

PARISH BULLETIN 2011/1
OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

EUROPEAN PARISH

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Ut unum sint...
That they may be one...

SCHEDULE OF MASSES:

Saturday: 19.00 at St. Alphonse, 32 rue des Capucins
Sunday: 11.00 a.m. At St. Peter and Paul, Hollerich

CONFESSIONS

Every Saturday evening from 17.30 to 18.00 in St. Alphonse. Also any time at 34 rue des Capucins, by appointment (tel. 47 00 39)

BAPTISMS

On Saturdays at 11. 30 a.m in St. Alphonse (also, by way of exception, on Sunday afternoons at 15.00 either in St. Alphonse or in Hollerich). Over the past few years there have been a lot of baptisms in our predominantly young community. As a result it has been difficult to arrange separate pre-baptism preparation meetings with parents. For some time past we have begun to take groups of parents together to prepare for the baptism. These sessions, conducted by Mrs. Cheryl Kouba and myself, last about an hour or so and are obligatory for parents (and if possible at least one godparent) of the children to be baptized. It is therefore important that we have good advance notice (several months) of upcoming baptisms. It may not always be possible to have the baptism on the day that would suit you best, so do let us know well in advance. In view of the frequently loose connection of parents/godparents with the church community, we will soon have to move towards a more lengthy and intensive period of preparation for baptism.

WEDDINGS

If you are thinking of getting married, please contact me well in advance (6 months or so). There are documents to be got (recent baptismal and

confirmation certificates, and a letter of freedom to marry). When you have these documents we proceed to the filling up of the matrimonial dossier. If you are getting married outside Luxembourg, the dossier will have to be sent to the diocese in which the marriage takes place. Many dioceses insist that the documents be sent to them three months in advance of the wedding ceremony.

1. LITURGICAL CALENDAR FOR LENT AND EASTER

March 19th: This Saturday evening mass will be a special service for the feast of St. Patrick (March 17th) and will be mainly in Irish (Gaelic), with some English, of course. All are welcome.

March 20th: Second Sunday of Lent (A) Matt. 17, 1-9
This mass will be held in St. Alphonse at 11. 15 a.m. and will be a community mass for the entire European parish.

There will be no English Mass in Hollerich on March 20th.

March 27th Third Sunday of Lent (A) John 4, 5-42

April 3rd: Fourth Sunday of Lent (A) John 9, 1-41

April 10th Fifth Sunday of Lent (A) John 11, 1- 45

HOLY WEEK

April 17th: **PALM (Passion) SUNDAY**, with reading of the Passion acc. to Matthew. The Service begins with the blessing of the palms and a procession. **There will be no Saturday evening Mass in St. Alphonse on April 17th.**

April 21st: **HOLY THURSDAY:** Mass of the Lord's Supper in Hollerich at 20.00 hrs.

April 22nd; **GOOD FRIDAY:** Reading of the Passion, Prayers and Holy Communion at Hollerich at 15.30

April 23rd: **HOLY SATURDAY:** Easter Vigil in Hollerich at 21.30

April 24th: **EASTER SUNDAY:** Mass in Hollerich at 11.00 a.m., as usual.

NB. There will be no English mass in St. Alphonse on Holy Saturday evening.

May 1st: Second Sunday of Easter (A) John 20,19-31

I will be in Ireland on holiday that week-end. Parishioners are kindly invited to attend mass, whether on Saturday or Sunday, at St. Alphonse (Saturday 18.00, Sunday 10.00 a.m.), the Cathedral or elsewhere.

May 8 th :	Third Sunday of Easter (A)	Luke 24, 13-35
	This is the day of our Confirmation Ceremony and you are asked particularly to come in good time, as there will be a more than usually big crowd, including parents and relations of the young people being confirmed.	
May 15 th :	Fourth Sunday of Easter (A)	John 10, 1-10
	As usual, this is First Communion day for the Hollerich parish community, so the church in Hollerich will not be available to us. Instead we will go to the Cathedral for the 'Messe du Peuple de Dieu' at 10.30 a.m.	
May 22 nd :	Fifth Sunday of Easter (A)	John 14, 1-12
May 29 th :	Sixth Sunday of Easter (A)	John 14, 15-21
June 2 nd :	ASCENSION THURSDAY	Matt. 28,16-20
June 5 th :	Seventh Sunday of Easter (A)	John 17. 1-11
June 12 th :	PENTECOST SUNDAY	John 20,19-23
	This is First Communion Sunday in our parish	
June 19 th :	TRINITY SUNDAY	John 3, 16-18

2. OUR LENTEN PROJECTS 2011

This year we will be supporting a girls' school in Haiti with a lump sum of 5000 euro. The rest of the money received from parishioners will go towards the establishment of a tree-planting project in Peru.

Project 1: Planting 'TARA' trees in the commune of Santa Rosa de Huaysuy, 10 km from Huanta, Peru.

