

PARISH BULLETIN 2012/1

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 Ss. 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 baptism in our predominantly young community. For some time past we have been taking 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). The suggestion has recently been made that we should occasionally have baptisms during the Sunday mass – it would point up that baptism is an initiation into the Christian community. There are difficulties in the way e.g. people coming from overseas for the baptism may not be able to remain on Sunday; a baptism might prolong the Sunday mass by 15 minutes or more etc. However, I would be pleased to hear from parishioners what they think of the idea.

It is very important to give me 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, please.

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 baptism and confirmation certificates

and a 'Letter of freedom to marry' which is to be got from the parish of your baptism. 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 17th: This Saturday evening mass will be a special service for the feast of St. Patrick and will be mainly in Irish (Gaelic), with some prayers in English. All are welcome.

March 18th 4th Sunday in Lent (B) John 3, 14-21
Our Archbishop, Jean-Claude Hollerich, will celebrate the mass and preach. There will be a vin d'honneur at the back of the church at the end of Mass.

March 25th 5th Sunday in Lent John 12, 20-33

HOLY WEEK

April 1st: **PALM (Passion) SUNDAY**, with reading of the Passion according to Mark. The Service begins with the blessing of the palms and a procession. **There will be no Saturday evening Mass in St. Alphonse on Saturday evening, March 31st.**

April 5th **HOLY THURSDAY**: Mass of the Lord's Supper in Hollerich at 20 hrs.

April 6th: **GOOD FRIDAY**: Reading of the Passion, Prayers and holy Communion at Hollerich at 15.30

April 7th: **HOLY SATURDAY; EASTER VIGIL** in Hollerich at 21.30

April 8th: **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.

April 15th : Second Sunday of Easter (B) John 20, 19-31
I will be on holiday in Ireland that week-end. There will be no Saturday evening mass in St. Alphonse. It is possible I may be able to get someone to take the Sunday mass in Hollerich. Please keep an eye on the website and I will announce it as soon as I know.

April 22nd : Third Sunday of Easter (B) Luke 24,35-48
I will be back for the Saturday evening Mass on April 21st.

April 29th: Fourth Sunday of Easter (B) John 10,11-18
As usual, this is First Communion day for the Hollerich parish, so the church in Hollerich will not be available to us that day. Instead we will go to the Cathedral for the 'Messe du Peuple de Dieu' at 10.30 a.m.

May 6 th :	Fifth Sunday of Easter (B)	John 15,1-8
May 13 th	Sixth Sunday of Easter (B)	John 15,9-17
May 17 th	ASCENSION THURSDAY	Mark 16,15-20
May 20 th	Seventh Sunday of Easter (B)	John 17, 11-19
May 27 th :	PENTECOST SUNDAY	John 20, 19-23
May 28 th	8 th Sunday in Ordinary time (B)	Mark 10,17-27
June 3 rd :	TRINITY SUNDAY	Matt. 28,16-20
June 10 th	CORPUS CHRISTI: This will be First Communion Sunday in our parish	
June 17 th	11 th Sunday of the Year (B) This will be the Sunday of our open-air mass at Trintange, so there will be no English mass in Hollerich that day.	Mark 4, 26-34

2. OUR LENTEN PROJECTS 2012

This year there are four projects in all:

(a) **the sinking of a well at Tanzéogo**, in the department of Mané, province of Sanmatengo in Burkina Faso. We have already promised support to the tune of 5000 euros. Mme Marie-Pierre Gleis has provided a good number of photos. The work is already finished and the water is flowing at the rate of 900 litres per hour. As a result, the population has water to drink, water for agriculture, pottery, and basket-making, and is enjoying considerably improved hygienic conditions.

(b) Project 2 : **the sinking of a water-well** in a village at some distance from Garango in Burkina Faso. M. Patrice Roy has maintained very good contact with the parish priest of our sister-parish and with the sisters in the orphanage in Garango. The missionary committee proposes that we finance one of the three well-sinkings asked for. That will mean helping them to the tune of 8,300 euros.

(c) our third project is to help in the **construction of a school building** at Huanta, in the province of Ayacucho in Peru, for the Redemptorist fathers. Their college San Alfonso, founded in 2008, has already more than 400 pupils. An area for sport and games has already been laid out. The new school building, 16 metres long and 6 metres broad, will be built in brick with a saddle-back roof. It will have a porch-roof at one side, a metre and a half long, which will help to protect the children (and the building) from the rain. The two large halls for 36 pupils will also be equipped with an apparatus for (film) projection. We have received a very detailed account of all this and the Redemptorists send us regular reports and photos. We've been asked to contribute one third of the cost of construction i.e. 8500 euros.

(d) The rest of the money collected during Lent 2012 could go to the support of a **workshop for deaf persons in Lebanon**. These are people who became deaf as

a result of bombardments and they have asked us to help renovate the sanitary arrangements of their workshop, to maintain the building and to buy two sewing machines and materials to work with. Mme Sigwarth knows one contact person there and will keep us informed.

