



Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants

St Patrick's Day 2010



Parish Resource Kit



Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants

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Introduction to Parish Resource Kit for St. Patrick's Day

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A Phobal Dé,

Guím rath, séan agus beannacht oraibh uilig ar ócáid Lá le Pádraig, Aspal Éireann. Inniu tá ár n-imircí ó Éirinn scaptha i ngach aird na cruinne go mór in ár smaointe agus in ár nurnaí.

St. Patrick's Day is a time when we remember and pray for our emigrant population. 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.

St. Patrick's Day provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the issues effecting 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 kit 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 and include the website in parish bulletins etc: www.catholicbishops.ie/migrants

With every good wish

Yours sincerely,

† Séamus Hegarty
Bishop of Derry



Parish Resource Kit

The St. Patrick's Day Parish Resource Kit contains:

1. Suggested prayers for the Prayer of the Faithful
2. Homily Notes
3. Parish Bulletin Insert
4. A brief history of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants
5. Emigration statistics.



Prayer of the Faithful

About six of the following could be used

P. Trusting in God's goodness and love, let us offer these intercessions for our concerns, our needs and the needs of others.

We pray for the Church, that it may continue to be at the service of human mobility and pursue the globalisation of solidarity, caring for those who fall by the wayside. **R**

We pray for those who leave our shores in search of new beginnings, may they know your presence as you journey with them. **R**

For all those who are overwhelmed by loneliness, poverty and despair, that they may be comforted through our help and kindness. **R**

We pray for the newest members of our own community, that they may receive a true welcome, in our schools, in our work places and in our homes. **R**

For those who come to Ireland, may they find a welcome place to celebrate their unique culture. May our celebration of St. Patrick's life remind us of the blessing and graces that a migrant can bring to our shores. **R**

We give thanks for those who continue to remember and look after elderly relations abroad. May distance not inhibit our duty to care for those we love. We give thanks for the benefits of new technologies that allow us to communicate better across the miles and that give us the freedom to travel more frequently to spend time with those we love. **R**

We remember those who die away from home and we remember those who have died without family or friend to accompany them in their last hours. **R**

For our chaplains and all who care for our people abroad, may they be sustained in their ministries. **R**

We pray for all those who live far away from home: that they may know the love and support of the Christian Community wherever they may be. **R**

For our emigrants who are isolated and alone: may we have the courage to reach out to them. **R**

We pray for Irish prisoners overseas and their families at home. **R**

For all those who have recently emigrated. May God watch over them as they seek to build a new life on far away shores. **R**

The journey of migrants becomes a living sign of a future beyond this present world; we pray for those who have died. May they be welcomed by the Father to their final destination. **R**

For our undocumented in the United States: may people be empowered to overcome what obstacles and difficulties exist, so that a way may be found to bring the undocumented out of the shadows of society. **R**

P. God our loving Father, we ask that we may know your peace as we trust in your guidance and care. May your son accompany us as we journey to your kingdom. We make these prayers through your son Jesus Christ our Lord ... **Amen.**



Homily Notes

INTERCOM provides a number of excellent homily notes which can be used in conjunction with this resource kit.

There is a phrase in the third canon of the Mass which has to mean more in Ireland than in perhaps any other country – ‘Father hear the prayers of the family you have gathered here before you. In mercy and love unite all your children **wherever they may be**’. How evocative that ‘wherever they may be’ is how much salt and zest it adds to the prayers of that family gathered before the Father, whether family as blood related or as parish! We may be kneeling in a church in Donnycarney or Drumshambo but our minds and prayers are with sons and daughters in Sydney. They may be with a long lost uncle whom we last heard was in Birmingham, or with the men and women we knew in Boston or London when we ourselves were emigrants. There will be few families at Mass today, or any day, who will not make that prayer for some real person because of the simple mathematics of emigration in Ireland. No less than 1.2 million who were born among us are now living abroad and one in nine of this congregation will have lived more than a year as an emigrant.

Shortly before Christmas a man contacted the Irish Bishops’ Council for Emigrants (IECE) saying he wished to make a donation to help elderly Irish emigrants in London. He said that he had heard of the difficulties faced by some of his fellow country men and women and wanted to help if he could. He donated what he described as ‘a significant sum for him.’ The man was put in touch with an Irish nun who spends her time visiting the most vulnerable, isolated and disadvantaged of the elderly Irish community in London. She explained the work she does and that any grant would be used for the provision of basic necessities. Hot water bottles, heaters, small fridges and other such items may appear modest but they make a real and tangible difference to those who have little.

This true story reminds us that as a people we are generous – giving not just out of surplus but giving out of the little we often have. As has often been shown whenever there is need because of a world disaster, Irish people give way beyond our proportion. While we are all tested as Patrick was, there is like Patrick, that answering of God’s call to reach out beyond ourselves – letting God in and watching what he can do with our love, like the mustard seed of St. Mark’s Gospel. This the smallest of all seeds, grows into the greatest of trees so that even the birds of the air come and rest in its branches. There is a call today to remember all emigrants and in a special way those who are vulnerable, isolated or alone this day.



Insert for Parish Bulletin

On St Patrick's Day 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.

St Patrick first encountered Ireland as a migrant. Thus, it is fitting that on the Feast of our National Patron, we again seek to highlight the needs of the many Irish emigrants spread throughout the world.

Today too we 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.



The 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 at home and abroad of the needs of Irish emigrants.

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

- There are approximately 50,000 undocumented Irish living in the United States.
- In 2009, the number of Irish people granted residence visas to live in Australia increased by 25% to 2,501. A further 22,786 people under 35 years of age took up working holiday visas. (*The Irish Times – 25 Jan 2010*).
- Canada issued 1,471 visas to Irish nationals in the first 6 months of 2009 and is on course to issue 3,000 for the full year. Last year it was 2,607. Regarding the figures for 2010 ‘USIT said it filled its compliment of 1,000 places for its 12 month working holiday programme for people under 35 in just two days.’ (*Irish Times – 14 Jan 2010*).
- In Britain the number of national insurance numbers issued to Irish people has increased only slightly in the first half of 2009, suggesting 11,000 people will move there this year. (*The Irish Times – 29 Dec 2009*).

Front cover image: Celtic Cross designed by Gerard Horan (1956-2010)