The 'tara' tree is endemic to Peru. Its 'fruits'/beans, which can be made into flour, are much in demand by tanneries and by the pharmaceutical and chemical sector. The grains can be used, among other things, for making paints and lacquers. So tara is therefore a much sought-after product. Only 20% of Peruvian farmers grow it. Most people look for the 'beans' in the woods and sell them in small quantities at the local market.

The project which we are supporting consists in planting on 28.25 hectares of not less than 30,764 shoots of tara. But because of the dry season in that part of Peru, it will be necessary to invest in an irrigation system – and that costs money. 60% of the inhabitants of the village will receive instruction on the project and will be accompanied.

Because the project fits in with the laws which concern the development of the country, only half of the money needed will have to come from foreign sources. The entire project, over 15 years, will cost more or less 95,000 euro, of which half (50,000 euro) will be provided from outside.

After five years the harvest could be 10kg for each tree, ie, a capacity of 50%. After 8 years the capacity or yield will be full. The first 3 years there are hardly any fruits. Up to now this posed a problem as regards credit. The banks didn't want to agree to repayment during the first three years. In our project the villagers don't have to pay back during these first three years. Many families will thus be able to improve their stand of living appreciably.

There will also be a reforestation of the region and other kinds of things can be cultivated under the 'tara' trees which are 5 or 6 metres in height, for example fruit trees of 2 to 3 metres, and below – on the ground – kitchen vegetables.

The Redemptorists have been active for a century in this region. In July 2010 Père Rall visited his confreres in Huanta, where the Redemptorists have already built a church, a school and an orphanage.

Project 2: Marie Consolatrice, Port-de paix, Haiti

This school, run by the 'Servantes Lasaliennes de Jesus', is twinned with a school of the same name in Esch/ Alzette. It was not damaged in the earthquake of January 2010. Drinking water is available, but there is a great need of school books, teaching materials and money to pay the teachers' salaries. Many of the girls come from a considerable distance to school on foot. After the earthquake a cholera epidemic devastated the country. In short, the situation is chaotic and our help is absolutely necessary.

Because of the political instability in Haiti (and the widespread corruption), coordination is not possible and humanitarian aid from around the world does not have much effect. However, direct help is possible because of the contacts maintained by the two twinned schools. Every euro we give will go directly and immediately to the educational programmes and the support of the young girls.

You can subscribe, mentioning CAREME 2011, PEROU, HAITI to the following account numbers of the European parish

CCPL IBAN LU 67 1111 0283 7652 0000

or BCEE IBAN LU 16 0019 1000 4800 4000

Many thanks – and apologies for the rather limp translation from the French.

3. FORGIVENESS

What follows is a précis of an article by one of my favourite theologians, the late Herbert McCabe, O.P. It was reprinted recently in the 'Tablet' (5th March), but as many of you do not get that publication, I thought it worthwhile to reproduce Fr. McCabe's reflections here. I should warn you in advance that his style is at times quite provocative. He begins: It is very odd that people should think that when we do good God will reward us and when we do evil he will punish us. I mean it is very odd that Christians should think this, that God deals out to us what we deserve. It is not, I suppose, really odd that other people should..for God tends to be just a great projection into the sky of our moral feelings, especially our guilt feelings. But I don't believe in God if that's what he is...[but] you could say that the main theme of Jesus is that God isn't like that at all.

The Prodigal Son: Take the famous parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15, 11-32). In this, the younger son goes to a distant country.. and squanders all his father's gifts in debauchery and generally having a high old time. After a bit he sees himself for what he is, so as to say “I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants”.

What his sin has done is to alter his whole relationship with his father; instead of being a son he now should be treated as one who gets his wages, gets exactly what he deserves. But there are two things here; there is the fact that this is what his sin has **done**, and there is the fact that he **recognizes** this. Luke makes sure we get this crucial point by repeating it twice. The vital thing is that the son has recognised his sin for what it is: something that changes God into a paymaster, or a judge.

Sin is something that changes God into a projection of our guilt, so that we don't see the real God at all; all we see is some kind of judge..God has been turned into Satan, the accuser of man, the paymaster, the one who weighs our deeds and condemns us...

It is the great characteristic of sinners that they do not know that they are sinners, that they refuse to accept and believe that they are sinners. On the contrary, they have found all the ways of justifying and excusing themselves.

The whole conversation in hell consists of the damned telling each other how it is all a terrible mistake and they should not be there at all because they are righteous and virtuous. The desperate boredom of this must be the **pain** of hell, but the thing that **constitutes** hell is that God can't be seen. All that can be seen is this vengeful punitive god who is Satan.

