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The Spoils of Spiritual Empire: Emigrant Contributions to Nineteenth-Century Irish Catholic Church-Building

Sarah Roddy

The role of Irish Catholic emigrants in their native church's 'devotional revolution' has been understood primarily as a passive rather than an active one. A remarkable drain of over two million of the poorest people in the decade or so after the Great Famine, it is agreed, both increased the ratio of priests to people, and left behind the more prosperous and already more religiously devout sections of the population: ideal conditions in which to impose even greater Ultramontane orthodoxy.[1] In at least one respect, however, post-Famine emigrants were expected to contribute directly to this transformation. While the treatment of the Irish abroad as a vital source of familial remittances and as a cash cow for political purposes represent familiar territory, the Catholic Church's exploitation of this source of funding has had considerably less attention.[2] This essay will therefore explore the resort of Irish clergy to fundraising for church-building among the Irish diaspora. It will assess the origins, nature and extent of the practice, ask how it was that emigrants were persuaded to contribute in such numbers to churches in which they would never even worship, and finally determine what this may mean for the relationship between the Irish at home and abroad.

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[1] Emmet Larkin, 'The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850–75', *American Historical Review*, 77 (1972), 625–52; S.J. Connolly, *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dundalk, 1985), 54.

[2] On the significance of private remittances see David Fitzpatrick, 'Emigration, 1871–1921' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland VI Ireland under the Union, II 1870–1921* (Oxford, 1996), 622–5. On political fundraising among the diaspora, see M.V. Hazel, 'First Link: Parnell's American Tour, 1880', *Éire-Ireland*, 15 (1980), 6–24. Mention of clerical fundraising is made in Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford, 1985), 458 and Ignatius Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe, 1850–1914* (Dublin, 1995), 53.

I

While much discussion has centred on relative church attendance levels before and after the Famine, it is arguably the churches themselves which provide the most cogent evidence of Emmet Larkin's thesis of a specifically mid-century devotional revolution.[3] Some scholars have attempted to counter Larkin by highlighting a gradual and continuous process of Roman conformity stretching back to the eighteenth century. The transformation in devotional practices, they contest, was not nearly so rapid as the term 'revolution' implies.[4] That may yet be proven – and Larkin has since clarified that 1850–75 was a period of 'consolidation' in a longer-term process – but, with regard to the arena in which devotions were practiced, a very clear-cut difference can be discerned between the generality of churches that were constructed before the Famine and those that were built after.[5] According to one estimate, in the century following Catholic Emancipation, twenty-four cathedrals and some 3,000 churches were built in Irish parishes.[6] While the period between 1820 and 1840 may have seen the most intense activity, the chapels built tended to be functional 'barn' structures, designed primarily to bring Masses in from the open air or out of smaller thatched buildings in poor repair.[7] It is likely that even these new, slated edifices did not provide

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[3] On church attendance see David W. Miller, 'Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine', *Journal of Social History*, 9 (1975), 81–98.

[4] Desmond Keenan, *The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: A Sociological Study* (Dublin, 1983); Thomas McGrath, 'The Tridentine Evolution of Modern Irish Catholicism, 1563–1962: A Re-evaluation of the "Devotional Revolution" Thesis', *Recusant History*, 20 (1991), 511–23; Eugene Hynes, *Knock: The Virgin's Apparition in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cork, 2008), 91–108.

[5] Emmet Larkin, 'Introduction' in idem, *The Historical Dimensions of Irish Catholicism* (Dublin, 1997), 7.

[6] T. P. Kennedy, 'Church Building' in P.J. Corish (ed.), *A History of Irish Catholicism, V: The Church since Emancipation* (Dublin, 1970), 8. Larkin cited an 1864 estimate of 1,805 churches built since 1800, a figure with which Desmond Keenan was in broad agreement. Emmet Larkin, 'Economic Growth, Capital Investment and the Roman Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland', *American Historical Review*, 72 (1967), 858; Myles O'Reilly, *Progress of Catholicity in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century Being a Paper Read before the Catholic Congress of Mechlin, September, 1864* (Dublin, 1865); Keenan, *Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 119.

[7] Emmet Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Church in Pre-Famine Ireland 1750–1850* (Dublin, 2006), 137–89; S.J. Connolly, *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1780–1845* (2nd edition, Dublin, 2001), 108–9; Keenan, *Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 117–8; S.J. Connolly, 'Catholicism in Ulster, 1800–50' in Peter Roebuck (ed.), *Plantation to Partition: Essays in Ulster History in Honour of J.L.*

sufficient accommodation – standing or seated – for the rapidly growing population.[8] By contrast, in the second half of the century, despite the fall in population brought about by the Famine, these churches were augmented by, and in very many cases remodelled into or replaced by, much grander, more ornate and far costlier places of worship.

This was not, as Desmond Keenan has acknowledged, a simple case of providing more room for congregations, but was intended to send a symbolic message.[9] The message was in fact two-fold, and was aimed at Catholics and non-Catholics alike. First, an increasingly Ultramontane hierarchy, headed by that most rigidly Roman archbishop, Paul Cullen, wished to see religious life more fully centred on the parish church, and thereby more fully supervised by parish clergy. 'Stations' in lay people's homes and 'patterns' at holy wells were frowned upon as occasions attended by dubious secular revelry, and were increasingly stamped out.[10] The consecrated chapel became the scene of more orthodox devotions: rosaries, benedictions, novenas and especially parish missions.[11] Yet where churches were merely larger versions of the ordinary Irish cottage, perhaps still with thatched rooves, clay floors or unplastered walls, or, in the better case scenario, 'huge and ungainly barns', they hardly provided sufficiently holy settings, nor offered sufficient reason to the waverer to attend.[12] The power of infinitely grander and awe-inspiring churches to attract more and more regular visitors should not be discounted.

Secondly, post-Famine churches were intended to project outwardly, in Archbishop John MacHale's words, 'the majesty and splendour of religion'.[13] With Catholic chapels, for historic reasons, often situated on inferior sites, sometimes even outside the bounds of villages, there was a growing feeling that they ought to compensate by being architecturally outstanding. In particular, there was a need to outshine those Anglican churches that were

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McCracken (Belfast, 1981), 164.

8 Connolly, *Priests and People*, 108.

9 Keenan, *Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 119.

10 Connolly, *Priests and People*, 149–50.

11 Larkin, 'Devotional Revolution', 644–5.

12 William Carleton described 'a long, thatched chapel, only distinguished from a dwelling house by its want of chimneys, and a small stone cross that stands on the top of the eastern gable'. William Carleton, *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (3 vols, Dublin, 1834), II, 161. While the Halls encountered barn churches in 1841, thatched chapels could certainly still be found in the post-Famine landscape. See *The Nation*, 7 June 1854; Mr and Mrs S.C. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character, &c.* (3 vols, London, 1841), II, 18–19.

