



'Church without Frontiers, Mother to All'

Parish Migration Resource Pack

Christmas 2014
and
101st World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 18 January 2015



PARISH BULLETIN INSERT

World Day of Migrants and Refugees takes place on 18 January 2015. In his pastoral message marking this important date in the Church calendar, Pope Francis reminds us how Jesus identified himself with strangers and outcasts: 'Jesus Christ is always waiting to be recognised in migrants and refugees, in displaced person and in exiles, and through them he calls us to share our resources, and occasionally to give up something of our acquired riches.'

On this day we are asked to remember in our prayers those who have left our shores and also those who have joined us here in our parishes from overseas.

Let us remember in a special way those migrants whose journeys were filled with fear, trepidation and hostility. In particular, let us remember the elderly Irish community in Britain, the undocumented in the United States and Irish prisoners overseas.

Closer to home we remember those who are the victims of racism, human trafficking and those living in the direct provision system.

May we all walk together in prayerful solidarity with migrant peoples – both at home and abroad. May they find comfort and shelter in our parish and in our community.

CONTENTS

Message from Bishop Raymond Field and Bishop John Kirby	3
Migration Statistics	4–5
Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 101st World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2015)	6
Prayer for Migrants	8
World Day of Migrants and Refugees Poster	10–11
Prayer of the Faithful.....	13
Christmas 2014 – Suggested Homily Notes	14
World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 18 January 2015 – Suggested Homily Notes	15
Tips for Remembering Migrants at Christmas and on World Day of Migrants and Refugees	16
Mental Health and Migration	17
Reflection	19

MESSAGE FROM BISHOP RAYMOND FIELD AND BISHOP JOHN KIRBY

A Phobal Dé,

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas and the 101st World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Sunday, 18 January, 2015, it is important that we come together to remember and pray for all those who have travelled far from their homeland in search of a better life.

In his message, '**Church without Frontiers, Mother to All**', Pope Francis reminds us how Jesus identifies himself with strangers and outcasts: 'Jesus Christ is always waiting to be recognised in migrants and refugees, in displaced persons and in exiles, and through them he calls us to share our resources, and occasionally to give up something of our acquired riches.'

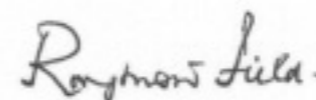
Pope Francis has made migration a signature issue of his pontificate. He has spoken out on behalf of migrants and 'the globalisation of indifference', continually emphasising: 'in an age of such vast movements of migration, large numbers of people are leaving their homelands, with a suitcase full of fears and desires, to undertake a hopeful and dangerous trip in search of more humane living conditions.' He stresses the need to make efforts to ensure that 'the dignity and the centrality of the human person is protected, promoting solidarity and dialogue between peoples.'

Large numbers of Irish people continue to travel abroad in search of new opportunities. Whilst their departure creates a void in Irish families and parishes, our communities, villages and towns have also become home to thousands of new residents from all over the world: migrants who have left their home in the hope of starting a new life filled with endless possibility and opportunity. Often these journeys bring uncertainty and unfamiliarity to the migrant and their families. This in turn can lead to significant strain on their emotional and mental wellbeing.

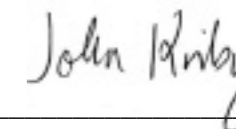
Indeed mental health difficulties are the unspoken injury afflicting whole swathes of the migrant community. We hope this Resource Pack will assist you in highlighting this issue – bringing it in from the periphery of people's consciousness, so that through dialogue and improved collective awareness people can receive comfort, security and support from their community and parish.

We encourage you to make use of these resources in reaching out to the people of your parish in relation to this important issue. If the Council for Emigrants and Council for Immigrants can be of any assistance to you in your ministry, please contact our offices in Maynooth. We also encourage you to visit our websites: www.catholicbishops.ie/emigrants and www.catholicbishops.ie/immigrants.

