



JUST.NOW

September – October 2009 Justice Briefing

17th October, 2009, UN Day for the Eradication of Poverty



17th of October 2008 - Commemoration Dublin

Since the year 2000 people have gathered at the Famine Memorial in solidarity with people experiencing poverty. The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice has been associated with the Dublin Celebration since its beginning. We invite all our readers to join us on the 17th of October of this year to listen to the voice of people who struggle on a daily basis with the reality of great poverty. Your presence will be an expression of our solidarity. This edition of Just.Now describes the work of Fr. Joseph Wresinski founder of ATD. It has been prepared by Françoise Barbier and the team of ATD Fourth World Ireland who initiated the Irish 17th of October commemoration.

Join us on Saturday 17th October 2009 at 11.30am: The commemoration will be prepared by the 17th October group, an informal coalition of community groups and voluntary, religious, overseas development organisations and schools. The commemoration will focus on the expression by people in poverty of their suffering, hopes and efforts to change things for the better; it will include a contribution by local school and after schools children

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The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice consists of The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, The Vincentian Congregation, The Daughters of Charity and The Sisters of the Holy Faith. Working for social and economic change - tackling poverty and exclusion.
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17th October, UN Day for the Eradication of Poverty

At its origin, Fr. Joseph Wresinski founder of ATD Fourth World.



Father Joseph Wresinski

Born in extreme poverty, Fr. J. Wresinski witnessed the deprivation and humiliation suffered by his family. His mother's courage in the face of difficulties left an indelible mark on him.

In 1957, he founded ATD Fourth World in an emergency housing camp in France and remained hopeful that things could change 'if only we would listen to those who have so much to teach us about justice, humanity and love because of their very suffering.'

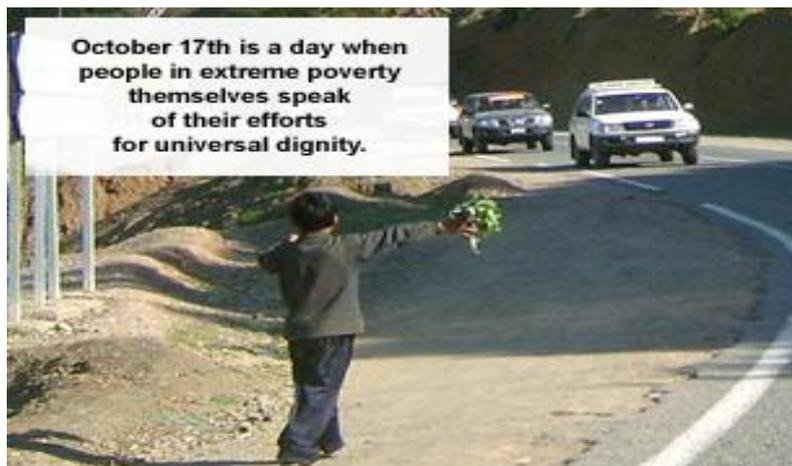
On the 17th of October 1987, in the presence of 100,000 people from every social background and continent, Joseph Wresinski unveiled the first 'Poverty Eradication Stone' in the Trocadero Human Rights Plaza in Paris. Five years later, 1992, the United Nations declared that the 17th of October each year would be the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Since then commemorative stones have been unveiled in many capital cities (*also in small towns and villages*) throughout the world. In 2008 the Irish Commemorative Stone was unveiled at Custom House Quay in Dublin.

ATD Fourth World is working with individuals, families and communities facing extreme poverty and social exclusion in both urban and rural settings and in the so-called developed and developing worlds. It has consultative status with the Council of Europe and the United Nations organisations and has a permanent delegation at the European Union.

In Ireland, the ATD Fourth World team is composed of Francoise Barbier, Dominique Vinchon and Francoise Sleeth.

We each worked in different countries before coming to this country but the focus of our work has always been on reaching out to and supporting the most vulnerable families in the defence of their human rights.

We always do it in link with other community and voluntary groups which also believe that people in poverty ought to have a voice in society and opportunities to contribute to the decision-making process.



'Listening to the voice of the people living in poverty...'

In its continuous effort to reach out to the most marginalised individuals, families and communities, ATD Ireland joined forces with groups and organisations involved with them in order to commemorate October 17, the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty



The 17th October 2008 saw the unveiling of a commemorative stone laid on Custom House Quay near the Famine Memorial. It bears the message in English, Irish and French that was first inscribed on the commemorative stone in Paris which was laid on the 17th October 1987.

"Wherever men and women are condemned to live in poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights are respected is our solemn duty" Fr. Joseph Wresinski

Poverty remains very hurtful to children, young people and adults, everywhere, including (our rich?) Ireland. October 17th is a day to honour their courage and efforts to overcome poverty despite the huge obstacles they face.

"The 17th October is a time to listen to people who do not usually have a voice and who have most to say about what fighting poverty means when you do it every day of your life"

It's a day we feel we are together: settled people, homeless people, travellers, workers in different organisations, politicians, people from different backgrounds and a day when other countries, we all stand together against poverty."

