

PARISH BULLETIN 2006/3

of the English-speaking community

European Parish

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Tel: 47 00 39
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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 at St. Peter and Paul's, Hollerich.

CONFESSIONS:

Every Saturday evening from 17.30 to 18.00 in St. Alphonse. Also any time at 34 rue des Capucins, by appointment.

BAPTISMS:

On Saturdays at 12.15 and on Sundays at 15.00 in St. Alphonse. Saturdays and Sundays at 15.30 in Hollerich. It is **essential** to contact me well in advance about baptisms, so that (a) we can meet and prepare for the baptism (b) check out the availability of the church on the day you would like to have the baptism. Please remember that neither St. Alphonse nor Hollerich are 'our' churches (we have only the use of them). They may not be available on the day you might prefer.

WEDDINGS:

If you are thinking of getting married, please contact me well in advance (6 months or so). There are documents to be got and a matrimonial dossier to be drawn up. If you're getting married outside Luxembourg, the dossier will have to be sent to the diocese in which you are getting married. Many dioceses insist on having the documentation three months or so ahead of the wedding.

1. LITURGICAL CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

October 22 nd :	29 th Sunday of Year (B)	Mk. 10, 35-45
October 29 th :	30 th Sunday of Year (B)	Mk. 10, 46-52
November 1 st :	Feast of All Saints	Mt. 5, 1-12a
	All Saints is a Holy Day of Obligation. There will be mass in Hollerich at 11.00 a.m. as usual.	
November 2 nd :	Feast of All Souls	
November 5 th :	31 st Sunday of Year (B)	Mk. 12, 28b-34
November 12 th :	32 nd Sunday of Year (B)	Mk. 12, 38-44
November 19 th :	33 rd Sunday of Year (B)	Mk. 13,24-32
November 26 th :	34 th Sunday of Year (B)	
	Feast of Christ the King and last Sunday of Liturgical Year (B)	
December 3 rd :	First Sunday of Advent	John 18, 33b-37
	Beginning of new Liturgical Year (C)	
		Lk, 21, 25-28. 34-36

2. FIRST COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION

At a recent meeting of catechists, musicians and people in charge of the reading and other rotas, we discussed the dates of Confirmation and First Communion. Since then I've been in touch with the bishop and the date of Confirmation has been set for **MAY 20TH 2007**. We decided on **May 27th** for First Communion. By the time you are reading this, the first meeting with the parents of prospective First Communion children will have taken place (October 15th). We'll keep you informed about the Confirmation programme. If you have a child for Confirmation or First Communion this year who is at neither the European School or ISL, please let us know as soon as possible. By the way, we insist that any child making First Communion **must be over 8 years of age** (as of January 1st 2007).

3. THE ANGLICANS AND OURSELVES

Over the past few years we've managed to do a few things together with the local Anglican community, especially during Church Unity Week in January. It's minimal, granted, but it's something. There's no lack of good will but, as we all know, scheduling anything (even within one community) is extremely

difficult, given people's busy social schedules. Two things came to my notice in the last issue of 'The Konvikt' (magazine of the Anglican community here) which may be of interest to you.

(A). EMMAUS - THE WAY OF FAITH:

Talking to Rev. Chris Lyon recently, this programme struck me as something through which Anglicans and ourselves might grow in faith together. The following is taken directly from the 'The Konvikt'. 'Emmaus - the way of faith' is a programme which the Anglican Chaplains would like to introduce to the congregation over the next few years. It is rooted in an understanding of evangelism, nurture and discipleship modelled on the example of companionship as told in the story of the Emmaus road (Luke 24, 13-35).

Emmaus is an attractive programme partly because of the content of its courses and the way that they are structured, but also because it works from the insight that most people grow in faith through relationship with others and makes that a central plank of its method. The chaplains are looking not only for newcomers and enquirers to join the course, but also for more mature and experienced Christians who are willing to be sponsors and who are ready to talk about their own journey with a person with whom they will be paired for the duration of the course.

How does the programme work? There are three stages:

(a) **Contact:** this is about general orientation.. And the material is presented in a book called 'Contact' which is a simple guide.

(b) **Nurture:** this offers a flexible 15-session course on Christian basics. A nurture group is made up of enquirers, newcomers and people who have been part of the church for some time and who are willing to learn more about sharing their faith. Topics in the Nurture stage are:

Part 1. What Christians believe

Believing in God

We need God in our lives

The life and ministry of Jesus

The death and resurrection of Jesus

The Holy Spirit

Becoming a Christian.