13 Keenan, *Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 119.

often the usurped former property of the pre-Reformation Roman church.[14] If the chapel could not be centrally located, the logic went, it might at least demonstrate that it served the majority of the population through other means. The pointed words of one bishop at the newly consecrated cathedral in Limerick that it was, with its sky-scraping tower, a 'magnificent' building 'before which the glories of the olden temples paled' is a clear reference to this point.[15] Such considerations had even greater currency in Ulster, where, as Oliver Rafferty has remarked, new churches were 'a statement to the world that Catholicism was no longer content to be retiring and elusive in the northern Protestant landscape'.[16] The bishop of Dromore, for one, saw putting churches into 'architectural order' as 'a matter of importance, especially in the north of Ireland where Catholics are regarded as an inferior race'.[17] Post-Famine church-building, therefore, reflected, and was expected to reflect, a new Catholic orthodoxy, self-confidence and ebulliance.

Expressing all of these qualities architecturally was necessarily expensive, particularly given the overwhelming preference for ornate neo-Gothic composition. In the late 1830s the great Gothic revivalist A.W.N. Pugin received the first of several commissions in Ireland, including a number of parish churches in County Wexford, the chapel of St Peter's seminary in the same county, and the cathedrals at Enniscorthy (also Wexford) and Killarney, County Kerry.[18] His stylistic example was followed by 'the Irish Pugin', J. J. McCarthy, whose extraordinarily productive career, begun in 1846, saw him work on several dozen ecclesiastical buildings all over Ireland, including at least seven cathedrals.[19] Other prolific Irish ecclesiastical architects followed in their train. These included George Ashlin, who formed a partnership with Pugin's son Edward in 1860 and is credited with work on at least sixty churches across the island; William Hague, a Cavan builder's son who appears to have been a former pupil of McCarthy and who was commissioned to design or remodel several churches and other ecclesiastical

[14] On siting of churches see Kennedy, *Church-Building*, 8; Keenan, *Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 120.

[15] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 July 1861.

[16] Oliver Rafferty, *Catholicism in Ulster, 1603–1983: An Interpretive History* (London, 1994), 150.

[17] John Pius Leahy to Tobias Kirby, 24 October 1872, Irish College Rome Archive (hereafter ICRA), Kirby papers, KIR/1872/298.

[18] Nigel Yates, *The Religious Condition of Ireland, 1770–1850* (Oxford, 2006), 238. For detailed photographs of many of Pugin's Irish churches, see Pugin Foundation, http://www.puginfoundation.org/irish_buildings/ [accessed 5 April 2010].

[19] Jeanne Sheehy, *J.J. McCarthy and the Gothic Revival in Ireland* (Belfast, 1977).

institutions in both south Ulster and the Dublin area; Andrew Egan, dubbed 'the builder of Tuam' and reputedly responsible for every Catholic church within twenty miles of that town; and John Benson, who was the architect of several Gothic revival churches in both his native Sligo and in County Cork.

While it is clear from the above that priests could call upon the services of more specifically local, as well as prominent national architects to build their churches, and that this likely translated into corresponding differentials of cost, it is also the case that any kind of professional input added to the overall bill. Certainly, the architect's pursuit of stylistic integrity in buildings could sometimes clash with the commissioning priest's greater consciousness of financial constraints. William Hague, for instance, having proposed altars for the parish church in the County Kildare town of Rathangan, was dismayed to be told by the incumbent Fr Kavanagh that his design was too costly, and that Kavanagh had seen a less expensive, if profoundly out of keeping, example in a Dublin chapel which he wished to copy. Evidently the priest got his cheaper tabernacle, but not from Hague: the architect related this tale with not a little relish at Kavanagh's inquest, where cause of death was recorded as a blow to the head from a falling altar statue.[20] This resort of priests to copying other designs to cut costs may have been a reasonably common occurrence, although not usually with such disastrous consequences.[21]

Nevertheless, the scale and pretention of the new church buildings rendered former fundraising methods inadequate. While the average pre-Famine parish church cost *c.*£400, even the smallest and most basic post-Famine gothic chapel was built for anywhere between £2,000 and £3,000.[22] The bill for more ambitious parish churches routinely ran into many thousands, while that for cathedrals could be astronomical. Tuam's Cathedral of the Assumption, built between 1828 and 1837, cost £20,000: cathedrals finally completed at the turn of the century cost multiples of that amount. St Colman's cathedral in Queenstown (now Cobh) in County Cork was built for a final total of £235,000; the cathedral of St Eunan and St Columba in Letterkenny, County Donegal ended up costing over £300,000.[23] As the historian of the diocese of Killaloe, Ignatius Murphy, has outlined, priests in some parishes had a deal of trouble extracting even £400 from

[20] *Freeman's Journal*, 7 October 1886.

[21] Keenan, *Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 121.

[22] Ibid., 121–2; *Irish Builder*, 1 June 1860, *passim*.

[23] Peter Galloway, *The Cathedrals of Ireland* (Belfast, 1992), 55, 156.

their congregations in the 1820s and 1830s. A weekly halfpenny subscription was tried and abandoned by many priests; charity lectures by notable guest speakers attracted people from miles around and proved more lucrative, but could hardly be a regular occurrence; while, finally, donations from candidates at election time were 'handsome', but were obviously intermittent and may well have tailed off by the time of the Famine.[24] Although charity lectures, offerings from congregations and larger donations from more well-heeled parishioners continued to be exploited in the second half of the century, more expensive churches would clearly require more imaginative means of raising money.

II

It was in this context that enterprising priests increasingly turned to the diaspora to plug gaps in funding, most notably by undertaking tours abroad in emigrant destinations. By spending several months conducting house-to-house collections, and delivering charity sermons, clergymen hoped to reap healthy sums. There was an element in this of following – perhaps unconsciously – Presbyterian example. Although the 1830s and 1840s saw intensive Presbyterian church-building in Belfast, largely funded by the city's wealthy laymen, there was a parallel history of ministers of poorer, especially rural congregations seeking money for necessary building projects abroad. In 1843, for example, the newly installed incumbent of the infant Portrush congregation, Jonathan Simpson, made the first of three successful visits to the United States begging funds for 'a wee kirk'.[25] However, this practice seems to have been substantively discontinued with the advent of the General Assembly's Manse and Church Building Fund for Weak Congregations in 1854. At a meeting to explain the parameters of the new scheme, Rev. James Morgan, himself an able church-builder, was particularly disapproving of foreign fundraising tours. They forced long clerical absences on congregations that could ill-bear them, they did not always reap adequate rewards, and they were, he said, 'disrespectable to religion'.[26] Morgan saw an unbecoming indignity in these sojourns; as he apparently thought to himself on meeting

[24] Ignatius Murphy, 'Building a Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland', *The Other Clare*, 2 (1978), 20–5.

