



The Holy Family of Bordeaux in Britain and Ireland

Glory to God alone in Jesus Christ through Mary and Saint Joseph

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Rock Ferry young singers entertain the community with Christmas carols

Editorial

It is the best of times; it is the worst of times. Dickens's words in relation to the French Revolution and the Terror which followed it, can be adapted to our own times. We have only to consider the long-running conflict in Syria and its consequences, the violence and oppression that, in some cases, followed the Arab spring, the terrorist attacks around the world, to see parallels.

At the same time, we can see vision and hope. At the end of 2015 the 193 U.N.-member states agreed to a new set of development goals to reduce poverty and protect the environment. The Paris Climate Conference, while lacking binding commitments, was a milestone as governments of the world agreed to tackle climate change. Even more important was the unprecedented demonstration of people-power before and during the Conference, that certainly influence the outcome.

It is clear that this people-power needs to continue and grow if we want to see change in the world. There are many signs that this is being done and from which we can draw hope, so many that it is not possible to enumerate all the NGOs and volunteers who are working on all aspects of human and environmental rights. Pope Francis is giving a clear lead in all this. His encyclical, *Laudato Si*, is still being talked about, as are his speeches on a wide range of moral and justice issues made recently in the US and Mexico.

This is a time of opportunity, not a time to leave it to governments. It's a time for all of us to take action to build the kind of world that is a home for all.



Message from Sr. Gemma (Unit Leader)

JESUS WEPT

An image that came to me most powerfully recently was the image of Jesus crying. We find several instances of Jesus crying in the Gospels. Jesus looked at the city of Jerusalem and wept: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem how often I would have gathered you as a mother hen gathers her chicks, but you would not have me." (Luke 19:41) He wept over his friend Lazarus' death and the pain that death brought to Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha. (John 11:35). He wept at Judas' betrayal: "Judas, do you betray me with a kiss, a kiss of friendship?" (Luke 22:48).



There is no doubt that he continues to weep over our world where hundreds of thousands of people are on the move, fleeing from war, destruction and death; where little children are abused and starved and will grow up without ever having experienced a safe and secure childhood; where bombs rain down daily on innocent populations, destroying their homes and massacring their loved ones. Surely Jesus weeps. Do we weep? How can we not?

As we see the terrible images on our television screens and read harrowing accounts in the newspapers, we cry out: "What can we do?" Jesus' answer to the young man in the Gospel, who asked that same question was: "Go sell what you have, give to the poor and come follow me." (Matthew 19:21). What do we need to "sell" in order to follow Jesus and build communion among ourselves and among those around us? What have we to let go off to stop the violence?

We can do little to stop the bombs raining down on innocent populations but by following Jesus and modelling our lives on his, we can stop the violence that can creep into our own hearts. We can put an end to the small but hurtful ways that we can cause pain to one another. We can make a commitment to refuse to add to the suffering that is already in our world. This we can do.

The image of Jesus weeping reminds us that He loves each one of us. He suffers when we betray our call to live and promote communion; when we fail to "practice the joyful giving of ourselves, unconditional acceptance, attentiveness, dialogue, forgiveness and genuine relationships" (Ana Maria's letter: February 2016).

Perhaps if we contemplate the weeping Jesus this Lent, we will turn away from all that is destroying communion among us. May Jesus' tears melt our hearts and move us to be more merciful to ourselves and to each other. If we contemplate the weeping Jesus, we can change during this Lent and we can rise with Jesus to a new way of life, with a renewed commitment to live "as visible and prophetic witnesses of God's mercy in the Church and world contexts in which we live" (Ana Maria's letter).

The Shamrock and the *Holy Family*

Though the qualities of courage, constancy and patriotism are connected with the Irish shamrock, the humble plant is now called to an even more beautiful destiny because it will shine on the banner of the children of the *Holy Family* and be for them a sign of union and togetherness. It will not inspire acts of chivalry among us – we leave that glory to warriors – but devotedness and fidelity can be found anywhere, and should be understood the men and women who have left only for his glory. May the shamrock be more than for the Irish, a constant more nobly and practised more holily by everything for God and who want to live for the members of the *Holy Family*, even reminder of what we owe to God almighty and to the adorable, holy and lovable persons of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.