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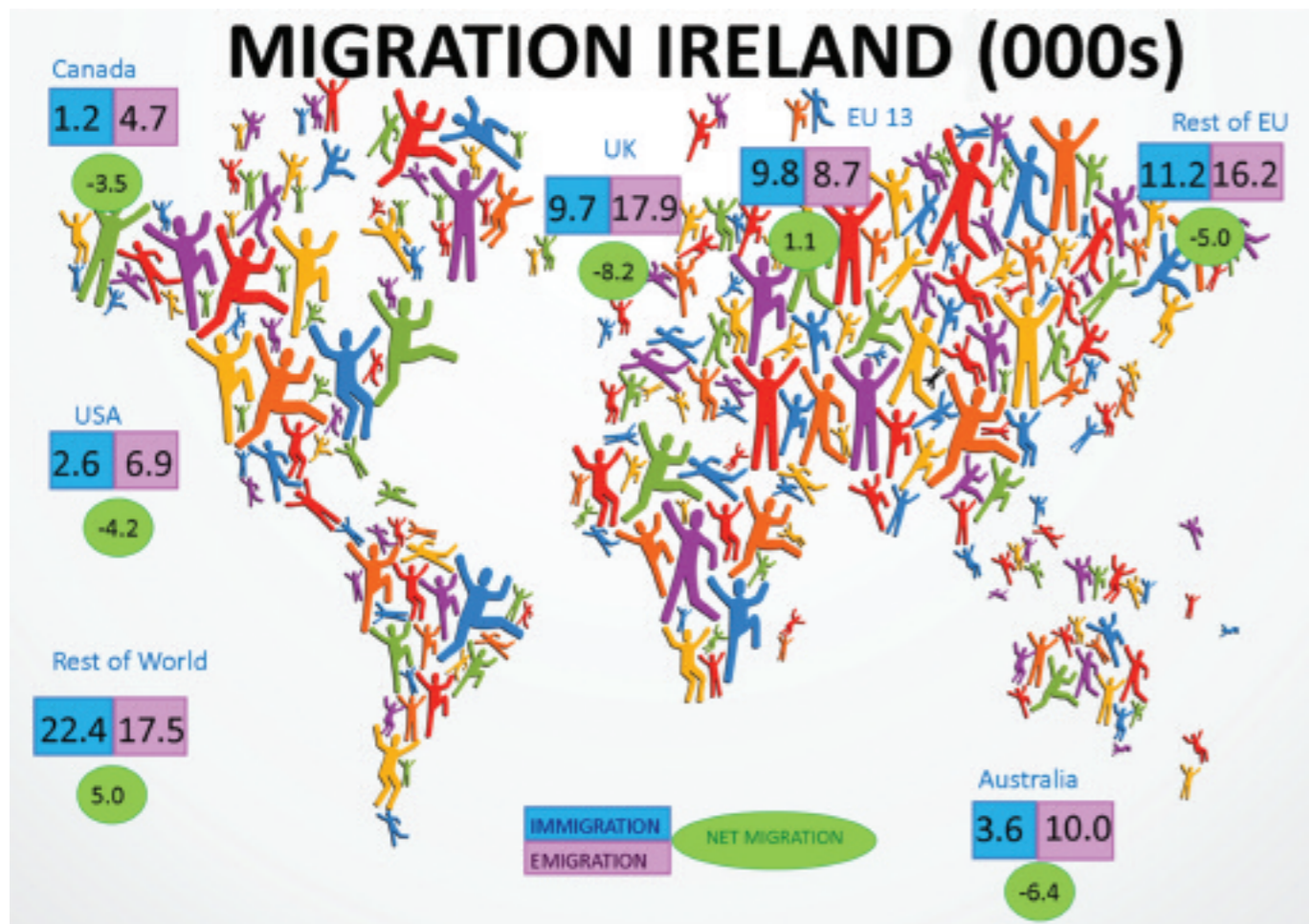