[25] Jonathan Simpson, *Annals of My Life, Labours and Travels* (Belfast, 1895), 123–5.

[26] For similar sentiments, see W.D. Killen, *Memoir of John Edgar* (Belfast, 1867), 174.

a young Ulster minister in London, despite letters of character from home, 'everyone thinks you are a rogue and will treat you as such'.[27]

Notwithstanding a confirmed case of such roguery in 1842—an Irishman in London impersonated a parish priest and fraudulently solicited donations for an invented County Wicklow chapel-building fund—there were evidently no such qualms in the Catholic Church.[28] Indeed, just as Presbyterians were abandoning such fundraising methods, Catholic clergy began stepping up what had hitherto been a practice of last resort. Before the Famine, fundraising tours had been instigated by at least two bishops. William Browne of Galway and William Higgins of Ardagh had personally made trips to London in 1837 and North America in 1842 respectively.[29] As Higgins told Cullen in Rome, 'in order to complete the undertaking [St Mel's cathedral in Longford Town] I must not confine my exertions to a narrow sphere and having done what I can in Ireland, it will be necessary to appeal to the religious generosity of other countries'.[30] These examples were to be followed more widely during the second half of the century.

Initially, a number of small-scale collections took place on behalf of churches and cathedrals during and in the immediate aftermath of the Famine. Fr Batt O'Connor, parish priest of Milltown, County Kerry, was dispatched to Boston to collect for Killarney cathedral in 1847.[31] Similarly Fr Michael Quinlivan, curate in Ennis, fundraised for a local church in England in 1850.[32] So too Fr Theobald Mathew made a fundraising trip to the United States

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[27] *Belfast News Letter*, 20 January 1854.

[28] *Freeman's Journal*, 31 October 1842. Another such case was reported in 1858 in Liverpool. *Armagh Guardian*, 6 August 1858.

[29] William Browne to Paul Cullen, 19 August 1837, ICRA, Cullen papers, CUL/1837/368a; William Higgins to Cullen, 8 November 1841, ICRA, Cullen papers, CUL/1841/692.

[30] St Mel's cathedral was by no means unusual in not being finally completed for another fifty years. (*Freeman's Journal*, 12 May 1889). One local historian has noted that O'Higgins had also been given unprecedented leave by other Irish bishops to fundraise in their dioceses. It may be that the scale of his ambition for what he felt would be 'the most extensive and most elegant church of modern times, in any part of the United Kingdom' impressed other prelates, even if the result does not seem entirely at home in its modest surroundings. As Galloway notes, 'it looks as though it was put here by mistake'. M. J. Masterson, 'Centenary of St Mel's Cathedral, 1840–1940', *Ardagh and Clonmacnoise Antiquarian Journal*, 2 (1940), 59; James Mac Namee, *History of the Diocese of Ardagh* (Dublin, 1954), 436; Galloway, *Cathedrals of Ireland*, 171. See also Yates, *Religious Condition of Ireland*, 247.

[31] Shelley Barber (ed.), *The Prendergast Letters: Correspondence from Famine-Era Ireland, 1840–1850* (Amherst, MA, 2006); *Freeman's Journal*, 4 October 1847; ibid., 9 October 1847.

[32] Ignatius Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe, 1800–1850* (Dublin, 1992), 295–6.

between 1849 and 1851. A lack of proper targeting meant that this last trip was remarkably, and perhaps uniquely, unsuccessful. Mathew's appeal as a temperance advocate was cross-denominational and his attempt to raise money not merely for that cause, but also for the completion of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Cork consequently backfired. The non-Catholics in his audiences could not but be left with the uncomfortable impression that their contributions might end up benefiting the Catholic Church, and his efforts therefore raised little but Protestant hackles.[33]

That high-profile failure might have discouraged further efforts, were it not for the successes of the campaign undertaken on behalf of the putative Catholic University. Begun with great fanfare at the reforming Synod of Thurles in 1850, it was anticipated that 'our brethren, who are scattered not only through the sister kingdom and the British Colonies, but throughout the Continent of America' might be appealed to for 'the pecuniary means for the accomplishment of such an object'.[34] This appeal took the form, initially, of an impassioned address by the Catholic University Committee to the Irish in America:

> Ireland turns with confidence to her children in the 'far west', and their numerous and prosperous descendants in the land of freedom. She has nurtured them in the true faith, which she has preserved for them and for herself by the ready sacrifice of earthly possessions, and often, when the occasion demanded, by the generous expenditure of her blood. In poverty she asks for assistance from the wealth and generosity of her friends and children.[35]

At least eight clergymen were subsequently sent in personal pursuit of this assistance. Two went to England – Francis M'Ginity, curate of Dundalk, and Michael Hope, parish priest of Ballymore, County Meath – and six to North America.[36] Robert Mullen, curate of Clonmellon, County Westmeath and Alexander Peyton, curate of Fermoy, County Cork jointly toured the interior

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[33] John F. Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade: Temperance in Nineteenth-Century Ireland and Irish America* (Boston, 2002), 168–9; John Francis Maguire, *Fr Mathew: A Biography* (London, 1865), 256.

[34] *The Synodical Address of the Fathers of the National Council of Thurles to their Beloved Flock, the Catholics of Ireland* (Dublin, 1850), 11.

[35] 'Address of the Catholic University Committee to their Brethren in America', *Battersby's Catholic Register* (1852), 184–6.

[36] *Freeman's Journal*, 12 July 1851.

dioceses of the United States from late 1851 to early 1853.[37] A separate team, consisting of James Donnelly, a future bishop of Clogher, and Philip Devlin, the curate of Buncrana, had been sent in July 1851 and appears to have concentrated on the east coast. They were accompanied on their trans-Atlantic voyage by Daniel Hearne, a well-known Manchester priest, who seems to have collected mainly in Canadian dioceses.[38] Finally, at least one priest was also sent to the United States on behalf of the university in 1864.[39] As head of the university committee, Cullen had written in advance of the collectors to the bishops of the dioceses they planned to visit, asking co-operation.[40] By and large, the collectors got it. There seems to have been a genuine enthusiasm for their cause among some members of the North American hierarchy, particularly Dr Walsh of Halifax, who was an early and vocal champion of the project.[41] In addition, it certainly helped that, as Archbishop Hughes pointed out in a letter to his clergy in New York, the pope himself had sanctioned the collection.[42] All of which resulted in substantial amounts of money – each collector's total ran into the thousands – being gathered for the never-built insitution.[43]

There was an escalation in the number of foreign fundraising trips in the university collectors' wake. The trend appears to have branched into three. First,

[37] Ibid., 22 February 1853.