Part 2: How Christians grow

Learning to pray
Reading the Bible
Belonging to the Church
Sharing Holy Communion

Part 3: Living the Christian life

Living God's way
Serving the Lord
Your money and your life
Learning to love
Sharing the faith.

(C) the final stage is about **growth** and includes short courses (3 to 5 sessions) on deepening your faith.

This programme is something the Anglican chaplains (Chris and Joan Lyon) are hoping to offer and develop. I promised to inform our community to find out if there is any level of interest in the programme. If so, it might be quite a good ecumenical venture. If you *are* interested, please let me know.

(B) *THE YOUNG ADULTS GROUP* (Anglican community)

This group was formed this year. They participants are people in their 20's and 30's who meet together fortnightly (on a Tuesday or Wednesday from 7.00 p.m.) to discuss questions of faith. The theme of the evening is discussed informally, then the group moves on to current issues or questions that may arise. Sometimes there a little singing and the evening ends with a prayer or a brief service. There's invariably food and wine - often takeaway - at the start of the evening. If you'd like to get involved you can speak to Ian Kent (021 209 606) or Cherry Hooper (021 437 486). The group is at present in its infancy and would welcome new members. Think about it.

4. PRAYER DURING ADVENT

During Advent we will be offering an opportunity for anyone who would like help in deepening their prayer. The essential commitment will be to undertake half an hour or so of private daily prayer over a two or three week period, as well as to participate in a couple of meetings and to receive some individual

guidance in prayer. If you're interested, please contact Steve McCarthy (tel: 621 31 91 10) or email sjmc@pt.lu for further details **before the middle of November**.

5. WE HAVE FAILED PLANET EARTH

This is the title of an article by Richard Chartres, Anglican bishop of London, which appeared in *The Tablet* (September 2nd issue). I found it so worthwhile that I thought of synopsising it for the bulletin. So here it is.

SIN, SALVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The word 'sin' has been used a number of times recently in relation to our impact on the environment. You may feel that the environment is a issue of moral concern but isn't using the word 'sin' a bit over the top? Well, that's because the notion of 'sin' has come down in the world. In the Bible it means a state of **alienation in which we're all involved**. Today, however, it is commonly regarded as a term covering a limited range of offences committed by our own free will against conventional morality.

“The total picture of damage and liberation, sin and salvation, which is found in the Bible, teaches us that these themes transcend our individual relations with God. Sin is living a life turned in upon itself and alienated from our true nature which relates us to God, to God's creation and other creatures and to our own deepest well-being. God is pictured working through covenants with particular individuals - Abraham and David and their descendants - but there is also a **cosmic covenant** whose brokenness is vividly described in Isaiah 24,4: *'The world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant'* .

Salvation, envisioned by St. Paul in his Letter to the Romans, entails our re-integration into a vaster order and harmony of a creation *'delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God'*, and is made possible through Christ in whom *'all things hold together'*. It may be difficult for us to connect with this biblical world-view, but aspects of the present ecological challenge force us to engage with a richer understanding of sin and salvation. We have a great deal of knowledge about the facts, the causes and effects of environmental degradation (water shortages, deforestation, melting glaciers etc.), but it seems hard to translate this knowledge into energy

for the profound changes which are needed in the way we live now.

We have increasingly come to view ourselves in the words of René Descartes as **‘masters and possessors of the earth’**. It follows that we consider ourselves fully justified in treating the world as mere matter to be exploited. The consequences are lethal, if this mind-set is accompanied by a largely uncritical acceptance of growth without limit with no end in view beyond the process itself... It is becoming clearer that ‘creation care’ and not simply concern for the environment as a backdrop to human activity, flows from our Christian faith.

WHY ARE WE HERE?

According to the Bible, we human beings are enrolled as **viceroy of the earth and co-creators with God**. This is what we assert every time we offer bread as ‘fruit of the earth and work of human hands’. The Bible does not imply a rejection of the idea of development. According to Genesis we are to ‘dress and keep’ creation. This implies a balance between care and development.