Bishop Raymond Field
Chair
Irish Bishops' Council for Immigrants

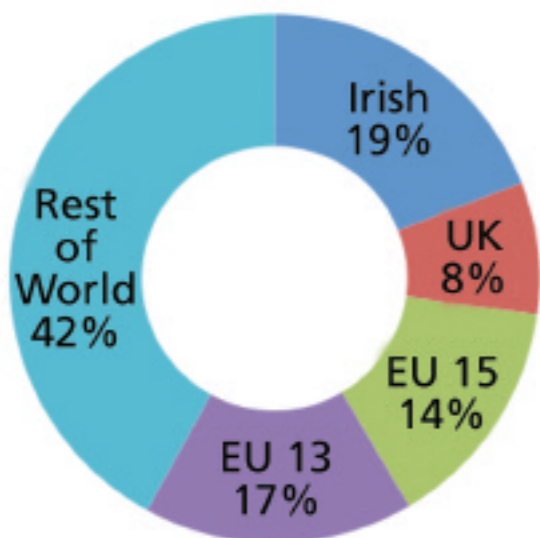


Bishop John Kirby
Chair
Irish Bishops' Council for Emigrants

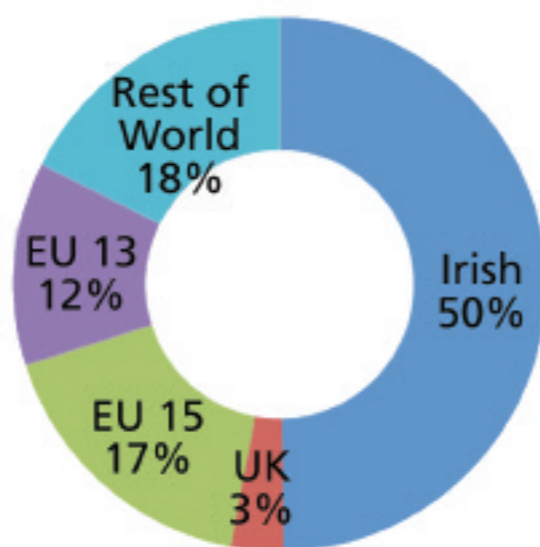
MIGRATION STATISTICS



Who is coming to Ireland?
2014 Estimated Immigration
by Nationality



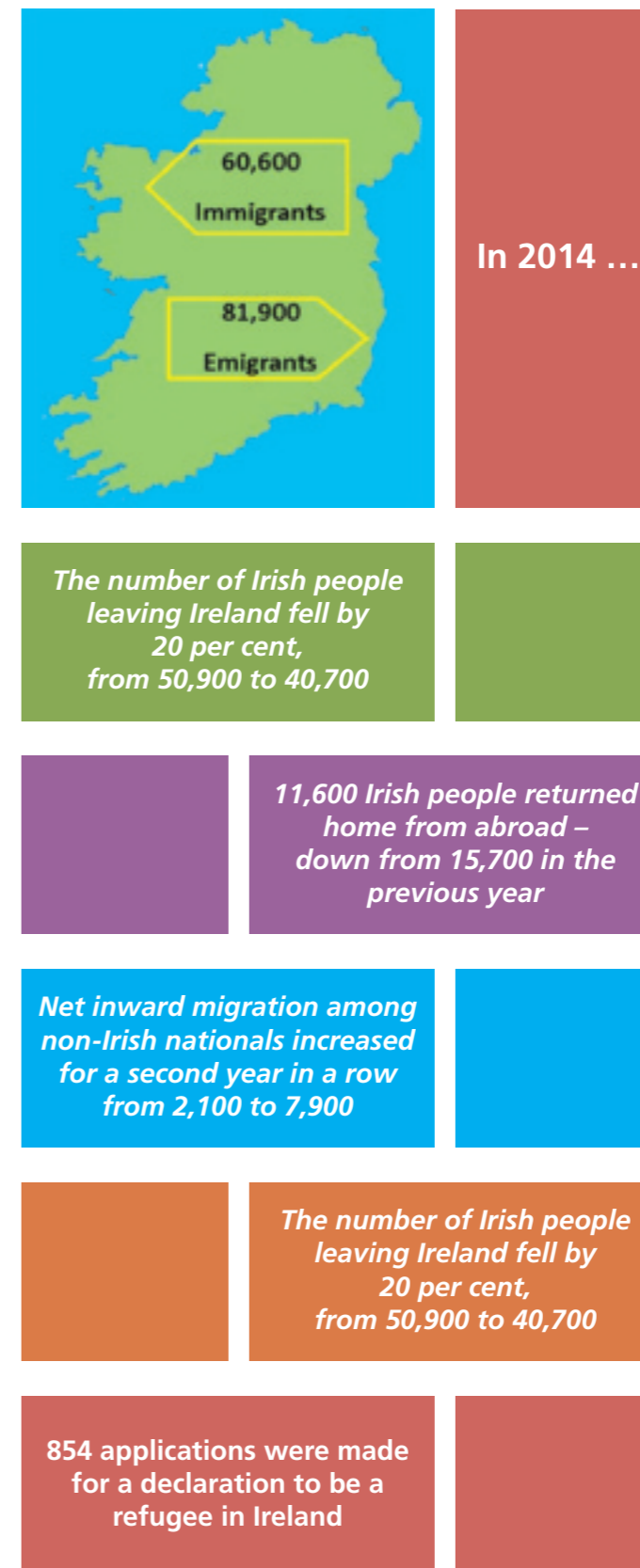
Who is leaving Ireland?
2014 Estimated Emigration
by Nationality