[38] Hearne was an unusual addition to the team. A prominent pro-Repeal (of the Union and the Corn Laws) minister in Liverpool before embarking on the university collection, he was alone in not returning to his parish once the collection was over, acceding to a request from the bishop of Boston to take on the vacant parish of Taunton, Massachusetts. Anon., 'Very Rev. Daniel Hearne' in *Catholic Directory, Almanac and Registry* (1866), 402.

[39] Bartholomew Woodlock to Archbishop John Mary Odin, New Orleans, 4 September 1863, University of Notre Dame Archives (hereafter UNDA), Odin papers, VI-2-g A.L.S. 4pp. 12mo. 3; William Keane to Paul Kirby, 8 February, 1864, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1864/26.

[40] See, for example, Cullen to John Baptist Purcell, Cincinnati, 8 July 1851, UNDA, Purcell papers, II-4-l; Paul Cullen to Anthony Blanc, New Orleans, 8 July 1851, UNDA, Blanc papers, V-1-b; Paul Cullen to Peter Paul Lefebvre, Detroit, 8 July 1851, UNDA, Lefebvre papers, III-2-h.

[41] *Freeman's Journal*, 1 July 1851; ibid., 16 October 1851; ibid., 13 November 1851.

[42] Ibid., 30 August 1851.

[43] Colin Barr notes that $8,573 or £1,613 had been raised in the US by the end of 1851, while according to Dr Leahy's inaugural lecture as vice-rector of the University, the Irish had been 'enabled by their brethren in Great Britain and America to swell their thousands into tens of thousands'. Colin Barr, *Paul Cullen, John Henry Newman and the Catholic University of Ireland, 1845–1865* (Notre Dame, 2003), 60–2; Patrick Leahy, 'Dr Leahy's Inaugural Lecture as Vice-Rector of the C.U., 16 November 1854', *Catholic University Gazette*, 1 (1855), 285.

of the nineteen Catholic cathedrals built wholly or in part during the second half of the nineteenth century – cathedral-building generally being a process phased out over many years – at least sixteen were partially funded by a priest of the relevant diocese touring abroad in England, Scotland, North America or Australia. Indeed, during that timeframe, only the prelate of Ossory could boast that his episcopal seat in Kilkenny was built using subscriptions gathered entirely within the diocese.[44] Often, as with the University collection, more than one priest was fundraising abroad at a time, and in several cases collection tours were undertaken more than once, as each new phase of building required.[45]

Secondly, there appears to have been a tendency to fundraise abroad for the chapels attached to religious institutions. The Augustinian Fathers in both Galway and Dublin, the Franciscans in Clara, County Offaly and Clonmel, County Tipperary, the Jesuits in Galway, and the nuns of an unspecified St Joseph's convent school each went down this route, with the latter order employing the services of a Canon Magee to do the collecting.[46] The chapel of Carlow College and the seminary in the diocese of Kilmore were similarly funded.[47] It is likely that such activity exploited close connections with sister orders and alumni working among emigrant communities.[48] Moreover, religious orders may have felt it a particular necessity for chapels which were normally the secondary church in a parish, and could not therefore command a monopoly on local peoples' largesse.

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[44] *Freeman's Journal*, 6 October 1857. Of the other two, the builders of St Peter's Cathedral in Belfast almost certainly did not use this method of fundraising, but the cathedral at Loughrea certainly received substantial donations from emigrants in America, even if it is not apparent that a priest was sent abroad to fundraise. (See below.) The planned Killaloe diocesan cathedral in Nenagh, which was never completed, was also begun with the proceeds of a priest's tour in America. *Freeman's Journal*, 28 February 1899; ibid., 8 November 1860; Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe, 1850–1914*, 69–70.

[45] St Patrick's Armagh, for example, necessitated collections in the United States in 1854, 1856, 1868 and 1900. Archdeacon Felix Slane to Joseph Dixon, 4 December 1854, Armagh Diocesan Archives (hereafter ADA), Dixon Papers, II Box 1, Folder 2; *Freeman's Journal*, 26 June 1856; Fr Murphy to Michael Kieran, 1 March 1868, ADA, Kieran Papers, Cathedral collection; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 11 March 1900.

[46] *Freeman's Journal*, 8 November 1853; ibid., 24 May 1869; Anthony Cogan, *The Ecclesiastical History of the Diocese of Meath Ancient and Modern* (3 vols, Dublin, 1867), II, 498; *Freeman's Journal,* 5 December 1881; Edward Murphy S.J., Galway to Fr Daniel Hudson, Notre Dame, 15 August 1882, UNDA, X-2-j - *A.L.S.* - 4pp. - *12mo.* - {1}.

[47] *Freeman's Journal*, 24 May 1887; Nicholas Conaty to Lefebvre, 12 October 1868, UNDA, Lefebvre papers, III-2-l-Printed L.S.–1p.–4to.–{1}.

[48] Fr Michael Page O.S.A., collector for the Galway Augustinian Fathers, was one who mentioned staying with Augustinians in Philadelphia in a letter home. *Freeman's Journal*, 28 February 1854.

Thirdly, and possibly most significantly, there seems to have been a pattern of clerics in poorer parishes seeking donations from emigrants, who often, but not exclusively, had a personal connection to the area. To a great extent, this remains a hidden process. There are a number of mentions of foreign collections for ordinary parish chapels in national newspapers, including the *Nation* and *Freeman's Journal*, with references to be found particularly in speeches made at opening consecration Masses.[49] These can, however, be just a tiny sample of what was by and large a localised undertaking repeated across the country. Nevertheless, this limited evidence, coupled with occasional mentions in parish and diocesan histories, and in the Archives of the Irish College, Rome, hint that it was thought common practice for priests to travel to raise otherwise unobtainable sums in emigrant destinations.[50] As William Hague recalled of his run-in with Fr Kavanagh, when he challenged him on the unsuitability of the cheaper altars he had chosen for the building, the priest laughed, said he was not bound by architectural rules and might very well 'go to America some day, collect funds, and build a church to suit the altars'.[51]

The clerical tour abroad was not, however, the only means of extracting money from the diaspora for religious purposes. The amount of remittances sent home by ordinary Irish emigrants to their families was a source of amazement and curious pride among the great and good in Ireland. Charles Gavan Duffy M.P. spoke for many, when at a meeting to devise how to pay for the completion of St Catherine's Church in Meath Street, Dublin, he

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[49] These include churches at Askeaton, County Limerick, St Johnston, County Donegal, Clogheen, County Tipperary, Louisburg, County Mayo, Manorhamilton, County Leitrim, Clonea, County Waterford, Crosserlough, County Cavan, Omagh, County Tyrone and Castlerea, County Roscommon and Castlebar, County Mayo. *Freeman's Journal*, 10 July 1851; ibid., 3 October 1855; ibid., 6 January 1859; ibid., 17 October 1860; ibid., 20 October 1885; ibid., 26 November 1888; ibid., 19 June 1893; ibid., 2 October 1899; *The Nation*, 28 June 1873.

