

PARISH BULLETIN 2010/3 OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

EUROPEAN PARISH

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Ut unum sint.....

That they may be one.....

SCHEDULE OF MASSES AND CONFESSIONS

Mass every Saturday evening at 19.00 in St. Alphonse, 32 rue des Capucins and on Sundays at 11.00 in Ss.Peter and Paul, Hollerich. Confessions every Saturday evening from 17.30 to 18.00 in St. Alphonse and at any other time by appointment (ring 47 00 39) at 34 rue des Capucins.

BAPTISMS

Baptisms are held normally on Saturdays at 11.30 in St. Alphonse. In special circumstances on Sunday at 15.00 in St. Alphonse or at 15.30 in Hollerich (subject to the availability of the church). If you wish to have your child baptized, please contact me well in advance (some months), as there are a great many baptisms in our parish and it will not always be possible to have the ceremony on the day that suits you best. There will be an **obligatory preparatory meeting** (usually with several couples present). It is normally held on a Monday evening at 34 rue des Capucins at 19.30. We invite the parents and, if possible godparents, to be present. The meeting lasts about an hour or so. The next meeting will be on November 8th at 7.30 p.m.

WEDDINGS

If you are thinking of getting married, you need to contact me well in advance (six months or so). There are documents to be got (recent baptismal and confirmation certificates and a 'letter of freedom to marry' – which you will get from the parish in which you were baptized and grew up). We then proceed to draw up a matrimonial dossier. If you are getting married outside Luxembourg, the dossier will have to be sent to the diocese in which the wedding takes place, three months before the ceremony.

1 LITURGICAL CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER/ NOVEMBER 2010

October 10 th :	28 th Sunday of the Year (C)	Luke 17,11-19
October 17 th	29 th Sunday of the Year (C)	Luke 18,1-8
October 24 th	30 th Sunday of the Year (C)	Luke 18,9-14
October 31	31 st Sunday of the Year (C)	Luke 19,1-10
November 1 st :	Feast of All Saints (Mass in Hollerich at 11.00 a.m.)	Matt. 5, 1-12
November 7 th	32 nd Sunday of the Year (C)	Luke 20, 27-38
November 14 th	33 rd Sunday of the Year (C)	Luke 21, 5-19
November 21	34 Sunday of the Year (C)	Luke 23, 35-43
	Feast of Christ the King and last Sunday of the Liturgical Year (C)	
November 28 th	First Sunday of Advent (Year A) Beginning of New Liturgical year (A)	Matt. 24, 37-44

2 MEETING OF THE INTERIM PARISH COUNCIL

As announced in the summer bulletin (2010/2). we have established an Interim Parish Council whose main task will be to prepare the way for and eventually organize the establishment of a permanent council for our community. The members of the Interim Council (just to remind you again) are Regan Otte, Steve McCarthy, Robert Foley, Michael Doyle, David Borg, Diana Terese Singha, Monique Oswald and Dolores Navales. We met on September 7th last and had a lively, if somewhat diffuse, discussion on a range of topics e.g. what is to be the function of the Parish council? If it is to be a representative body, what should be the *basis* of representation – nationality? Age-group, Etc. Central to our discussion was the question: how will the Permanent Parish Council function? We felt we should attempt to formulate some of the structures necessary for the functioning of the Permanent Council and what follows is an initial draft statement of guidelines. These guidelines have not yet been fully discussed. We offer them to you as a report on 'work in progress'.

Guidelines for the Permanent Parish Council (drafted by Steve McCarthy)

Mission

The Council exists to co-ordinate the activities of the Parish, to take and encourage new initiatives in the interests of the Parish, and to support the pastoral work of the Parish priest.

Membership

The Council will consist of 9 members. The Parish Priest will automatically be a

member of the Council. The other eight members shall be chosen from the active members of the Parish who have received the Sacrament of Confirmation, without restriction of age.

So far as possible the membership of the Council will reflect, informally, the diversity (nationality, age, talents and gifts etc.) to be found within the members of the Parish.

Duration of Service

Members of the council will have a mandate to serve for a term of three years, which may be renewed. All members of the Council will have the same three year mandate. If a vacancy occurs on the Council, either through the shortage of volunteers to serve on the Council, the resignation of a member, or for any other reason, the remaining members of the Council may co-opt another person or persons on to the council, up to a total of nine members.