Mother Emmanuel Bonnat

from Áine

The Benefit of Rain

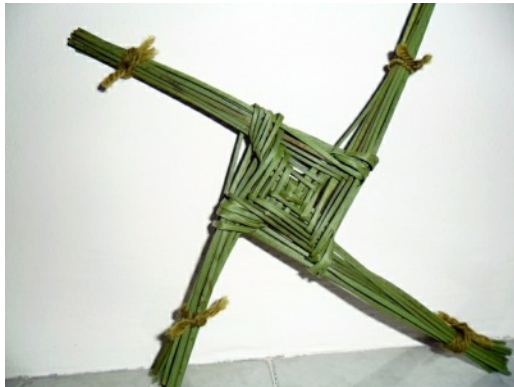
*From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the incarnation,
the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole...*

Laudato Si #99

The amount of rain that has fallen in North West of England over the past few months proved beneficial for me. I have three “clumps” of rushes growing in the rose bed in the garden. On the 31st January I was able to collect the rushes and make a small number of St Brigid’s Crosses.

This activity enabled me to revisit an annual memory from my childhood. I grew up in Ardboe on the western shores of Lough Neagh in Tyrone within a farming community. Within the area there were acres of bogland so rushes were plentiful all year round. On 31st January each year as a family we gathered with neighbours and friends to make the St Brigid’s Cross. Earlier in the day I would have accompanied my Father to the bog to collect the rushes.

As our guests arrived they were offered a cup of tea, homemade bread and cakes.



Brigid's cross by Catherine

The table was then cleared and one of the children present would go outside, collect the rushes and come to the door. They would knock on the door and listen, a voice from inside would ask, “Who is it”? After the response, “St Brigid”, the door would be opened and all gathered inside would reply, “You are welcome”. The rushes were placed on the table all took their place and the rushes were quickly graded so the best were chosen to bend into the shape of a cross. This activity could take hours with conversation and “more tea?”. At the end of the evening the remainder of the rushes were gathered and tied up in a bundle; the crosses were set aside.



St. Brigid of Kildare

The following morning the crosses were taken to the Chapel where they were blessed during Mass. The bundle of rushes was taken outside to the byre and laid on the floor as bedding for the cattle. The blessed crosses were placed above the door of the house, the byre and in the tractor to offer protection to all who enter.

In chatting with a number of Sisters in the Province, I realised that my memory of the ritual surrounding the making of St Brigid’s Crosses, which I thought was country wide, actually was particular to the shores of Lough Neagh. I hope this article will enable you to share your own memories of making a St Brigid’s Cross with one another.

Recently I came across this chant by Monica Brown:

Gracious Brigid
Spread your mantle of blessing upon us
As true pilgrims we face life’s journey
O holy woman, O gracious Brigid
Come spread your mantle upon us

Catherine Lavery
Wrexham

Refugees, Migrants and those who accompany them

Pursuing our Provincial Chapter commitment to collaborate with other organisations in support of refugees, a first port of call was the JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service). Some sisters, including Margaret Muldoon, had the privilege of meeting Louise Zanré who was JRS (UK) Director up to the end of last year. She stepped down from her post at the beginning of this year because of ill health, although she was continuing to work with JRS and contribute her great experience.

She died on 16 February deeply regretted by all who knew her.

Louise was the person that the Holy Family were in dialogue with regarding welcoming refugees into our communities in London. I first met her in November and was very impressed and inspired by her welcoming attitude, her ability to give her full attention to whoever was speaking with her, whether refugee or volunteer, and her total committed to the cause of refugees, and to upholding their dignity. She was well versed in the law and so a great help in advocating on their behalf. As one volunteer put it "She was a very special colleague and a wonderful example of how to live a full Christian life." In my short experience I learnt a lot from her. The volunteers who had worked with her for years were truly shattered.