[50] Terence O'Rorke, *History, Antiquities and Present State of the Parishes of Ballysadare and Kilvarnet, in the County of Sligo* (Dublin, 1878), 498; Cogan, *History of the Diocese of Meath,* II, 495. Those mentioned in the Kirby collection include chapels at Lurgan, County Armagh, Clonmel, County Tipperary, Eniskean, County Cork, Donegal Town and Carrick-on-Shannon, County Leitrim. J.P. Leahy, Newry to Kirby, 24 October, 1872, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1872/298; P.F. Flynn, S.S. Peter and Pauls, Clonmel, to Kirby, 5 February 1873, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1873/54; D. Covenly, Eniskean to Kirby, 4 March 1873, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1873/89; P. Kelly, Donegal Town to Kirby, 24 February 1874, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1874/86); Thomas Fitzgerald, Carrick-on-Shannon to Kirby, 3 May 1874, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1874/217. See also Lawrence J. Taylor, *Occasions of Faith: An Anthropology of Irish Catholics* (Philadelphia, 1995), 157.

[51] *Freeman's Journal*, 7 October 1886.

reminded those present – including Archbishop Cullen – that 'it was a known fact that more money was transmitted home by Irish emigrants in every part of the world than by emigrants of any other nation'.[52] Indeed, an otherwise puzzling note in one of the earliest issues of the *Dublin Builder*, the magazine of Irish architecture, pointed out that 'serving girls and working people' in New York had recently been paid one and a half million dollars in dividends on the 'upwards of 30,000,000 dollars' they had deposited in savings banks. The clear implication was that a portion of this wealth might ultimately help pay for Irish architects' work.[53] Priests and church-building projects certainly commanded their share of the bounty. It is highly likely, if difficult to prove, that a significant proportion of cash remittances sent to family members, particularly elderly parents who did not intend to emigrate, found its way into church offerings. Meanwhile, direct emigrant contributions were certainly made to bazaars, or raffles, which became an increasingly popular method of raising money from the 1860s. Tickets were frequently sent for sale to emigrant destinations, and on more than one occasion there were reports of postponing the drawing of prizes until such time as tickets could be more widely distributed among the diaspora.[54] There were also cases of emigrants remitting money or liturgical items directly to Irish clergy.[55]

Given these various revenue streams, putting a reliable figure on how much emigrant money was contributed to post-Famine Irish church-building is a tall order. That did not, however, prevent confident estimates being made in the early years of the new century by those answering criticism of inappropriately high expenditure.[56] Horace Plunkett's ill-judged critique of the 'extravagance' of so many 'gaudy edifices' built 'at the expense of poor communities', which,

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[52] Ibid., 31 January 1854.

[53] 'Property of the Working Classes in America', *Dublin Builder*, 1 September 1859, 118.

[54] *Freeman's Journal*, 3 November 1890.

[55] *Catholic Telegraph*, 26 May 1860; Alfred P. Smyth, *Faith, Famine and Fatherland in the Irish Midlands: Perceptions of a Priest and Historian. Anthony Cogan, 1826–1872* (Dublin, 1992), 147–8; *Freeman's Journal*, 1 July 1858.

[56] For the virulent, anti-clerical take of a Catholic barrister and polemicist see Michael J. F. McCarthy, *Priests and People in Ireland* (Dublin, 1902), 262. This kind of criticism has continued to rear its head periodically. In 1966, a Trinity College student, Brian Trevaskis, notoriously called the bishop of Galway 'a moron' on RTE television's *Late Late Show*, for spending money on building a 'monstrosity' of a cathedral instead of on the poor. *Irish Times*, 29 March 1966; Marcus Tanner, *Ireland's Holy Wars: The Struggle for a Nation's Soul, 1500–2000* (Dublin, 1999), 162. More recently, the bishop of Ardagh was criticised for soliciting donations from 'vulnerable' confirmation candidates for the rebuilding of the fire-damaged St Mel's cathedral in Longford. *Irish Independent*, 17 May 2010.

he asserted, 'shocks the economic sense', prompted Monsignor Michael O'Riordan's claim that somewhere between a fifth and a quarter of all money used for the purpose came not from the Irish at home but from the Irish abroad.[57] The art critic Robert Elliott went further, suggesting that factoring in all forms of fundraising, half the money had been collected abroad, while the barrister Michael McDonnell asserted that Catholic churches had 'in large measure' been built by emigrant contributions.[58] Cardinal Patrick Moran agreed with these estimates, reporting that Cardinal Michael Logue had told him that 'it is from the United States, from friends of Ireland in the home countries, and in the colonies, that the greater part of the funds have been derived to erect such noble monuments of religion'.[59] The credibility of all of these estimates, each, perhaps, with its own agenda, is questionable. However, even in the absence of an exhaustive examination of parish accounts, there can be little doubt that the diaspora's contribution to church-building funds was highly significant, and in very many individual cases, vital.[60]

III

The Irish Catholic Church's motivation in all of this seems clear. Ostensibly more curious is what prompted emigrants to contribute toward the erection of buildings in which they were never even likely to worship. To begin with, the tour diaries of three clerical collectors offer some insight. Fr James Donnelly, one of the university collectors, maintained a private diary during his two years travelling along the east coast of the United States in the early 1850s. Monsignor Michael Buckley also traversed the east coast of North America between 1870 and 1871 collecting on behalf of Cork cathedral. He, like several

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[57] Horace Plunkett, *Ireland in the New Century* (London, 1904), 107–9. As Plunkett's biographer observes, close friends, among them a Jesuit priest, advised strongly against these passages. Trevor West, *Horace Plunkett: Co-operation and Politics, An Irish Biography* (Washington, 1986), 72; Michael O'Riordan, *Catholicity and Progress in Ireland* (London, 1906), 30.

[58] Robert Elliott, *Art and Ireland* (Dublin, 1904), 266–8; Michael F. J. McDonnell, *Ireland and the Home Rule Movement* (Dublin, 1908), 114.

