



## Irish National 17 October Committee

[www.17october.ie](http://www.17october.ie)

Drawing of 17 October Commemorative Stone,  
Custom House Quay, Dublin by Joe Connolly

# I Bear Witness to You...

Joseph Wresinski's Address  
17 October 1987  
Human rights Plaza, Paris

You, the millions and millions  
of children, women and fathers  
who have died from misery and hunger  
and whose legacy we hold.  
It is not your death that I evoke,  
today on this Plaza of Human Rights  
and Liberties.  
I bear witness to your lives.

I bear witness to you, the mothers,  
whose children are cast aside in this world,  
condemned as they are to sheer misery.

I bear witness to your children,  
twisted by the pains of hunger,  
no longer able to smile,  
yet still yearning to love.

I bear witness to the 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.

I bear witness to you, the poor of all times,  
still poor today, forever on the road,  
fleeing from place to place,  
despised and disgraced.

Labourers without a trade,  
ever crushed by their toil.  
Labourers whose hands, today,  
are no longer useful.

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

I bear witness to you,  
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.

I bear witness to you,  
men, women and children.  
Your renown is henceforth engraved  
by heart, hand and tool,  
in the marble of this Plaza of Human Rights  
and Liberties.

I bear witness to you, so that humanity  
may at last fulfil its true destiny,  
refusing forever that misery prevail.

*Joseph Wresinski, 17 October 1987.*

*The Irish 17 October Committee was made up in 2013 of activists and groups in local communities, home school liaison officers and members of organisations such as Daughters of Charity Community Services, Focus Ireland, Irish Human Rights Commission, Inner City Renewal Group, ATD Fourth World Ireland, Life Centre in Ballyfermot, Matt Talbot Community Trust, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, Neighbourhood Youth Project 2, North West Inner City Training and Development Project, Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice.*

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