On behalf of the parish council and the missionary committee,
Mme Suzanne COLLIN-VANMOERKERKE

Account numbers for the European parish:
CCPL IBAN LU 67 1111 0283 0000 or
BCEE IBANLU 16 0019 1000 4800 4000

Mention; Careme 2012. Many thanks.

3. A LENTEN REFLECTION

Some years ago, Eamonn Duffy, professor of the history of Christianity at Cambridge, wrote a thought-provoking article in 'the Tablet' which I felt might be worthwhile summarising here. He called it 'Fasting – our lost rite'. Dr. Duffy, who is in no sense a 'conservative', welcomes the renewal of Vatican II, but suggests that “the post-conciliar reforms were sometimes implemented in a spirit of philistine dismissal of 'tradition', as nothing more than the dead hand of the past... one of the saddest casualties of the process was the effective abolition of the Church's ancient observances of fasting and abstinence”.

The ritual observance of fasting and abstinence from meat during Lent and abstinence from meat on Fridays, as well as the eucharistic fast from midnight before receiving communion, were defining marks of Catholicism before Vatican II, as abstinence from pork is a defining mark of Judaism. Friday abstinence in particular was a focus of Catholic identity which transcended class and educational barriers and had nothing to do with priests or authority.

The argument for change in the 1960's suggested that many people who were punctilious about not eating meat on Friday – while perhaps drinking their wages or beating their wives! - were sticking to 'mere externals', and ignoring the essence of 'real' Christianity. The call was for 'a more spiritual kind of religion'. The result is we now have fasting only two days of the year (Ash Wednesday and Good Friday) and compulsory Friday abstinence has been replaced “by a genteel and totally individualistic injunction to do some penitential act on a Friday, an injunction... which most Catholics know nothing about. *What had been a corporate mark of identity has been marginalised into an individualistic option*” (my italics, E.B)

Why did this happen? Not because fasting was peripheral to Catholic faith. Fasting

was an important element in Jewish religion and Jesus said that though his disciples did not fast 'while the bridegroom (himself) was with them', they would fast after his death. From at least the fourth century A.D. Christians have observed fast days and the 40 days of Lent in commemoration of the Passion. "At the heart of Catholicism for a millenium and a half lay a dialectical dividing of time, a rhythmic movement between the poles of fast and feast, Lent and Easter, renunciation and affirmation".

Catholics shared that rhythm with most of the world's great religious traditions. This suggests that there's something essential about fasting not only for our Catholic identities but as religious beings, as human beings. But since 1967 "*what was once a truly corporate observance, reminding us of the Passion of Christ, of our own spiritual poverty and, even more concretely, of the material poverty of most of the human race, reminding us what it was like to be hungry, has become another individual consumer choice, like going on a diet*" (my italics. E.B.)

Professor Duffy suggests that religious traditions need shared observances (such as fasting) to sustain their identities. The Jews, during long centuries and in many cultures, without temple or priesthood, knew who they were "because of what they did and did not eat". Christian fasting and abstinence were also deeply embedded in theological conviction. Their abandonment "was not therefore a simple change in devotional habit, but the signal of a radical discontinuity in the tradition and a decisive shift in theological perception".

But there's something more at stake in all this than theology, namely *the Church's prophetic integrity: its claim to solidarity with the poor.* (my italics, E.B.).

"Compulsory fasting and abstinence, practiced regularly, routinely and in common, was recognition by the Church that identification with the poor and hungry... is not an *option* for Catholics, but a necessary and definitive sign of their redemption, as essential in its way as attendance at Mass". By making fasting and abstinence optional, the Church forfeited one of its most eloquent prophetic signs. One of the striking things about the change in 1967 is that the English bishops – by contrast with the American hierarchy – in abolishing compulsory Friday abstinence, made no attempt to explain the power and meaning of the traditional observances. They simply spoke of the 'inconveniences' surrounding Friday abstinence e.g. people sometimes have their main meal at work, social events are often arranged for Fridays and so Catholics appear singular and awkward. Eamon Duffy believes this is missing the point completely "*The whole rationale of symbolic gestures requires that they disrupt and disturb the secular order. Their power to witness... comes precisely from their awkwardness*" (my italics. E.B)

The abandonment of fasting and abstinence, Duffy goes on, "was symptomatic of a more widespread levelling down of much that was distinctive in the symbolic lives of Catholics". Increasingly holy days of obligation (e.g. Ascension Thursday) are celebrated on the nearest Sunday to avoid inconvenience or the interruption of secular

patterns of living. Sunday Mass can be heard on Saturday”to make way for a day's work or cleaning the car or a morning in bed with the papers, like our pagan neighbours” (Duffy). He suggests that the dropping of fasting and abstinence came about because Catholics had “long since parked responsibility for all that with the bishops”. “How else could the Catholic people have allowed their pastors to assail and abolish these ancient continuities in the name of convenience and the avoidance of oddity?”. He points out that the ordinary members of the Orthodox and Byzantine Rite Catholic Churches have a far less authoritarian mentality than we have, a much more lively sense of the richness of their traditions of prayer and practice and a deeper hold on the symbols which provide continuity with the Christian past and guidance to its future.