[59] P. F. Moran, *The Priests and People of Ireland* (Melbourne, 1904), 18.

[60] Fr Peter Conway, parish priest of Headford, County Galway built his chapel entirely from the proceeds of three trips made to the United States in the early 1860s. He consequently attempted to nickname it 'the Irish-American church', but the moniker failed to endure, presumably because it was far from unusual for a church to be thus financed. *Freeman's Journal*, 23 March 1861.

other collectors, was taken ill during his exhausting trip and subsequently died, after which his sister published what may well be a bowdlerised version of the diary he kept during his travels.[61] Fr Pius Devine, meanwhile, conducted a collecting tour between 1872 and 1875 in North America, Australia and New Zealand, intercut with a mule ride across the Andes. The Passionist father was in pursuit of funds to build a new chapel for his order at Mount Argus in south Dublin. His account of the trip, entitled 'The Adventures and Misadventures of a Jolly Beggar' remained unpublished, and is perhaps all the more remarkably frank because of it.[62]

Indeed, throughout his account, and in stark contrast to the sympathetic, if slightly condescending tone adopted by Buckley, Devine did not shy away from criticising those from whom he solicited donations. Those who gave nothing, or gave less than Devine believed to be within their means, he routinely dismissed as 'stingy'. He also found great amusement in the lengths to which a few were prepared to go to avoid contributing. Mrs Shanahan, a Cork woman described in rather unchristian terms as resembling 'a big heap of mashed turnips, propped up into human shape', claimed, somewhat unconvincingly, to be 'a Prodeshan' and therefore 'too enlightened' to make a donation to Devine's cause. Devine's greatest irritation, however, was reserved for those who joyfully heeded their own priests' enjoinders not to give money to beggars from outside the parish. 'Our clergy towld us to give yez nothing!' claimed one young factory girl, prompting Devine to counter sardonically, 'do you obey everything yer clergy tell ye as well as you do that?'[63] Such territoriality on the part of American clergy worked against the fostering of a charitable spirit, claimed Devine. In Lowell, Massachusetts, one priest (whom Buckley also encountered) told his people to give to nobody but himself, while another urged parishioners to 'give to whomsoever you know has a good cause'. 'The other parish has a splendid church and a generous people', Devine pointed out, 'this parish has a poor church and the stingiest people ever I met'.[64]

Clearly, then, there were some Irish emigrants who declined to fund churches in the home country, perhaps feeling themselves 'overbegged'. Certainly, Devine pronounced St Louis, Missouri as 'over-run' with religious

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[61] M. B. Buckley, *Diary of a Tour in America*, Kate Buckley (ed.) (Dublin, c. 1870).

[62] Fr Pius Devine, C.P., 'The Adventures and Misadventures of a Jolly Beggar (1872–1875)', Central Archives, St Paul of the Cross Retreat, Mount Argus, Dublin (CD-ROM version courtesy of archivist).

[63] Ibid., 25 June 1873.

[64] Ibid., 4 June 1873; Buckley, *Diary of a Tour in America*, 209

collectors, both local and non-local.[65] Fathers Mullen and Peyton, collecting for the Catholic University buildings some years before, were similarly confounded by New Orleans, labelling it 'a den of infamy', where many Irish 'had no notion of going to Mass' and offered them 'nothing but insults', and where they had, as Donnelly observed, 'no monopoly of the charity of the good people'.[66] One American priest's lament that many Irish immigrants in more remote areas 'went to ruin', 'on account of not being cared for but to collect their hard earned dollars' seemed to chime with collectors' experiences away from the east coast.[67] However, for all these complaints, as Devine attests, 'Fifty cents in one place, a dollar in another' soon added up, and each subsequent cheque for £200 or £500 'looks very nice'.[68] Michael Buckley was more fulsome in his praise for his numerous contributors, asserting to have met with 'very little meanness'. 'The donations in general were small', he wrote of St John, New Brunswick, 'but everyone gave something'.[69]

Across the Irish emigrant world, the motivations to do so were various. As early as the 1850s, and perhaps tying in with rather mawkish attempts in popular literature to play it up, there was already a sentimentality for the 'ould sod' producing a distinct stream of revenue for Irish church-building projects. James Donnelly was by no means alone among collectors in noting 'what a magic influence the very name of Ireland exercises on the hearts of those who might be supposed, many of them at least, to have long since forgotten her'.[70] In fact, recent efforts by the diaspora to relieve famine distress clearly intimated that many had not forgotten the land of their birth, and that they might well be encouraged to continue giving to Irish causes that appealed to them.[71] The Fenians and the Home Rule movement would later successfully politicise and capitalise on this sentiment. However, for many emigrants, contributing towards an Irish chapel, and particularly one located in his or her home county, seemed to offer a more emotionally fulfilling way

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65 Devine, 'Jolly Beggar', 21 September 1873.

66 Alexander Peyton to Dr Murphy, Cork, 17 May 1852, Dublin Diocesan Archive, Cullen papers, 325/1/II/171; 'Diary of Rev. Dr James Donnelly, written during fundraising trip in America, 1852–53' Clogher RC Diocesan Records, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, DIO(RC)1/11B/2.

67 Fr John Brummer to Archbishop John Baptist Purcell, 18 May 1854, UNDA, Purcell papers, II-4-m–A.L.S.–5pp.–16to.–{8}.

68 Devine, 'Jolly Beggar', 20 October 1872.

69 Buckley, *Diary of a Tour in America*, 113.

70 *Weekly Telegraph*, 23 September 1854.

71 Donal A. Kerr, *A Nation of Beggars? Priests, People and Politics in Famine Ireland, 1846–1852* (Oxford, 1998), 60.

of reconnecting with their lost Irish lives. Collectors seem to have been aware of this; Buckley, in particular, appeared to target districts where he knew Cork people were in abundance. Independent of collectors, however, fond memories of a humble church from their youth certainly prompted some groups of emigrants or, in a number of cases, older female emigrants to donate liturgical adornments for its replacement.[72] Moreover, the tendency of such better-off emigrants to sponsor expensive items like stained-glass windows, which could then contain their family name, might be interpreted as a means by which they compensated for the painful knowledge that they would never be laid to rest in Irish soil. They were, in essence, ensuring that if they were not to be buried in the churchyard, they could at least be forever memorialised in the church.[73]

Other emigrants donated to Irish priests in pursuit of more immediate emotional succour. Several collectors reported that their nationality alone won them a hearing and a donation. The priest 'fresh from Ireland' was, for a host of reasons, an attractive prospect to many long-standing immigrants. Michael Buckley found that progress from house to house could be slow 'as we had for the most part to sit down, and tell the people some news of the dear country they had left behind'.[74] Both he and Pius Devine encountered poor people who were prepared to contribute beyond their apparent means in return for something as simple as a conversation in the Irish language; and in Montreal, one female servant from Cork gave Buckley four dollars on condition that he give her some item, however small and insignificant, from her native city.[75] There was an element in many donations, therefore, of paying for whatever time and information the priest could offer, or simply for contact with him as an Irishman and a reminder of home.