The younger son in the story has escaped hell because he has seen his sin for what it is. He has recognised what this does to his vision of God “I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands”. And, of course, as soon as he really accepts that he is a sinner, he ceases to be one; knowing that you have sinned is contrition or forgiveness, or whatever you like to call it. The rest of the story is not about the father **forgiving** his son, it is about the father **celebrating**, welcoming his son with joy and feasting. This is all the real God ever does, because God, the real God, is just helplessly and hopelessly in love with us. He is unconditionally in love with us.

His love for us doesn't depend on what we do or what we are like. He doesn't care whether we are sinners or not. It makes no difference to him. He is just waiting to welcome us with joy and love. Sin doesn't alter God's attitude to us; it alters our attitude to him, so that we change him from the God who is simple love and nothing else, into this punitive ogre, this Satan.

Sin matters enormously to us if we are sinners; it doesn't matter at all to God. In a fairly literal sense he doesn't give a damn about our sin. It is we who give the damns. We damn ourselves because we would rather justify and excuse ourselves, and look on our self-flattering images of ourselves, than be taken out of ourselves by the infinite love of God.

Contrition, or forgiveness (remember that it is we who forgive ourselves) is almost the exact opposite of excusing ourselves. It is a matter of accusing ourselves – for now human beings have power on earth to forgive sins, power to recognise sin for what it is and so abolish it. Contrition, or forgiveness, is self-knowledge, the terribly painful business of seeing ourselves as what and who we are; how mean, selfish, cruel and indifferent and infantile we are. The younger son recognises a truth: that his sin had made him into a wage earner, one who gets his deserts. And in the simple recognition of that his sin is no more. Contrast him with the elder son: “I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command”. Even though he is law-abiding and not debauched like his brother, he has not seen God for what he is. He thinks of himself as a wage earner. He thinks that he should collect his pay packet from God and demand what he deserves. Jesus presents us here

with the frightening possibility of the virtuous and carefully law-abiding man who, because he is concerned with himself, with his own merits and virtues, and what he thinks he deserves, cannot see God any more than the profligate... God and his love were hidden from the younger son by the almost childlike pleasures of the flesh. God is hidden from the older one by pride, the speciality of Satan...

It is by the power of God, by the love of God coming to him even while he was in sin, that the younger brother became able to see himself for what he is; and this is contrition, this is forgiveness. Never be deluded into thinking that if you have contrition, if you are sorry for your sins, God will come and forgive you – that he will be touched by your appeal, change his mind about you and forgive you. Not a bit of it. God never changes his mind about you. He is simply in love with you. What he does again and again is change your mind about him. That is why you are sorry. That is what your forgiveness is. You are not forgiven because you confess your sin. You confess your sin, recognise yourself for what you are, because you are forgiven.

When you come to confession, to make a ritual proclamation of your sin, to symbolise that you know what you are, you are not coming in order to have your sins forgiven. You don't come to confession in order to have your sins forgiven. You come to **celebrate** that your sins are forgiven. You come to put on the best robe and ring on your finger and the sandals on your feet..because your blindfold and your blindness have gone, and you can see the love God has for you.

4. LENTEN PENITENTIAL RITE THURSDAY APRIL 7th

Each Advent and Lent we have a rite of reconciliation for those who would like to attend. We hold it in the church in Hollerich, in the glassed-in area at the back. This Lent it will take place on Thursday, April 7th at 8.00 p.m. The form of the service is as usual: an opening prayer, a reading followed by a short homily, a period of silence during which people can, if they so wish, make a brief private confession. This will be followed by Absolution and a final prayer or hymn. All are welcome..

5. OUR NEW PARISH COUNCIL

Our website catholic.lu has already announced the names of our New Parish Council. But just in case you haven't seen it, here they are: Fr. Eamonn

Breslin, Monique Oswald, Marcella McCarthy, Michael Doyle, Robert Foley, Marthese Lufi, Silvio Muller, Cheryl Kouba, Regan Otte and David Borg. Our first meeting was held on February 14th and the minutes of that meeting have still to be approved by the Council, but will eventually be available. All the council members were not able to be present at the meeting but, since there was a quorum, we proceeded to the election of a chairperson. Cheryl Kouba was the only candidate emerging and she was duly elected. We will proceed to the election of a secretary at our next meeting on May 10th.

A number of suggestions were made at our first meeting about activities our parish should undertake. They included (this list is not exhaustive): relations with the parish of Hollerich and with the Archdiocese; outreach to youth; relationship and pre-marriage counselling; social events (e.g. our annual open-air mass and picnic); Liturgical services (e.g. volunteers for the choir etc.).

We have already over the past two week-ends put forms at the back of the church asking for volunteers for any of these activities. Many thanks to those who have already volunteered. We'll be in touch with you soon.

And with that, we bring this present bulletin to an end.

I wish all our parishioners a fruitful and prayerful Lenten season and the joy of the risen Lord in your hearts this Easter!

Eamonn Breslin, parish priest