

PARISH BULLETIN 2007/3

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 any time by appointment (ring 470039) at 34 rue des Capucins.

BAPTISMS:

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

of having the documentation three months or so ahead of the wedding.

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1. LITURGICAL CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

October 21 st	29 th Sunday of the Year (C)	Luke 18,1-8
October 28 th	30 th Sunday of the Year (C)	Luke 18, 9-14
November 1 st	Feast of All Saints	Matt. 5, 1-12

All Saints is a Holy Day of Obligation. There will be Mass in Hollerich at 11.00 a.m., as usual, but no vigil Mass the evening before.

Nov. 2 nd	Feast of All Souls	
Nov. 4 th	31 st Sunday of the Year (C)	Luke 19, 1-10
Nov. 11 th	32 nd Sunday of the Year (C)	Luke 20, 27-38
Nov. 18 th	33 rd Sunday of the Year (C)	Luke 21, 5- 19
Nov. 25 th	34 th Sunday of the Year (C)	Luke 23, 34-43

Feast of Christ the King and last Sunday of Liturgical Year B.

Dec. 2 nd	First Sunday of Advent	Matt. 24, 37-44
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Beginning of new Liturgical Year (A)

2. THE ASYLUM-SEEKERS OF OUR PARISH

Over the past three or four weeks, the situation of asylum-seekers has become a live issue in our community, but as yet we are only beginning to grasp the real dimensions of their difficulties. The wake-up call came with the arrest, one Wednesday in mid-September, of Victor Akpala. At 8.30 in the morning, plain-clothes policemen came to the hostel where he was staying - he was asleep at the time - and, after a few preliminary questions, took him away handcuffed in a police car and brought him to the Centre Pénitentiaire in Schrassig. He just had time before he was taken away to call me on his mobile phone and tell me what had happened. It took hours of phoning around to different police-stations in Esch and in Luxembourg before I learnt that the arrest had been carried out by the police judiciaire and not by the regular police. I asked if I could phone Victor but was told that it was against regulations.

Most of you will know by now what happened afterwards. Victor's mobile phone was taken from him and he was allowed to make only a few calls per week (since then he can make one every few days, but unless he asks

permission before 7.00 a.m. from the relevant prison official, he is not allow to

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phone that day. Conditions in the prison are not very very pleasant: the food is very poor and a good deal of time is spent locked in the cell. In spite of that Victor was relatively upbeat when I visited him on Thursday, October 11th and again on October 22nd. He can only receive visitors if he makes an application in writing, with the name, date of birth etc. of the prospective visitor. It took three weeks before I got to see him. No one else has been given permission to visit him. So it is vital to his morale that we keep in contact with him by letter.

You will find the address below in the piece by Chery Kouba.

Over the past few weeks we have sent a letter from the parish, with well over a hundred signatures, to the Minister, protesting against the manner of Victor's arrest and his continual detention. Several people have written individual letters and, through the good offices of M. Armand Clesse, Director of the European Foundation, a new lawyer has been found who is ready and more than willing to take up Victor's cause free of charge. Up to now we have had no reply from the Ministry to any of our letters.

Victor's arrest and detention has underlined for us the urgency of informing ourselves of the situation of the asylum-seekers in our parish and helping them in whatever way we can. As a result of some phone-calls and informal chats, Cheryl Kouba undertook to talk to the asylum-seekers in our parish after mass on Sunday, September 30th. This led to the meeting which Cheryl Kouba describes in the **Parish Information Letter** distributed at the masses on Saturday and Sunday 13th and 14th October. Even though many of you will have a copy of that letter already, I include it here (a) for those who haven't read it and (b) because of the importance and urgency of the situation.

Parish Information Letter

October 13 - 14, 2007

Do small things with great love

- Mother Teres of Calcutta

On Friday evening, October 5th, 2007, a meeting was held to discuss the situation of our parishioners who are seeking asylum here in Luxembourg. The testimonials of those who are seeking asylum were both enlightening and deeply moving. Although Luxembourg is comparatively generous in its aid to refugees, there are areas where more aid is needed. We, as a community, can help.

How can we help?

Become informed. [Http://www.ecre.org/drc/luxembourg.shtml](http://www.ecre.org/drc/luxembourg.shtml) - the website of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles contains important information regarding the situation of refugees in Luxembourg.

Being a mentor . Volunteers are needed to become mentors. Mentors will be responsible for supporting refugees by helping them to find their way through ‘the system’ and to understand official documents - such as governmental letters and work contracts, which are normally in French. Legal aid is given to those seeking asylum, but only pertaining to the process of obtaining asylum. Usually, the asylum applicants and their attorneys, who are chosen from a list given to them by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, meet only after their demand to reside in Luxembourg has been refused.