JRS has an open day every Thursday and welcomes between 70-80 asylum seekers - those who have no legal status, many of whom have been waiting for years. Some stay all day, grateful to have a welcoming place, where they can just be themselves, while others come and go. They receive a hot meal, other material aid, one to one conversations and other needs are attended to discreetly, with great respect for each one. The information given to volunteers during their induction states: "Whilst having little control over whether they will be granted leave to remain, or whether they will be deported tomorrow or even where they will be sleeping, each person needs to retain their sense of identity, an ability to make choices and find positive ways to use their time and talents." I see this lived out at the Centre.

I am also inspired by the come, their resilience, their midst of daily struggles and circumstances of their lives. are ever asked and priority - occasionally something of his/her reality difficult it would be for me a day. It is a humbling and experience. I am also aware percentage of the huge and in our world today.



faith of the people who ability "to seek life" in the despite the traumatic While no intrusive questions confidentiality is a high someone will share and I often reflect on how to live in their shoes even for thought provoking that they are a small growing number of migrants

Last Thursday, as each one arrived, he/she was informed of Louise's death. The atmosphere was emotional all day. They were very shocked and moved, women sobbed, men sat there with eyes full of tears. These people who had experienced so much suffering in their lives reached beyond themselves to truly grieve for another. With limited knowledge of English, they struggled to write a few words of appreciation, gratitude or sympathy in a condolence book. Those who couldn't manage to write by themselves asked for help while remaining determined to make the, often quite laborious, effort to copy what they wished to say into the book. They knew she was their friend and, in the context in which they live, this was a rare treasure.

I am reminded of the words of Pope Francis:

We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voices to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them, and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them (EG 198)

No one of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice. I trust in the openness and readiness of all Christians, and I ask you to seek, as a community, creative ways of accepting this renewed call. (EG 201)

Last blog of Louise Zanré - 25 January 2016

Migrants and refugees challenge us

What is the response of the gospel of mercy?

This is the last column I shall write in the capacity as director of Jesuit Refugee Service UK. After 15 ½ years I shall be moving on into another role at JRS UK. It has been and continues to be a privilege to work at JRS.

The theme for this year's World Day of Prayer for Migrants and Refugees (17 Jan) is *Migrants and refugees challenge us: the response of the gospel of mercy*. The last 15½ years have indeed been challenging. At times it has seemed that the political environment has been downright hostile towards refugees and migrants in the UK. In particular, the use of immigration detention has increased; asylum seekers have lost the right to work after 6 months; legal aid in immigration cases has gone entirely and has been severely curtailed in asylum cases; appeal rights have been restricted; healthcare rights have been reduced and asylum seekers were moved from the normal benefits system to a parallel asylum support regime with mandatory dispersal outside London and the South East of England for accommodation (barring a very few exceptions).

However, in many ways the greatest challenge over the years has been relational and deeply personal. I constantly find myself amazed and, humbled and inspired by the deep rooted faith of the people we accompany at JRS. Their openness encourages me to approach them in the same manner. They accompany me as I do them, and they are constantly concerned for my

One of the most poignant years ago, when my husband died suddenly. All of the people attending our day centres at the time sent messages of sympathy and flowers, prayers, expressions of sympathy and walked or bussed across London to deliver them to me. They took time out of their lives to bring me comfort and very real and dynamic sense of what true family and community means – one that is extremely challenging and which truly flows out of mercy.



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examples of this occurred seven years ago. All of the people attending our day centres at the time sent messages of sympathy and flowers, prayers, expressions of sympathy and walked or bussed across London to deliver them to me. They took time out of their lives to bring me comfort and very real and dynamic sense of what true family and community means – one that is extremely challenging and which truly flows out of mercy.

In his message this year, Pope Francis writes:

“In the first place, versus a gift of God the Father who is revealed in the Son. God’s mercy gives rise to joyful gratitude for the hope which opens up before us in the mystery of our redemption by Christ’s blood. Mercy nourishes and strengthens solidarity towards others as a necessary response to God’s gracious love, “which has been poured into her heart through the Holy Spirit” (Rom 5:5). Each of us is responsible for his or her neighbour: we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they live. Concern for fostering good relationships with others and the ability to overcome prejudice and fear are essential ingredients for promoting the culture of encounter, in which we are not only prepared to give, but also to receive from others. Hospitality, in fact, grows from both giving and receiving.”