Let us tell you about June, a 22 years old mother whom we met recently in Dublin. She spent most of her childhood in care and then became homeless. Each time we meet her, in the Simon Community where she stays, we learn from her attention and concern towards the other residents who, she said, have become like her family. Her hope is that, one day all the homeless will get a place of their own and that one day her son will go to school and get a good education. On the International Day of the Family, thanks to our support, the support of the workers in her Simon Community, the support of Aidan Mathews who had invited us, the support of Natasha who read her testimony on her behalf, June's message has been heard on RTE Radio 1 on the program "A Living Word".

Prayer and Reflection



Universal Prayer

Joseph Wresinski, October 17, 1987
Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris

For these millions of children twisted by the pain of hunger,
no longer able to smile, yet still yearning to love.
For these millions of young people,
who have no reason to believe or even to exist,
and who vainly search for a future in this senseless world.

*Our Father we pray to you,
Send hands to reap your harvest.*

For these millions of men, women and children,
whose hearts are still pounding strong to the beat of struggle,
whose minds rise in revolt against the unjust fate imposed upon them,
whose courage demands the right to priceless dignity.

*Our Father we pray to you,
Send hands to reap your harvest.*

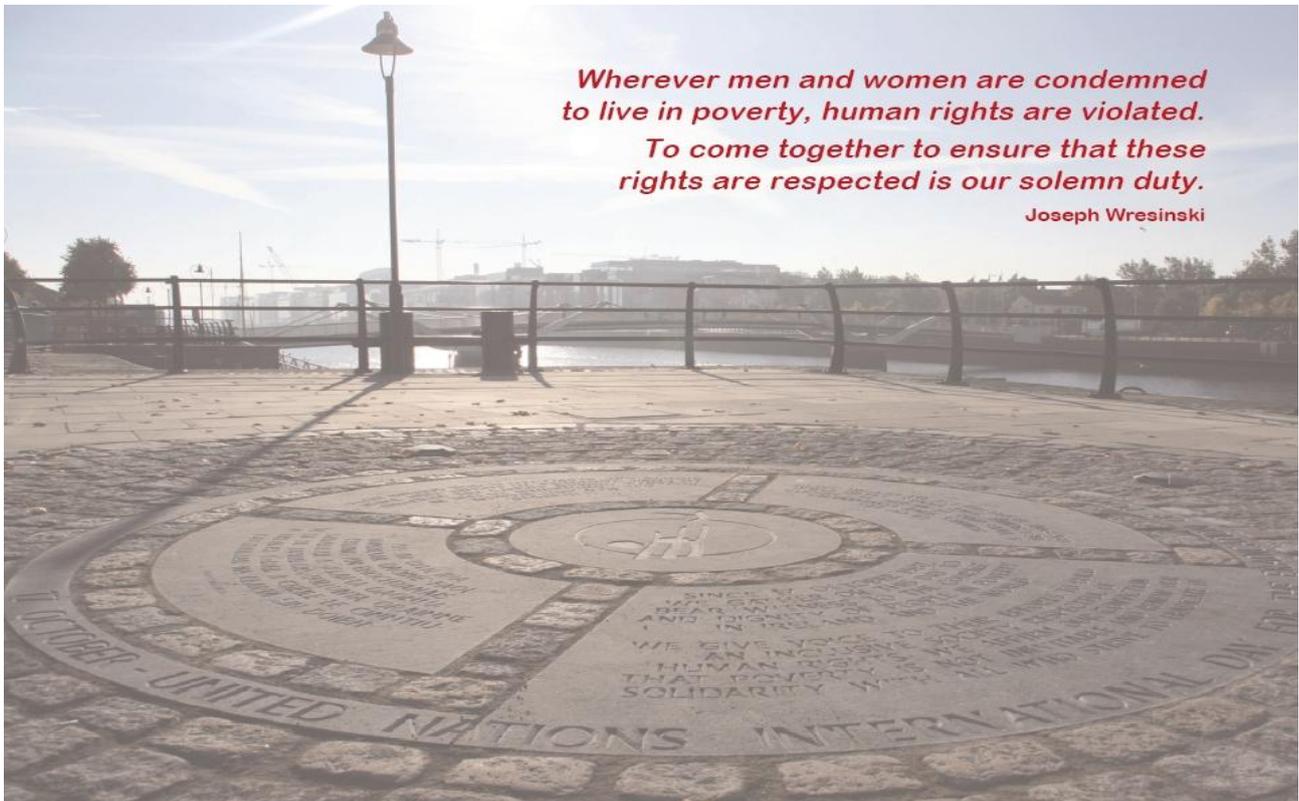
For these millions of children, women and men who do not want to condemn,
but to love, to pray, to work and to unite,
so that a world of solidarity may be born.
A world, our world,
in which all people would have given the best of themselves before dying.

*Our Father we pray to you,
Send hands to reap your harvest.*

May all those who pray
find a hearing in God's presence
and receive from Him the power to remove misery from humanity,
the humanity created in His image.

*Our Father we pray to you,
Send hands to reap your harvest.*

*Pope John Paul II chose this prayer to open the
1997 Paris World Youth Days.*



**The World Poverty Commemorative Stone
Custom House Quay Dublin, Ireland**

Acknowledgments - Francoise Barbier ATD
Fourth World Ireland
Design: Mary Murphy