Decision-making

Decisions of the Council will be made after prayerful discernment, followed if necessary by a simple vote. 5 members of the Council, which must include the Parish priest, will constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking decisions.

The Parish priest will have the right to veto any decision of the Parish Council which in his judgement is incompatible with his responsibilities as priest and pastor of the parish. Where a member of the parish has a particular interest in or expertise on a specific topic, the Council may invite him/her to participate in its discussions on that topic, though without the right to vote.

Officers

The Council will elect its own Chairperson and Secretary. The Parish Priest will not generally act as Chairman, except on an ad-hoc basis.

Meetings

The Council will establish a programme to meet at least four times a year.

The Chairman or the parish priest may convene any additional meetings they consider necessary, and communicate the details of such a proposed meeting to all the members of the Council.

Finances

The Council will have access to the financial and administrative resources of the European Parish for its own incidental running expenses and needs.

Where the Council decides to promote a specific project in the interest of the parish, it will also have access to the funds of the European Parish as a whole, subject to the approval of the financial authority of the European Parish.

Status of these Guidelines

These guidelines will be submitted at a meeting of the Parish to be held in due course, for approval by a show of hands.

3. FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2011

For those who are planning to put their child forward for First Communion, may we remind you that the preparation for 'First Confession' and First Communion is conducted through the parish and not through the school. Over the years we have developed a preparation programme which best suits the needs of our parish. We often have children from five or six different schools and the only common link is that they all speak English as a mother-tongue and/or are members of our English-speaking parish. The programme will be co-ordinated this year by Marina Calnan, but the actual teaching of the programme will be undertaken by the parents themselves. For many years we have used a programme called 'I belong', a Redemptorist publication adapted for our own specific needs.

The following are the requirements for children hoping to make First Communion this coming year

- (a) They must be 8 years old by January 1st 2011, the year they receive First Communion.
- (b) They should be following a Catholic Religious Education programme for at least two years. Our programme assumes the basic knowledge of the Christian faith taught in the school.
- © They should already have regular experience of attending Mass.

If a child is considerably older than the group average, special arrangements can be made with me for a more suitable preparation programme.

Important: There will be a meeting of the parents of prospective First Communion children in the sacristy in Hollerich after the 11.00 a.m. Mass on October 17th next. This meeting is obligatory for parents who wish their child to make First Communion this coming year.

4. CONFIRMATION:

This year will also be a Confirmation Year in our parish. As usual we will have a weekly preparation session which will begin some time in early January. The date of the Confirmation has already been decided, **Sunday May 8th 2011**. The following are the requirements for anyone going forward for Confirmation this year: (a) they must be at least 14 years of age by January 1st 2011 (b) they should be baptized and have made their First Communion and attend mass regularly.

As the programme of preparation is run by myself and a number of parishioners, we'll be looking for volunteers to help in the teaching. Two of those we had last time round (Ann McGing R.I.P and Cheryl Kouba) will not be available this year. So if you would like to help with this very vital work of communicating the faith to

the young people of our parish, please contact me. You will not be called on to do more than one evening's presentation of a theme, but we will need you to be present each week to help run the preparation sessions.

5. I BELIEVE [IN] THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

In the context of First Communion and Confirmation, it might be no harm to do a little theological reflection on what we mean by '**the Church**'. My intention is not to talk about current problems (clerical child abuse, authority in the church etc.), but to ask: what do we mean when we say in the Creed that we believe 'in one, holy, catholic and apostolic church'? Well, first of all, we can only believe ultimately in **God**. And this faith in God is already a sharing (earthly and imperfect) in the life of Father, Son and Spirit. That's what we believe in and hope in and entrust ourselves to. We cannot, in that sense, believe in and hope in and entrust ourselves to the Church. Of course it is **in** the Church that we come to our faith and trust and hope in God. Indeed our faith, hope and trust is a sharing in the Church's faith, hope and love.