I give thanks for all of the refugees I have encountered over the years and also for all of the volunteers, staff members and donors and supporters of our work at JRS. Together we have worked to build an alternative society, which values and accords dignity to every single person and in which we stand with each other in the spirit of solidarity.



City of Sanctuary Movement

City of Sanctuary believes in the transforming power of friendship, understanding and small acts of compassion and kindness.

The word 'sanctuary' is evocative of sacredness, quietude, welcome and safety. Today, when we talk of a sanctuary we may think of a sacred place, such as a temple, church, or mosque, or a quiet outdoor space away from the noise and distractions of the busy day. The idea of sanctuary has its roots in biblical times. In early Christian times, monastic settlements were designated places of sanctuary. In medieval times a sanctuary was a place in which fugitives were immune to arrest and those fleeing religious or political persecution could find a haven. Asylum seekers today are doing just that when they appear on our shores.

In England the first laws regulating sanctuary were promulgated by King Aethelberht of Kent in about 600 AD. Perhaps it is appropriate, then, that the City of Sanctuary Movement began in 2005 in Sheffield, England. It has now spread to over 70 cities and towns in Britain and Ireland.

Kildare, as a City of Sanctuary?

On 22 February about twenty people, seven of them Holy Family members, met in the Parish Centre, Kildare, to consider this question. Fr. Adrian, the parish priest, welcomed the participants and reminded them that Kildare was an old City of Sanctuary and expressed the hope that it would once more become one.

The meeting was led by Tiffy Allen, the Dublin-based coordinator of City of Sanctuary. She gave a fascinating account of the Movement which was founded by Inderjit Bhogal, a Methodist minister who came to the UK as a refugee child. "He wanted to create a culture of welcome that wasn't just about organisations but communities," she said.

City of Sanctuary works through gathering supporters from all walks of life and making the message of "Refugee Welcome" very practical through:

- Awareness raising – creating opportunities for local people to meet refugees, hear their stories and understand why they need sanctuary
- Advocacy – working with others to ensure that the voice of refugees is heard and their potential recognised
- Action – serving every day needs for befriending and help, working with local support networks or setting up our own



Srs. Claire McGrath, Kate Cuskelly and Esther Delaney



Sr. Anne Kearney and HF Lay Associate Esther Keogh discussion, interaction and sharing of ideas, information, difficulties and problems. Further meetings were arranged between interested people.

Tiffy stressed that each City of Sanctuary is different. The local community shapes it in its own way. Whatever project they choose will always be about reaching out and giving refugees and asylum seekers the sense that we welcome them and understand their situation."

These projects usually focus on arts, schools, faiths, sports, or health. A theatre project in Derry, for example, saw three refugees and three locals whose lives had been impacted by the Troubles telling stories of their personal search for a safe haven. A more unusual project such as the bike workshops.

Almost all of the participants at this meeting in Kildare had some experience of working with Refugees/Asylum Seekers/Homeless People in different organisations and several are full time workers. Therefore, there was much lively

For more information visit the website: <https://cityofsanctuary.org>

Safeguarding Update

“Safeguarding is a process that is still evolving,” Maria Crowley said, as she welcomed sisters from all the communities in Ireland to a training session in Newbridge for an update on the latest guidelines. Members of the Safeguarding team also present were Colette Keegan, the DLP (Designated Liaison Person) for Ireland, as Maria is for Britain, and Pauline Byrne.



The meeting was facilitated by Fr. Paddy Boyle, Dublin Diocese Training & Development Coordinator for safeguarding, at the request of the Holy Family Safeguarding Team for Britain and Ireland. Although many of the participants had already done training on child abuse, this relaxed, interactive workshop in the comfort of Newbridge Convent was an opportunity to raise broader issues and ask questions which would not have been possible in a larger, more disparate group.

The different types of abuse, who abuses, who are the abused, were only some of the points raised.

Young people abusing one another, normally called bullying, is now being done, and made easier and more vicious, through social media. Many schools have an anti-bullying policy statement posted prominently for all to read. Instances of abuse of the elderly in Nursing Homes have made headlines recently and are under investigation. In 2005 the HSE (Health Service Executive) published a very good document, so Fr. Paddy told us, on the prevention of abuse of the elderly. Its implementation may not be equally good.