EU 15: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, Austria, Finland and Sweden.
EU 13: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia.

Source: CSO 2014

MIGRATION STATISTICS



Source: CSO 2014 and Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner

Church without Frontiers, Mother to All

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Jesus is 'the evangeliser par excellence and the Gospel in person' (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 209). His solicitude, particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalised, invites all of us to care for the frailest and to recognise his suffering countenance, especially in the victims of new forms of poverty and slavery. The Lord says: 'I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me' (Mt 25:35-36). The mission of the Church, herself a pilgrim in the world and the Mother of all, is thus to love Jesus Christ, to adore and love him, particularly in the poorest and most abandoned; among these are certainly migrants and refugees, who are trying to escape difficult living conditions and dangers of every kind. For this reason, the theme for this year's World Day of Migrants and Refugees is: *Church without frontiers, Mother to all*.

The Church opens her arms to welcome all people, without distinction or limits, in order to proclaim that 'God is love' (1 Jn 4:8,16). After his death and resurrection, Jesus entrusted to the disciples the mission of being his witnesses and proclaiming the Gospel of joy and mercy. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples left the Upper Room with courage and enthusiasm; the strength of the Holy Spirit overcame their doubts and uncertainties and enabled all to understand the disciples' preaching in their own language. From the beginning, the Church has been a mother with a heart open to the whole world, and has been without borders. This mission has continued for two thousand years. But even in the first centuries, the missionary proclamation spoke of the universal motherhood of the Church, which was then developed in the writings of the Fathers and taken up by the Second Vatican Council. The Council Fathers spoke of *Ecclesia Mater* to explain the Church's nature. She begets sons and daughters and 'takes them in and embraces them with her love and in her heart' (*Lumen Gentium*, 14).

The Church without frontiers, Mother to all, spreads throughout the world a culture of acceptance and solidarity, in which no one is seen as useless, out of place or disposable. When living out this motherhood effectively, the Christian community nourishes, guides and indicates the way, accompanying all with patience, and drawing close to them through prayer and works of mercy.

Today this takes on a particular significance. In fact, in an age of such vast movements of migration, large numbers of people are leaving their homelands, with a suitcase full of fears and desires, to undertake a hopeful and dangerous trip in search of more humane living conditions. Often, however, such migration gives rise to suspicion and hostility, even in ecclesial communities, prior to any knowledge of the migrants' lives or their stories of persecution and destitution. In such cases, suspicion and prejudice conflict with the biblical commandment of welcoming with respect and solidarity the stranger in need.

On the other hand, we sense in our conscience the call to touch human misery, and to put into practice the commandment of love that Jesus left us when he identified himself with the stranger, with the one who suffers, with all the innocent victims of violence and exploitation. Because of the weakness of our nature, however, 'we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord's wounds at arm's length' (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 270).

The courage born of faith, hope and love enables us to reduce the distances that separate us from human misery. Jesus Christ is always waiting to be recognised in migrants and refugees, in displaced persons and in exiles, and through them he calls us to share our resources, and occasionally to give up something of our acquired riches. Pope Paul VI spoke of this when he said that 'the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others' (*Octogesima Adveniens*, 23).