Yet, though the Church is not God and though we don't believe **in** the Church (in the sense in which we believe **in** God), yet the church is in some way part of what we believe. It is deeply related to the mystery of God, Father, Son and Spirit.. The Church is, of course, a group of people, but it is more than that. It is a human institution – all too human at times - but it is more than just that. So what **is** this Church which we call 'holy and catholic'? Well, we sometimes say that Jesus 'founded the church'. So he did, but what does that mean? It doesn't mean that Jesus said one day to the apostles 'I'm going to found a church' and bingo, there the church was. It wasn't there on a Monday, so to speak, but it was there on the Tuesday after Jesus 'founded it'. That won't do, I'm afraid. The Church didn't come out of nothing. When Jesus came on the scene the '**people of God**' was already there, but it was scattered, unsure and divided. Jesus came and said '**the reign of God is at hand**'- God is powerfully present and he is gathering his scattered people together. God therefore was offering his people a **new flourishing** through Jesus, through his words and actions, his reconciling meals with sinners, his inclusion of 'outsiders'. We can say that, during Jesus' life-time, a **movement** within the 'people of God' began around him – including 'the 12', some women, even some Jewish officials (Nicodemus), as well as many people who were open to what he was doing and what God was doing through him. That was '**The Church**' **in embryo**.

But neither Jesus nor his disciples were thinking of something totally new, something different from the 'people of God'. They were hoping to renew and deepen the people of God, to open the people to what God was now doing among them in and through Jesus. Well, we know what happened the Jesus-movement. At Jesus' death it broke up. The disciples scattered and fled. The movement seemed in ruins. Then came Easter. If a journalist were telling the story of what happened at and after Easter, he might say: well, the disciples, after some kind of conversion-experience,

gathered together again. Peter played a special role in this and, within a short time, there was the nucleus of a new movement which came to be called 'The Church'. Now, of course, that's all true, as far as it goes. But it misses the main point. If you asked Peter and the others, they would say something like this: *“We didn't just decide to come together again, off our own bat. That was God's doing. God raised Jesus from the dead and He is now among us. His Spirit is powerfully at work among us and it is precisely the risen Lord who, through his Spirit, has restored us, forgiven us and gathered us. And through us he is now gathering 'the people of God' into one”*. Pentecost tells that story in powerful images – the mighty wind blowing new life, the fire transforming the old into the new, the people of God from everywhere gathering in Jerusalem, the overcoming of the Babel of tongues in a new communion. Pentecost is both a vision of the future and the real beginning of that future.

Peter and the disciples were still thinking, of course of the gathering of Israel, 'the people of God'. They never gave up on that, nor should we. But there the first and tragic split in the 'people of God' occurred. Many Jews rejected the new way of being 'the people of God' and the movement began to look outwards, towards the Gentile world. Paul played a huge role in the emergence of 'the people of God of Jews **and** Gentiles'. The communities he founded began to call themselves the 'ekklesia' i.e. the assembly, the 'gathered ones'. Many years later, at Antioch, they began to be called 'Christians'. Our word 'church', by the way, comes from '**kyriaké**', from the word Kyrios, the Lord. So the Church is the group of those who acknowledge that God has entered human history in a unique way in Jesus' life and death and is now, through the Spirit of that same Jesus, gathering people everywhere to himself.

Baptism and the Eucharist

The best way to understand what the Church is is to look at the two most striking rites that distinguish us Christians from the Jewish people of God. First, **Baptism**. In the early years of the Church, the rite of Baptism was very striking. The candidate (normally an adult) went down steps into a pool of water, having shed his old clothes, and was immersed in the water 'in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit'. Then he/she came up out of the water and was clothed in new white garments. It was a powerful symbolic way of pointing to the depth of what the daily life of the baptized is about. At one, if you like 'obvious' level, the baptized believer was now saying good-bye to the old dead, half-life of sinfulness and entering into a new life of self-giving love. In that sense he/she was following Jesus' way of 'loving to the end', loving unto death. But Jesus' death out of sheer love was really his breakthrough into the fullness of life (the Resurrection is, so to say, the 'other side of the Crucifixion'). So our everyday following of Jesus i.e. giving ourselves selflessly in love, is already a sharing in his risen life. It doesn't *feel* like 'risen life'- it feels awful at times – but that's what it is and that's what the rite of baptism was expressing. So, in baptism, the believer joins the company of believers, the company of those who, through faith, hope and love, do really share already in the risen life of Christ, in the

communion of the life of God, and look forward in joyful hope to its fulfillment.