Whatever you think about Eamonn Duffy's reflections on fasting, they are not the rantings of an old-fashioned conservative. Duffy is an extremely thoughtful and critical Christian layman. He's not saying we should get back to the pre-Vatican II situation. There are no quick fixes and traditions cannot be rebuilt by orders from Rome. We must start from where we are and begin a process of re-education to recover our shared past. We need to tap into the deeper resources of our tradition “and try to rediscover within it once more some of the supports which helped our fathers and mothers to live the Gospel. We could do worse than rededicate ourselves to the observance of fasting and abstinence”.

4. VENITE ADOREMUS: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Alphonse

Venite Adoremus is a project of contemplative prayer begun on January 2nd 2012 by Archbishop Jean-Claude Hollerich, in collaboration with a group of young adults in the crypt of the Cathedral in Luxembourg.

The young adults are invited to pray and to share their faith during a period of praise and adoration. Every two weeks, on Tuesday evenings from 8.15 to 9.15, there will be eucharistic adoration, with singing, prayer and periods of silence at St. Alphonse. On the first Sunday of each month, the archbishops will give a catechesis based on the gospel of St. Mark. Venite Adoremus is led by the archbishop himself. The next sessions of adoration will take place at St. Alphonse from 8.15 to 9.15 p.m. On March 27th, April 10 (catechesis by the Archbishop), April 24th and May 22nd.

The meeting of 8th May from 8.15 to 9.15 p.m (during the Octave) will take place in the crypt of the Cathedral. Again the Archbishop will be present to lead.

5. PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY ROBE OF CHRIST AT TRIER, APRIL 14

In the context of the annual celebration of the 'heiliger Rock' (holy robe) at Trier, the Archdiocese of Luxembourg has organized a one day pilgrimage. All the

parishes and communities of the country are invited. The theme chosen for this pilgrimage is “gather together that which is separated” (cf. the account of the Passion in the Gospel of John 19, 23-24.)

On the programme of the day of pilgrimage:

10.30 a.m. Eucharist celebrated by the archbishop Jean-Claude Hollerich, followed by a midday meal.

14.00 hrs. Veneration of the Holy Robe of Christ.

The pastoral region of Luxembourg will be organising bus transport (to avail of it you must sign up). There will be more about this later. Keep an eye on the website, catholic.lu. (Unfortunately I will be in Ireland and unable to attend.. E.B.)

6. LENTEN PENITENTIAL RITE Monday March 26th at 8.00 p.m.

As usual in Advent and Lent we will have a rite of reconciliation for anyone who would like to attend. It will be held in Hollerich, in the glassed-in area at the back of the church. This year it will take place on Monday March 26th at 8.00 p.m. The form of the service is as usual; an opening prayer, a reading followed by a brief homily, a period of silence during which people can, if they wish, make a brief private confession. The reconciliation rite will finish with Absolution and a final prayer and hymn. The whole service will last about 40 minutes or so. All are welcome.

7. CHOIR PRACTICES FOR THE 'MESSE DU PEUPLE DE DIEU'

As announced above, the 'Messe du Peuple de Dieu' will take place in the Cathedral on April 29th at 10.30 a.m. Rehearsals for the Inter-community choir for this mass will take place on Wednesday March 28th, Wednesday April 19th and Wednesday April 25th. The rehearsals will take place at the chapel of the Franciscan sisters at 50 ave. Gaston Diderich, and will begin each time at 8.00 p.m.

8. CONFIRMATION 2013

It may seem a little early to be announcing this, but parents of prospective candidates for Confirmation may like to know well in advance. We have already settled with our new Archbishop the date of our Confirmation ceremony next year. It will be **Sunday May 26th**.

9. A WEEKDAY MASS IN ENGLISH?

From time to time over the years people have asked about the possibility of a weekday mass in English. We never really got round to it, but at this late stage in my time as parish priest, I thought it might be worthwhile trying to establish something.

So on my return from Ireland after Easter I'll try and set up a regular Wednesday mass at St. Alphonse, say at 12. 15. As soon as I've arranged it with the authorities here at St. Alphonse, I'll announce it and put it on the website catholic.lu.

10. OUR FIRST COMMUNION PROGRAMME

Thanks to Robert Foley and his helpers, the First Communion programme seems to be going very well. I'd like to take this occasion to thank all concerned, parents, teachers, singers and musicians who are dedicating themselves to preparing the children for First Communion on June 10th. For your information, we have 24 children this year, 19 girls and 5 boys (!!)

And with that, I bring this Lenten Bulletin to an end. May I wish all our parishioners a very fruitful season of Lent and the joy of the Risen Lord in their hearts this Easter.

Eamonn Breslin, parish priest.