The multicultural character of society today, for that matter, encourages the Church to take on new commitments of solidarity, communion and evangelisation. Migration movements, in fact, call us to deepen and strengthen the values needed to guarantee peaceful co-existence between persons and cultures. Achieving mere tolerance that respects diversity and ways of sharing between different backgrounds and cultures is not sufficient. This is precisely where the Church contributes to overcoming frontiers and encouraging the 'moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalisation ... towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world' (*Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2014*).

Migration movements, however, are on such a scale that only a systematic and active cooperation between States and international organisations can be capable of regulating and managing such movements effectively. For migration affects everyone, not only because of the extent of the phenomenon, but also because of 'the social, economic, political, cultural and religious problems it raises, and the dramatic challenges it poses to nations and the international community' (*Caritas in Veritate*, 62).

At the international level, frequent debates take place regarding the appropriateness, methods and required norms to deal with the phenomenon of migration. There are agencies and organisations on the international, national and local level which work strenuously to serve those seeking a better life through migration. Notwithstanding their generous and laudable efforts, a more decisive and constructive action is required, one which relies on a universal network of cooperation, based on safeguarding the dignity and centrality of every human person. This will lead to greater effectiveness in the fight against the shameful and criminal trafficking of human beings, the violation of fundamental rights, and all forms of violence, oppression and enslavement. Working together, however, requires reciprocity, joint action, openness and trust, in the knowledge that 'no country can singlehandedly face the difficulties associated with this phenomenon, which is now so widespread that it affects every continent in the twofold movement of immigration and emigration' (*Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2014*).

It is necessary to respond to the globalisation of migration with the globalisation of charity and cooperation, in such a way as to make the conditions of migrants more humane. At the same time, greater efforts are needed to guarantee the easing of conditions, often brought about by war or famine, which compel whole peoples to leave their native countries.

Solidarity with migrants and refugees must be accompanied by the courage and creativity necessary to develop, on a world-wide level, a more just and equitable financial and economic order, as well as an increasing commitment to peace, the indispensable condition for all authentic progress.

Dear migrants and refugees! You have a special place in the heart of the Church, and you help her to enlarge her heart and to manifest her motherhood towards the entire human family. Do not lose your faith and hope! Let us think of the Holy Family during the flight in Egypt: just as the maternal heart of the Blessed Virgin and the kind heart of Saint Joseph kept alive the confidence that God would never abandon them, so in you may the same hope in the Lord never be wanting. I entrust you to their protection and I cordially impart to all of you my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 3 September 2014

Franciscus

PRAYER FOR MIGRANTS

Dear Lord,

Be with the displaced and the migrant.

Be with those who have lost contact with their families.

Be with those who long for a friendly face.

Be with those who long for a loving touch.

Be with those who are weary and find it hard to keep going.

Be with those who are cold and long for a warm fire and a cosy chair.

Be with those who sleep on hard ground and long for a comfortable bed.

Be with those who have no home.

Be with those who long to feel safe from wars and hatred.

Be with those who are in hiding from violent people.

Be with those who have lost hope.

*Be with those today who have to leave their homes
to look for a better or a safer life.*

Grant them a safe journey and welcome wherever they go.

Be with those who have been trafficked.

*Grant that they might meet a compassionate person
who will release them and give them back their freedom.*

*Be with those who are vulnerable and alone,
especially children.*

*Grant them protection from those
who would exploit their vulnerability.*

*Be with those today
who are separated from loved ones at the time of death.*

*Grant them a safe home in heaven
and eternal life in your presence.*

Be with me today and with those I love.

*Help us to recognise you in all the people we meet,
in the homeless,*

in the sick,

in the needy,

and in the stranger.

*Help us to extend a caring hand to all your people
so that we can build a better, just and caring world
where all will be one.*

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.



'Church without Frontiers,
Mother to All'

World Migrant Sunday 2015



Council for
Immigrants



Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL



Presider: Lord Jesus: Today you ask us to welcome into our hearts and lives those who have come to our shores to escape wars, poverty, oppression and violence. Grant us an open heart and mind, free of fear and doubt to welcome them into our communities.