A collector's status as an Irish *priest*, however, also had a powerful effect on many emigrants. Donnelly was touched by the reaction he elicited at a parish church in Maine, where his presence caused 'crushing and pushing for confession'.[76] The ability to, in Devine's unguarded phrase, 'hear all the grannies

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[72] *Freeman's Journal*, 1 July 1858; ibid., 20 July 1860.

[73] Ibid., 28 December 1874; cf Margaret Lynch-Brennan, 'Ubiquitous Bridget: Irish Immigrant Women in Domestic Service in America, 1840–1930' in J.J. Lee and Marion R. Casey (eds) *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States* (London, 2006), 337.

[74] Buckley, *Diary of a Tour in America*, 113.

[75] Devine, 'Jolly Beggar', 24 August 1872; ibid., 4 June 1873; Buckley, *Diary of a Tour in America*, 113, 66.

[76] 'Diary of James Donnelly', 20 March 1852.

in the parish in Irish' was an obvious selling point, and one that differentiated collectors even from many of their Irish-American counterparts.[77] Confession was not their only apparently superior sacramental offering, however. As an extreme illustration of the truism that 'the Irish are never content with any priest except one of their own', Michael Buckley related the tale of an Irish widow in Boston, who was only partially content with the cleric who administered the last rites to her husband, on the grounds that a priest from Ulster could not fully empathise with a Corkman.[78] How an American priest might have fared with her can only be imagined, but under normal circumstances, a Cork priest surely stood a chance of a decent contribution from such a woman. Some donors were also won over to Irish collectors by a more familiar style of preaching. One young servant girl, evidently given to a more strident form of religion, gave Devine a few dollars after a sermon because, unlike most American preachers, she felt he did not hold back 'for fear of hurting the people's feelings'.[79] Continued devotion to a particular form of Irish Catholicism, whether characterised by the vernacular language, the accent or the style in which it was delivered, seems to have worked to the advantage of clerical collectors.

The above clearly illustrates the advantage of collection tours for Irish priests. Fostering various immediate affinities, and occasionally rekindling old personal connections, helped to fill coffers. Moreover, every fifty cents given grudgingly on the basis of direct, face-to-face 'begging' was fifty cents that would not otherwise have been acquired. By contrast, the 'priest too poor to travel' as one later commentator had it, was forced either to rely on the spontaneous, unbidden generosity of emigrants, or to devise alternative methods of pressing his cause. The case of St Brendan's Cathedral in Loughrea, erected at the turn of the century without the aid of a collection tour, illustrates the nature of these funding streams. On one hand, the intention to build a cathedral having been adverted to in the Irish press, ex-patriate Galwegians in the United States enthusiastically – and independently – opened a subscription fund.[80] Later, some of the magnificent Celtic Revival stained glass windows of the building also found individual sponsors among the diaspora.[81] On the other hand, the bishop of Clonfert specifically appealed to his parishioners to

[77] Devine, 'Jolly Beggar', 17 March 1873.
[78] Buckley, *Diary of a Tour in America*, 245–6.
[79] Devine, 'Jolly Beggar', 4 May 1873.
[80] *The Nation*, 11 October 1856.
[81] *Freeman's Journal*, 28 February 1899.

lend their aid in attracting funding from abroad, asking them to send tickets for an impending bazaar to any emigrants they knew, 'especially in America'.[82]

This exploitation of family connections in pursuit of emigrant donations was important. There is clear evidence that letters from Ireland kept migrants informed of developments in local church-building at home. One young woman in Brisbane was keen to know of her Dungannon friend 'is the cathradle bilt yet', while Daniel Brennan of County Down made sure to tell his relatives in Australia that fundraising was underway for the new Catholic chapel at Dromore and for the new cathedral in Armagh, and that they were set to be the best churches in the north of Ireland.[83] *Sometimes, it was a matter of providing a degree of advance notice before collection tours. The correspondence between members of the Prendergast family in Milltown, County Kerry and in Boston, for example, contains discussions of the impending trip of their parish priest, Father O'Connor, on his mission to raise money for Killarney Cathedral. Despite the fact that O'Connor had previously acted as a conduit for the family's letters, owing to a less than warm relationship with the cleric, James Prendergast told his children not to* 'lose much to him on our account', as 'we were under no compliment to him'.[84]

The Prendergast children evidently ignored this advice, and their father's tune changed when O'Connor wrote letters to various persons in Milltown, including the curate and the nuns at the local convent, which lauded the Prendergasts as 'a credit to the land of [their] birth' who had received him with great kindness. 'I am glad ye did so', wrote James, 'for it was not an act lost. For that reason I will be glad that ye will, in future, shew him the respect due from parishioners'.[85] The praise for his emigrant offspring around his home parish, declared again 'publickly' on O'Connor's return, was clearly regarded by Prendergast senior as reflected glory, however unearned, which might yet do him some good.[86] A similar motive drove Jane Doran from County Down to apply subtle pressure on her brother in the United States with regard to the local church-building fund.

> The new church, I suppose you herd of it is going to be built on Caroelins hill. Dear brother I suppose you herd of Father O'Neil writing to George Brennan he spoke this morning from the altar of having a

[82] Ibid., 8 December 1898.

[83] Susan [Greame?] to Mary [?], 30 June 1872, Centre for Migration Studies (hereafter CMS), Irish Emigration Database, Doc. no. 9706236 and David Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia* (London, 1994), 408.

[84] Barber, *The Prendergast Letters*, 116.

[85] Ibid., 128–9.

[86] Ibid., 150.

> letter from him he said he sent five pounds to him and that there was a few other Irish men going to send some to[o]. It would delight one to listen to Father O'Neil this morning to hear the praise he gave him.[87]

Her family of 'big farmers' naturally deemed that their own emigrant members ought to be the subject of similar encomia.