The word '**communion**' brings us to the second great Christian rite, the **Eucharist**. The believers gather to break and to share bread and to drink from the one cup, in memory of Jesus. That's what our journalist friend might say. And he'd be right. But there's much more to it than that. What we believers say is this: "***the bread which we break, is it not a communion in the body of Christ? The cup which we drink, is it not a communion in the blood of Christ?***" The 'body and blood of Christ' is a strong way of speaking of his **life given for us**, so that we might share in his abundant life. So the Eucharist is not primarily something **we** do. It is the risen Lord, sharing his risen life with us, drawing us into his communion with the Father and the Spirit. That word 'communion' is probably the deepest word for what the Church is. The church is God reaching out in Christ, and through the Spirit drawing people into communion with himself. St John, in his first letter, puts it like this: "***What we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have communion with us, and our communion is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ***". That's why we speak of the Church as 'the communion of saints', the communion of those that have been 'made holy'. That's why we can speak of the Church as the 'holy Church'. We know that only God is holy. 'Holy' is almost another word for God. We say to Christ in the Gloria '***you alone are the holy one***'. We are holy only because we are forgiven. That is why the Church is linked in the Creed with the '**forgiveness of sins**'. We are indeed a church of sinners, but of forgiven sinners. And we should never forget that God's forgiveness is greater, stronger, deeper than our sinfulness. God has always already forgiven us.

The Creed speaks of the church as 'holy' but also as '**catholic**'. What does that mean? It means first of all that we Christians are not a group closed in on ourselves, existing for ourselves. God is interested not just in Christians, but in people everywhere. God is gathering all people into communion with himself. The Spirit of the risen Christ is at work **in the whole universe** – not just in the Church. Why then is there a Church at all? The Church exists to be a **living sign of God in and for the world**; to be the living embodiment of Christ's unlimited love and forgiveness in and for the world; to be the living witness to the Spirit who creates new life in people, restores them and gives them the hope of a future. The Church is 'catholic' because it is the sign of the wide embrace of God's love – which includes people '***of every tribe and tongue and people and nation***'. When we gather at the Eucharist, we gather in the name of people everywhere, we pray on behalf of the whole of suffering humanity, we look forward in joyful hope to the day when God will gather all people to himself and give them to share in his life. And we go out from the Eucharist to give that hope concrete shape in daily care and service and forgiveness and love.

That's, approximately, what we mean when we speak of the 'holy, catholic Church'.

6. A GENTLE APPROACH TO BEING QUIET

On Friday 15th to Saturday 16th October next, there is a retreat at Les Etangs, Centre Arend Fixmer, Medernach (a retreat house run by the Sisters of the Christian Doctrine). Those attending will gather for the evening meal at 7.00 p.m on Friday and depart around 5.30 p.m on Saturday. The Quiet Time will be led by Rev. Joan Lyon, Assistant Chaplain at the Anglican community, and she will be available if you would like to talk individually.. She offers the following description of the day: “The appeal of some time out is often tempered by wondering how you might pass a whole day in silence. This is not a completely silent retreat but a time to come together in fellowship as well as spending some time with God on your own. Some structure can be helpful and we are offering 24 hours of relaxation and tranquillity with some worship and optional input in the beautiful setting of this retreat house.

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(see www.doctrine.lu/medernach). The time will be yours to use as you need. A list of participants will be available nearer the time so that transport can be shared”.

For further details about how to get to the centre in Medernach, the timetable of the day's retreat and a registration form, go to **our website** catholic.lu and click on **Gentle approach to being Quiet** under Latest News.

7. TABLE QUIZ: WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 27

In aid of the Ireland Stand at the International Bazaar, there will be a table quiz on Wednesday October 27th next, to be held at the Centre Culturel, Hollerich (rue Emile Lavandier). It will begin at 7.30 p.m. (sharp). Doors open at 7.00 p.m. For Table Reservations, contact Annette Power (tel. 339884) or Gerri Egan (Tel. 432636) or Olive Deasy (tel. 332985).

Admission is 12 euro (which includes two drinks). The Quiz is played by teams of six. Why not organise a team and reserve a table! In this way you will avoid disappointment and facilitate the smooth running of the Quiz. Prizes galore!

And with that, I bring this particular bulletin to an end. Once again, do keep an eye on our website www.catholic.lu .You'll find this (and other bulletins) there and indeed I'm hoping that soon we'll be able to dispense with this printed bulletin and simply refer you to the website.

God bless you, one and all.

Eamonn Breslin, parish priest