Fr. Paddy is well versed in safeguarding policies both in Ireland and Britain and could point out the differences existing in the two jurisdictions. Some interesting, even contradictory, facts emerged in a discussion around such topics as the legal age of consent, when does one become an adult, the age when one becomes liable for criminal activity, marriageable age... For example, although the age for adulthood is 18, a person becomes an adult if married by the age of 16. However, such a person would not be allowed to vote until the age of 18.



A significant difference between Ireland and Britain is that Ireland has no official policy on vulnerable adults. When people with disabilities reach the age of 18 they are treated as adults in all respects whereas, in Britain, there is

legislation to protect ‘adults at risk’ or ‘vulnerable adults’. This is a point of law for advocacy in Ireland.

The Seven Standards, as now formulated, were carefully examined with wide ranging comments from Fr. Paddy in response to participant questions. This will not be the last meeting as more work is done on the outstanding issue of vulnerable adults.



Spearheading Holy Family efforts are our indefatigable DLPs, Maria and Colette, and their team. To them we owe our thanks and appreciation.

Síle McGowan
Clane

DO NOT LOSE HEART

by

Clarissa Pinkola Estés an American poet, psychoanalyst, author and spoken word artist

My friends do not lose heart. We were made for these times. I have heard from so many recently who are deeply and properly bewildered. They are concerned about the state of affairs in our world now. Ours is a time of almost daily astonishment and often righteous rage over the latest degradations of what matters most to civilized, visionary people.

You are right in your assessments. The lustre and hubris some have aspired to while endorsing acts so heinous against children, elders, everyday people, the poor, the unguarded, the helpless, is breathtaking. Yet, I urge you, ask you, gentle you, to please not spend your spirit dry by bewailing these difficult times. Especially do not lose hope. Most particularly because, the fact is, that we were made for these times. Yes. For years, we have been learning, practicing, been in training for and just waiting to meet on this exact plain of engagement.

In any dark time, there is a tendency to veer toward fainting over how much is wrong or unended in the world. Do not focus on that. There is a tendency, too, to fall into being weakened by dwelling on what is outside your reach, by what cannot yet be. Do not focus there.

We are needed, that is all we can know. And though we meet resistance, we more so will meet great souls who will hail us, love us and guide us, and we will know them when they appear. Didn't you say you were a believer? Didn't you say you pledged to listen to a voice greater? Didn't you ask for grace? Don't you remember that to be in grace means to submit to the voice greater?

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to help another soul, to assist some portion of this poor suffering world, will help immensely. It is not given to us to know which acts or by whom, will cause the critical mass to tip toward an enduring good.

What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts, adding, adding to, adding more, continuing. We know that it does not take everyone on Earth to bring justice and peace, but only a small, determined group who will not give up during the first, second, or hundredth gale.

One of the most calming and powerful actions you can do to intervene in a stormy world is to stand up and show your soul. Soul on deck shines like gold in dark times. The light of the soul throws sparks, can send up flares, builds signal fires, causes proper matters to catch fire. To display the lantern of soul in shadowy times like these – to be fierce and to show mercy toward others; both are acts of immense bravery and greatest necessity.

Struggling souls catch light from other souls who are fully lit and willing to show it. If you would help to calm the tumult, this is one of the strongest things you can do.

There will always be times when you feel discouraged. I too have felt despair many times in my life, but I do not keep a chair for it. I will not entertain it. It is not allowed to eat from my plate.

The reason is this: In my uttermost bones I know something, as do you. It is that there can be no despair when you remember why you came to Earth, who you serve, and who sent you here. The good words we say and the good deeds we do are not ours. They are the words and deeds of the One who brought us here. In that spirit, I hope you will write this on your wall: When a great ship is in harbour and moored, it is safe, there can be no doubt. But that is not what great ships are built for.

from Gemma

NEWS FROM COMMUNITIES

Rock Ferry Community

During Advent, we had the pleasure to welcome pupils from years 3 and 6, choir of St. Anne's Primary School, accompanied by their music teacher Miss Iveson, a class room assistant Mrs. Cappa and Mr. Harrison a member of the Board of Governors. They sang a variety of Christmas Carols, and soon many of the Sisters were delighted and joined in the singing with them.