For Pope Francis, the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Refugees, the Cardinals and Bishops, that they may lead us in solidarity with migrants, refugees and vulnerable people.
We pray to the Lord. **Lord hear our prayer.**

For all those who have to leave their homes because of violence, poverty and corruption. May they find acceptance and understanding on their journey and be welcomed with Christian hospitality.
We pray to the Lord. **Lord hear our prayer.**

For our politicians and lawmakers, that they will enforce laws that protect the rights and dignity of those who are most vulnerable in our country.
We pray to the Lord. **Lord hear our prayer.**

For our loved ones who are overseas this Christmas, give them strength to face their challenges and look kindly on those who are no longer in contact with their family.
We pray to the Lord. **Lord hear our prayer.**

For the emigrants and immigrants of our parish, that they may find support and care within the Church and the communities in which they live.
We pray to the Lord. **Lord hear our prayer.**

For those who are gathered here. May we through our action and example contribute to the building of a better world. May we reject bigotry, racism and discrimination and instead may we demonstrate understanding, compassion and welcome.
We pray to the Lord. **Lord hear our prayer.**

For those who died seeking a better life, especially the thousands who died in the waters off Lampedusa. May the Lord welcome them into his house and give comfort to their families.
We pray to the Lord. **Lord hear our prayer.**

Conclusion: Lord God, in faith we pray to you. Be near to us as we pray, and be close to us as we work in your service. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHRISTMAS 2014 – SUGGESTED HOMILY NOTES

As I think of Irish emigrants this Christmas, I think of December 1847 when the famine ship docked in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This was the ship infested with the cholera epidemic – and a journey that had truly horrific consequences.

Some of the survivors went into the small church in Halifax to celebrate Christmas, whilst large numbers were buried in the local graveyard. Many years afterwards this writer visited that churchyard and noticed the memorial crosses erected and the many Irish names of those that died that month. It was such a moving and sad experience.

The Catholic community of Nova Scotia welcomed them – some survivors recovered their health and remained to become good Canadian citizens. The welcome they received from the little parish near the harbour must have overcome them; they experienced the Church as Mother in a way that had no bounds. They were nursed and comforted by the poor Christians of Halifax in the spirit of the first Christmas.

Their inescapable needs were so wonderfully met. The phrases, 'the word became flesh, he lived amongst us' (John 1:14); 'For a son has been born for us, a son has been given to us' (Isaiah 9:5) made stunning sense for them. Remember this 'famine ship' was on the way to the US, but because of the deaths and diseases on board they chose to dock further north in this little port. So it was a surprise visit of people in degradation and deprivation, and the local Church rose massively to the challenge.

That story of the Irish emigrant and the Church has been replicated in many places since. The mid-nineteenth century Irish emigrants set a pattern for many communities in the New World. They were integrated into the new parishes and they became helpers in their communities welcoming the next arrivals.

Where did these strangers find home? They found it in the local parishes of Brooklyn, Boston, Brisbane, Cleveland and Chicago. After Mass on Sundays they met the other new arrivals, heard about home, collected their letters (before PO Box numbers existed), shared the news and partook in the sacred meal.

The legacy of the faith kept them together: in a few generations they were very successful and paid back with interest the initial care and encouragement they received from Mother Church. They became prominent in the economic, political and ecclesiastical spheres and soon became very important people and contributed so much to the expansion of the 'People of God'. The hope that was endowed in them helped them to overcome so many obstacles.

It can also do the same for this 'austerity' generation – emigrants who are suffering such dissonance from suddenly having to leave the place they called home and struggle in far-off places during a 'world recession'. The Church is with them as mother in New York, New Zealand, New England, and ready to embrace their plight as the little parish in Halifax did in 'Black '47'.

The Spirit knows no bounds.

Gerry French SSC

WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES, 18 JANUARY 2015 – SUGGESTED HOMILY NOTES

We live in an age of globalisation. It is understandable then that many people would arrive on our shores wanting to better their lives. We as Christians need to consider that it is right and natural that these people have hopes and dreams of a better life and want to make it a reality. They hope for a life that is more peaceful, productive and meaningful. We need to reflect, respond to and understand them and to welcome them warmly.

