

## Healthcare in Swinford

The Sisters were deeply involved in efforts to relieve distress and hunger in the Swinford area. There is a record of original letters Sr. Gertrude Kirwan wrote to the Mansion House Relief Fund appealing for help. At that time, there were 1800 families in the parish with a total of up to 10,000 people. There is a plaque erected at the site behind the District Hospital in memory of the 564 people buried there. There is another famine burial site, behind the Vocational school, that holds thousands of victims who did not make it to the workhouse. In 1883, Sr. Xavier Henry became the first Matron there. In 1922, the amalgamation of the workhouses started and the patients were transferred to Castlebar.

When the Workhouse was demolished, the Sisters of Mercy operated a Cottage Hospital for a short period. It then came under Mayo County Council and it was known as Swinford District hospital. The new Fever Hospital was built in the 1930's and Sisters worked there until 1976. It then became part of the District hospital until 1988. It is now a Mental Health Care facility under the HSE. A new day care centre was opened in the 1970's beside the District hospital. Sisters worked there until 2008.