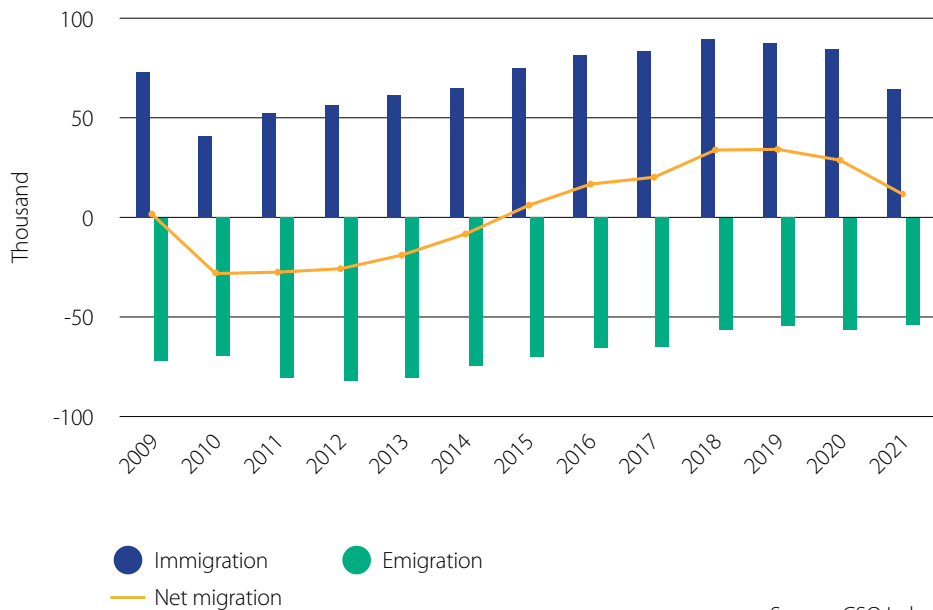


EMIGRATION STATISTICS

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) published the annual Population and Migration Estimates for April 2021.

- » Ireland's population was estimated to be 5.01 million in April 2021
- » The number of emigrants from the State in the year to April 2021 is estimated to be 54,000
- » Of the 54,000 emigrants from Ireland, 22,800 (42.2%) were estimated to be Irish nationals
- » In the year to April 2021, the UK experienced strong migration flows. 18,200 persons left Ireland to live in the UK, up from 10,000 last year

FIGURE 1: MIGRATION



Source: CSO Ireland



PRAYER

Holy, beloved father,
your son Jesus taught us
that there is great rejoicing in heaven
whenever someone lost is found,
whenever someone excluded, rejected or discarded
is gathered into our 'we',
which thus becomes ever wider.

We ask you to grant the followers of Jesus,
and all people of good will,
the grace to do your will on earth.
Bless each act of welcome and outreach
that draws those in exile
into the 'we' of community and of the Church,
so that our earth may truly become
what you yourself created it to be:
the common home of all our brothers and sisters.
Amen.

*Rome, Saint John Lateran, 3 May 2021
Feast of Saints Philip and James, Apostles*



IECE

IRISH EPISCOPAL COUNCIL FOR EMIGRANTS

Columba Centre
Maynooth
Co. Kildare
Ireland, W23 P6D3

Phone: 00 353 1 505 3155
Fax: 00 353 1 629 2363
Email: emigrants@iecon.ie
www.catholicbishops.ie/emigrants