Equally a migrant has to respect their host country, enjoy and be grateful for the welcome. Immigrants have a duty to integrate into the host country, respecting its national identity and traditions.

We as a Christian group must bring about a Church without frontiers and a mother to all. The temptation to view migrants in a negative way may cause tension: lack of appreciation of their culture, their way of life and family values. There may also be a lack of understanding of how being a refugee may result in people being separate from their family.

The Church in Ireland today can hugely benefit from the energy, living faith and contribution of migrants. Through their participation and living witness of the joy of the gospel they positively contribute to the life of the Church.

The wonderful gift of migration is that we wake up to find we have new neighbours, working in the same shops, singing the same songs, having the same hopes. Migration heightens fraternity among humans. Thank God for people on the move among us.

Sr Julie Doran OLA



TIPS FOR REMEMBERING MIGRANTS AT CHRISTMAS AND ON WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

In the Parish

Invite people to bring forward the names of family members who have emigrated, and invite new members of your parish to bring forward the names of family members they have left behind in their home country. Leave these names in the sanctuary area and include them in prayers for Mass.

Have a map of the world in the church and invite people to stick a pin with a name flag on the spot where their loved one is or where they have come from.

Ask people to write the names of loved ones they are separated from this Christmas in a book and place this book in the sanctuary to be remembered over Christmas.

Organise a migrant coffee morning where families affected by emigration can come together with families who have moved into your parish to share a cup of tea and exchange experiences.

Use hymns and prayers from the languages of your congregation to celebrate national feast days throughout the year e.g. Independence Day, Poland (11 November 2015) or St Patrick's Day (17 March 2015)

In the Home

Place a framed picture of family members you are separated from on a mantelpiece or shelf in the living room. Place a candle beside the picture and keep that candle lit over Christmas.

Keep a journal over Christmas. Ask family members to write in this, including children and any visitors who drop in. Send it to your loved ones after Christmas.

Remain in contact with loved ones overseas as much as possible by phone, email or Skype.

Keep a candle lit in your front window when you are at home. Lighting a candle in the window is an ancient Irish Christmas ritual during which prayers are said for those who are not present.

MENTAL HEALTH AND MIGRATION

When people decide to migrate to another country, a number of factors motivate them, both personal and professional. It's not easy to leave your home, where there are established roots of love and ties with family and friends.

Our home is deeply embedded in us in ways we can't even begin to understand: the smell of the ground when it rains, the local flowers only found at home, the colours of the sky at sunset or at daybreak, the location of our home, the location of our neighbours' homes, the shopping places and eating places, the hugs and internal squabbling of the family: they all pull you back when you are away from home.

The diversity of thoughts and feelings about moving physical space, of emotional adjustments, of interacting with new and different individuals, different work and living spaces, of diverse systems and ways of doing things, from as simple as getting a driving licence to as complex as buying a house, and everything in between, can be very daunting. Emotions about loss of the known and hope for things to come can be a heady mixture that can cause people much anguish and sleepless nights.

How do we comprehend all these diversities, and grow and flourish in our country of adoption? Among other things, there are a few suggestions overleaf to keep at the back of your mind for our loved ones adapting to life in a new country and to be mindful of when welcoming new parishioners into your community.

And what about those families who are left behind? IECE Board Member, Fr Alan Hilliard, recently wrote in an *Irish Times*' Generation Emigration segment:

The concept of 'migratory mourning' is one that is emerging in psychology today. It is most likely a clinical name for nostalgia and homesickness. This concept tells us that mourning occurs in those who go, those who are left behind, and those who return. The findings are only giving expression to what we always knew but what we continually find hard to face.

Emigration tears at the heart of families, communities and societies. Emigration – and especially the loss of our young – grinds a country down. We are ground down socially, culturally and economically because as every person emigrates we are losing possibilities for our future.

When the last of the islanders left the Blasket Islands in the 1950s, they said they could no longer stay because all their young folk had gone. Life, in the fullest sense of the word, was no longer sustainable.