Human beings are hungry and thirsty creatures. In the book of Genesis, God put his breath into the first human beings and *‘man became a living soul’*. The word for ‘soul’ used here is *‘nephesh’* which also had the ancient meaning of *‘throat’*. Human beings are hungry and thirsty not only for the wherewithal to sustain existence but for meaning and joy in life. For many, their search for the wherewithal to satisfy their hunger and thirst is concentrated on acquiring things, but for some, there is a breakthrough to a deeper joy and thirst which nothing can slake, only immersion in the living God.

Francis of Assisi had bourgeois origins and as a young man enjoyed a very jolly time on his father’s money - father being a wealthy wholesale textile merchant. But Francis surprised within himself a longing, a hunger and thirst for joy, for truth, for a depth of compassion which could not be satisfied by having things but which could only be tasted by an immersion in the reality of the living God. The Christian community with allies from other faiths and people of simple goodwill can make a difference by demonstrating that there is a constituency for change in matter like energy consumption and our responsibilities to the poor of the world. In this way we can enlarge the room for manoeuvre so that sympathetic politicians can be emboldened to act without placing themselves too far distant from public opinion.

SPIRITUALITY: THE EUCHARIST

Practical changes based on good scientific analysis are not, of course, the extent or even the main area of the Church’s responsibility..There is an evident

spiritual dimension of the conversion that is necessary which can reveal fresh energies in our traditional Christian practice. The Church is sustained by the Eucharist in which we are taught by Christ to take life with thanksgiving and not for granted. We may enter believing that we are the masters of the feast but holding up the gifts of creation and receiving them back as gifts of divine love converts us into guests and friends of the bridegroom.

We worship as a community not as individuals, so a Eucharistic ethos is one which initiates us into the mystery that I am well only if my neighbour is well. We receive the gifts of God in common. We are members one of another. The ecological movement has given us a new sense of what this entails. Who is my neighbour? In today's wired-up and financially interconnected globe we have new opportunities for assessing the impact of our actions on millions of unseen neighbours.

SPIRITUALITY: THE SABBATH

We urgently need as Christians to rediscover the Sabbath as the crown of creation and a festival of equilibrium and enoughness. The Genesis narrative asserts that creation reaches its consummation not in the creation of human beings on the sixth day but in the peace of the Sabbath on the seventh. At the same time the Sabbath concept when related to the fallow season for the earth points to the need for respect for our common home and restraint on human intervention and exploitation of the natural order.

Rather than being a mere pause between bouts of activity, the Sabbath was to be a **feast of contentment**. The rhythm of Sabbath days and Sabbath years reclaims time itself from being a mere succession of passing moments. It gives life a shape which flows from the recognition that creation was brought into being not to serve any transient human purpose but to be material for the praise and glory of the Creator.

Finally: A QUOTE FROM ST. ISAAC OF NINEVEH (today's northern Iraq)

“An elder was once asked, ‘what is a compassionate heart? He replied, ‘It is a heart on fire for the whole of creation, for humanity, for the birds, for the animals, for demons and all that exists. At the recollection and at the sight of them such a person's eyes overflow with tears owing to the vehemence of the compassion which grips his heart; as a result of his deep mercy his heart shrinks and cannot bear to hear or look on any injury or the slightest suffering of anything in creation.’”

6. HOUSE MASSES

Just a reminder that I am always available for house-masses if anyone wants to organize one. The occasion may be a birthday, an anniversary or whatever. I think it might be helpful, if you do organize a house-mass, to think of inviting newcomers to the parish. It would help them to feel more welcome.

7. CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Robert Foley has been doing wonderful work with the 3 to 7 year old during the Liturgy of the Word on Sundays. He suggests that if parents would like to accompany their children to the Children's Liturgy, or if some young singer or musician would like to help, they will be most welcome.

8. ALTAR SERVERS

Despite several appeals, we still have a very limited number of altar servers. Perhaps you might encourage your sons or daughters to help out. The only condition is that they need to have made their First Communion. For further details, please contact Annette Power at 339884 or 691 370097

9. COFFEE ROTAS

As you may know, the 'coffee hour' after Sunday mass is a very important part of our community life. People get to know each other and make friends. We are always looking for new people for the coffee rota and would particularly welcome newcomers from the national groups that have recently joined the EU. If you feel like offering your services, please contact Annette Power at 339884 or 691 370097.

Best wishes to all our parishioners - especially to those who have recently joined us. Please do not hesitate to call me at 47 00 39 or email ebreslin@pt.lu, if I can be of any help.

Eamonn Breslin, parish priest.