What was most impressive was how these young pupils conversed with our Sisters for some time afterwards, exchanged news about school life and got to know the Sisters better. It proved to have been a very enjoyable afternoon as bonds of friendship were made between one generation and the next.



Joan Farrell

Parish Ministry in Rock Ferry

In early November 2015, I began, albeit in a limited capacity, my Parish Ministry in St. Anne's, Rock Ferry. Prior to this I had been very involved in Sacred Heart Parish, Kilburn in London. It takes time to adapt to a new Community and a new Parish setting. What a coincidence that I should return to Highfield Road where I began my formation for religious life in 1955. It is as if I've come back home to where my "Holy Family" life began.

My ministry includes participating in various parish meetings, visiting those in the many nursing homes in the area, getting involved in St. Anne's Parish by being present at week end Masses, visiting sick parishioners in Arrow Park Hospital or at home, travelling across the water to Liverpool and acquainting myself with new neighbours who are quite welcoming. Above all, I spend time with my elderly, frail Sisters, learning from them how to face the Autumn years and enjoying their company in Community.

Since 2005 I've had the privilege of sharing in the lives of our Holy Family Sisters for seven years in Sri Lanka, parish involvement in the O.M.I. Sacred Heart ministry in Kilburn and now on Merseyside in the diocese of Shrewsbury. With St. Paul I can honestly pray "Glory to God whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can hope for or imagine".

Last weekend the theme for our Lenten reflection day as a local pastoral unit, including representatives from four parishes, was a reminder and challenge for us during the Jubilee Year of Mercy that, "wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident" in our parishes, communities, associations, and movements. In a word wherever there are Christians, everyone should be an oasis of mercy.

Anne Marie Glynn

FAITH IN THE MARKET PLACE ASH WEDNESDAY, 2016

Ash Wednesday is one of the most important days in the liturgical calendar. The ashes on our foreheads are a public sign of our commitment to Christ, and invite us to reach out to others.



In Whitewater, Newbridge Shopping Centre, a stand was organised by Sr. Eileen Murphy and twenty four parishioners, inviting shoppers and workers to come and receive the blessed ashes; this is an annual event. There were Trócaire boxes “to collect for charity” and prayer cards available for people to take away.

What impressed me was the commitment of the parishioners and their courage in witnessing to their faith in public. This event lasted from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and three people remained at the stand every hour. It’s just amazing and I thank God for this lovely new experience.

Christina Richardson, Newbridge

Sr. Annie Tunstan radiant at 70!



Many thanks to the communities and Sisters who sent me their good wishes for my special birthday.
My gratitude too, to the Sisters who sent personal greetings which I appreciate.
You are not forgotten in my prayers.
Every blessings.
Annie Tunstan.



Srs. Catherine and Annie ready to cut the cake



UPCOMING EVENTS

March 2016						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 St. David's Day (Wales)	2	3	4 World Day of Prayer (by the Women of Cuba) Beginning of 24 Hours for the Lord asked for by Pope Francis	5
6	7	8 International Women's Day	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 Death of Mother Trinity Noailles (1850)	17 St. Patrick's Day (Ireland)	18	19 Feast of St. Joseph Cluster Meeting (Clane) Earth Hour
20 Palm Sunda	21 World Down Syndrome Day	22 World Day for Water	23	24 Holy Thursday	25 Good Friday Reception of first Lay Associates Foundation of the Secular Institute (1824)	26
27 Easter Sunday	28	29	30	31		

Earth hour

Earth Hour is a worldwide grassroots movement uniting people to protect the planet, and is organised by WWF. Earth Hour was famously started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia in 2007. Since then it has grown to engage more than 7000 cities and towns worldwide....

Earth Hour 2016 will be held on Saturday 19 March between 8.30PM and 9.30PM in your local time zone. The event is held worldwide towards the end of March annually, encouraging individuals, communities households and businesses to turn off their non-essential lights for one hour as a symbol for their commitment to the planet...

For detailed information go to www.earthhour.org