*The Tilda Report [Trinity College Dublin's longitudinal study on ageing (tilda.ie)] is brave; it is saying what many have suppressed. Finally, people are being given permission to say they miss people they love. Finally, scientific research has acknowledged the impact of loss on the people who go and people who are left behind. Finally, loss that many can't speak about is beginning to be recognised as significant and damaging. Finally, we can see the desire among emigrants to leave in search of a place where they can 'be more' leaves others with an emptiness within themselves that may never be filled.**

* www.irishtimes.com/generationemigration (accessed 24 November 2014). Generation Emigration is a permanent section in the *Irish Times* online newspaper focussing on issues relating to Irish migrants.

1) *Is dá thrían tionnsgnadh* – Begun is two-thirds done

This old Irish proverb highlights the importance of making a good start to a journey, and never is this more the case than when planning to move your life to another country. Many people run into difficulties in the initial stage of their migration by not having researched their destination thoroughly. Knowing how long it can take to find accommodation or a job in a particular country (or even a given town or city), will mitigate anxiety and stress levels upon arrival. Often people don't expect rents to be so high, or have insufficient savings as they wait for that all-important first pay cheque. Planning your move and knowing what to expect will go a long way to making the transition less stressful.

3) Remember why you/they moved

When in doubt, remember the reasons and the goals of the move. There will be times when you'll look up at the sky and ask God, why did I move here? Why? When there is no car in the beginning months and travelling by bus or train is so tiring, when the winter winds prevent even a short walk to the shop, when setting up basic furniture items at the new home requires trips to nearby car boot sales, when our children are adjusting in the new school system, when at our new job place we are a minority in myriad ways (language, accent, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, etc.), and when there are no old friends or family to hold and hug us; yes these are the times you will have serious doubts. However, at those hardest times, always remind yourself constantly, even singing aloud, the reasons and goals for your move.

2) Keep the link with family and friends in the country of origin

While making new friends is essential to establishing new roots so as to create a warm and happy place of existence, it is also essential to keep the links with family and friends in the country you left behind. Both nurture the soul in different ways. Links with family and friends from home provide warmth and emotional security and serve as a reminder that one is not totally alone, even though we may be alone in a new, diverse environment. Calling, texting, messaging, Facebook, Skype: employ all available means of technology to remain connected with them. Yes, missed weddings, birthdays and, above all, missed opportunities to be with ageing parents will hurt the heart, but there is much consolation to be gained from regular contact with family and friends. It also makes it easier to ask for help should you need it. Thankfully the world is now a much smaller place, and it is worth remembering that your family and friends will want to hear from you – in good times and in bad.

4) Learn about and embrace your new community

If you can, try to begin prior to arrival. Learn as much as possible about the country, about the state and city in which you are planning to settle. If you have children, try to find out about the schools in the area you might be living in. Conduct an internet search, if possible, or find out through friends about renting accommodation. Prepare well for moving to a new, diverse place; the more informed you are, the higher your comfort level in the different environment. After arrival in the country of adoption, try learning new things, meeting and learning about new people, new systems and new ways of living. It is always worth learning about and involving yourself in your local parishes. Parishes are not homogenous groupings of people – rather they are a vibrant, multicultural community of faith. They can be a shelter and safe haven for those most in need or for anybody searching for a sense of place and belonging.

REFLECTION

Migrants' Hands

Migrant, give me your hand.
They say you cannot stay here,
This is not your land.
But to me you belong
Because you work on it with your hands.

Overseas worker, give me your hand.
It is half empty, you earn half of what I do.
But I know it is not right
Because your fatigue is the same.
I feel it in your hands.

Domestic Worker, give me your hand.
It keeps my house running
And my family comfortable.
Why do I look down on you,
You who hold my children's hands?

Illegal migrant, give me your hand.
You arrived uninvited
And kept quiet to save your chance.
Now they send you home
But one day across borders
We will stretch our hands.

All of you on the move, give me your hands.
You are so different and talk strange
Because I never moved
And do not know your direction.
Thanks for teaching me
That God's skin
Has the colour of our hands.



G. Battistella, Scalabrini Migration Centre



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