Irish priests were therefore adept at cultivating the traditional sense of duty many emigrants felt towards their families for the church's own ends. The same impulse that prompted many emigrants to send home almost all the money they earned in order to satisfy their relatives' sometimes onerous expectations could be turned to the church's advantage. The kind of intra-community competitive spirit which prompted parents to cover up receipt of an 'empty letter' (one containing no money) and publicly to flaunt and exaggerate those remittances that did arrive, had perhaps its ultimate victory in a tribute from the altar to a departed child's generosity toward the church.[88] What could more fully relay the idea to neighbours that one's offspring had 'arrived' in the new world, and attained or retained respectability? A donation toward the home chapel could symbolise the achievement of financial success, the retention of what was deemed a proper sense of duty to those left behind and the maintenance of a devout Catholic faith.

It may also be that some of the habits of remitting money worked in the church's favour. Particularly before the arrival of a post office in every parish, and before the advent of the international postal money order in 1871, the priest often acted as addressee for emigrants' letters and as banker for remittances.[89] He was therefore in a position to gauge which, if any, emigrants from the parish might be lobbied to contribute to a prospective building fund. The timing of some remittances may also have worked to the priest's advantage. As John Francis Maguire discovered on a visit to the United States in 1868, even some otherwise negligent exiles made sure to send home their 'Christmas box' and Easter gift.[90] This reflected an expectation that departed relatives would help provide the necessaries to celebrate, and have 'a good Christmas' as one emigrant put it, but it may also, given the strict obligation to attend Mass on those occasions, have led to a temporary swelling of the

[87] Jane Doran to William [Doran?], 30 March 1870, CMS, Irish Emigration Database, Doc. no. 107161.

[88] Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 486.

[89] Mairead Reynolds, *A History of the Irish Post Office* (Dublin, 1983), 82; Arnold Schrier, *Ireland and the American Emigration 1850–1900* (Minneapolis, 1958), 109.

[90] John Francis Maguire, *The Irish in America* (London, 1868), 317–8.

priest's coffers for purposes that could well have included church-building.[91]

A final boon to the church-building Irish cleric was the remarkable proportion of remittances that reached Ireland from young, single women. Up to a third of all the money in circulation in the country in 1870, one contemporary economist estimated, came ultimately from female domestic servants in the United States.[92] So significant was this, in fact, that many families consciously chose to send their daughters rather than their sons abroad, since they were thought more likely to remit money regularly.[93] That same sense of duty may well have been felt towards a favoured priest when the call for emigrant charity went out.[94] Moreover, as clergy in the American Catholic Church well knew, unmarried servant girls were also among the most devoted and generous benefactors of religious causes in the United States, helping to build churches and schools all over the country.[95] Irish priests, whether collecting in person or via other media, therefore became assiduous in courting this demographic for their own particular projects, a fact reflected in much of the evidence above, and confirmed by a plea of the archbishop of Armagh, Joseph Dixon, in an 1863 pastoral letter which urged 'the daughters of Ireland' to 'rival the zeal of the women of Israel' in order to see their home country's 'first Christian temple' completed.[96]

IV

In the second half of the nineteenth century, therefore, the Irish Catholic Church skilfully exploited emigrants – subjects of a phenomenon of which it ostensibly disapproved – for its own benefit. At one level, this was the pragmatic response of priests who recognised, whatever their public utterances, that, in

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91 Margaret Lynch-Brennan, *The Irish Bridget: Irish Immigrant Women in Domestic Service in America 1840–1930* (New York, 2009), 53.

92 Ibid., 53.

93 Ibid., 50; Joanna Bourke, 'Avoiding Poverty: Strategies for Women in Rural Ireland 1880–1914' in John Henderson and Richard Wall (eds), *Women and Children in the European Past* (London, 1994), 295.

94 Maguire, *Irish in America*, 331–2.

95 Hasia R. Diner, *Erin's Daughters in America Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1983), 137–8; Janet A. Nolan, *Ourselves Alone: Women's Emigration from Ireland 1885–1920* (Lexington, Ky, 1989), 87; see also Stephen Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress. Social Mobility in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge, MA, 1964), 175–6.

96 Joseph Dixon, 'Appeal in Favour of Completion of St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, 2 March 1863', ADA, Dixon Papers, Box 2 Folder 14.

what rapidly became hackneyed imagery, they could no more stop the tide of emigration than the tide of the ocean. At another, however, it reflected the reality that many clergymen genuinely subscribed to the idea of a 'spiritual empire' with Ireland at its centre. In this reading, as the Catholic University Committee had outlined, the Irish church was owed a debt for its centuries-long efforts to preserve the Catholic faith, not only for Ireland, but for the entire English-speaking world. The depth of this feeling is made clear in the diaries of the clerical collectors. Pius Devine's routine ascription of 'stinginess' to those he met indicated a clear sense of entitlement to the disposable income of Irish migrants and even that of their descendents. The idea that someone who would never even set eyes on a given church, let alone worship in it, may perfectly legitimately decline to contribute towards its erection seems not to have entered his mind. In that sense, clergymen mirrored the attitude of Irish families, who, in Grace Neville's stinging judgement, seemed to believe they had 'an unspoken right to the hard-earned dollars of those who left'.[97]

This sense of entitlement, unsurprisingly, caused tensions with emigrants' adoptive parishes and dioceses, with the result that a number of priests and bishops in the United States explicitly banned outside collectors.[98] A limited number of clergymen, including the university collectors, got around such measures by securing an overriding papal recommendation for their cause via Dr Kirby at the Irish College in Rome.[99] However, as Devine and Buckley each found, the hostility from American clergy, and in the overwhelming majority of cases from Irish-American clergy, was often intense. A conversation Buckley had with David Bacon, bishop of Portland, Maine, suggests something of the origins of this hostility. On unsuccessfully seeking permission to fundraise among the Irish of the diocese, Buckley was asked 'What claim have you on them? They are Irish you say; then why not keep them at home; they are poor, and we want all their resources to pay for their spiritual wants'.[100] Bacon's sense that charity ought to begin at home for Irish-Americans was to be

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[97] Grace Neville, '"She never then after that forgot him": Irishwomen and Emigration to the United States in Irish Folklore', *Mid-America*, 74 (1992), 280.

[98] Roger Antonio Fortin, *Faith and Action: A History of the Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 1821–1996* (Columbus, 2002), 67.

[99] Bartholomew Woodlock to Kirby, 10 February 1864, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1864/28; P.F. Flynn, S.S. Peter and Pauls, Clonmel to Kirby, 5 February1873, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1873/54; J. Maher, Dublin to Kirby, 28 June, 1880 ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1880/310; James McCarthy, Queenstown to Kirby, 8 May 1881, ICRA, Kirby papers, KIR/1881/136.

[100] Buckley, *Diary of a Tour in America*, 137–8.

expected. However, as the bulging coffers of Irish clerical collectors, and the magnificent churches they helped construct in Ireland demonstrate, 'home' had dual implications for many Irish emigrants.

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