Keep aware of possible employment opportunities. Some asylum seekers receive ‘tolerance’, or permission to seek an employer during a limited time period, usually six months. Once an employer is found, the asylum applicant becomes eligible to receive a work permit. So please look out for possible, genuine employment opportunities so that those who have been granted ‘tolerance’ can move to the next stage. (Unfortunately, some work places have taken advantage of the refugees’ situation; they have had them work, illegally and often for low wages, before the work permit has come into effect, only to inform them, after a short period of time, that their help is no longer needed.)

Inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration that we stand behind our fellow parishioners who are seeking asylum. A small group of our parishioners will visit the Ministry to become informed about the entire process that those seeking asylum must go through here in Luxembourg. An important aspect of this is to make it known that our fellow parishioners who are seeking asylum are not standing alone.

Write to Minsiter Nicolas Schmit. Please support Victor Akpala and others who are seeking asylum by writing to the minister at the following address:

M. Nicolas Schmit
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration
5, rue Notre Dame,
L-2911 Luxembourg.

Stay in touch with Victor Akpala. Please let Victor know you are thinking

of him:

Mr. Victor Akpala
 Centre Pénitenciaire de Luxembourg
 Block P2, Centre de Rétention, Um Kuélébiérg
 L-5299 Schrassig.

Pray. Last but not least!

If you would like to help in any of these or other ways, please contact Cheryl Kouba by email at: mamer5clan@yahoo.com or by phoning 26-11-90-07.

3. TWO WEEKS OF GUIDED PRAYER DURING ADVENT

(Sponsored by the Anglican Church of Luxembourg and the English-speaking Roman Catholic Church, paroisse europeenne)

An Introduction to the Way of St. Ignatius

- * Have you felt that you need to pray more than you are doing?
- * Have you felt that you would love to be closer to God?
- * Have you felt that you never seem to have enough time to pray?
- * Have you felt that it would be helpful to share your prayer with someone else?

This time of Guided Prayer might be what you need.

Key elements:

- * Commit to daily private prayer over a two week period
- * Come to an initial, middle and final meeting with other participants
- * Individual prayer guidance

Introductory meeting: 8.00 p.m. on Thursday, 29th November

Second meeting: 8.00 p.m. on Thursday 6th December

Final Meeting: 8.00 p.m. on Thursday 13th December

in **The Vicarage, 89 rue de Mühlenbach, L-2168 Luxembourg.**

One-to-one meetings as arranged within the fortnight (i.e. two weeks) with either Steve McCarthy or Joan Lyon. For further information or to register, please send your details (name, address, tel. number and email) either by post or email to **Joan Lyon**, 89 rue de Mühlenbach, L-2168 Luxembourg joan.lyon@anglican.lu or **Steve McCarthy**, 21 rue de Luxembourg, L-5364 Schrassig sjmc@pt.lu

4. FUTURE LOCATION OF SUNDAY MASS: Hollerich or Cents?

Some time early this year, I went to Mgr. Schiltz, the Vicar General of the diocese. We had been having some difficulties with the authorities in Hollerich and besides there had been talk for some time that we could do with a somewhat bigger church. Mgr. Schiltz suggested I have a look at the church in Cents which had the advantage that there was no mass there on Sunday morning. I went and saw, and was impressed. It's a modern church, in 'amphitheatre' style, with rows of seats, in a semi-circle, sloping down towards the altar. Then came our First Communion, Confirmation and summer holidays and the whole question of any move was put on hold.

Since then a number of things have happened: 1. The parish of Cents has been separated from Hamm (up to now they formed one parish, with the Saturday evening mass in Cents and the Sunday mass in Hamm). 2. A new parish priest has been appointed to Cents, Abbé Henri Hamus, who is also very much involved in the diocesan administration. 3. The Tridentine mass has been approved and the Archbishop would like to provide a church for them. Hearing that we were interested in Cents, he (apparently) offered them Hollerich. 4. I had a meeting in early September with Abbé Hamus who gave me to understand that there was a possibility that the people of Cents, now that they had their own separate parish, might like to have a Sunday mass in the parish church. That would, of course, put paid to the possibility of our going there. Since then it appears that there will *not* be a Luxembourgish Sunday mass in Cents. 5. The archbishop rang me recently to ask, among other things, how the possible move to Cents was going. I told him that there were a lot of things to be considered before we could decide on such a move.

Since then, I have written to Abbé Hamus (and have sent a copy of the letter to the archbishop). What follows is a summary of what I wrote: (a) ours is a very large community by Luxembourgish standards (b) it is international, not just European (c) it is a predominantly young community - average age around 40-45, therefore lots of babies and young children (d) our people come to Sunday mass from all over the Grand Duchy - from Clemency, Mamer, Roodt-Syre,

Niederanven, Stadtbredimus etc. (e) some of them don't have cars and need to use public transport. This would influence the time of the Sunday mass, if we were to decide to move there. To sum up, we are - I pointed out - a community with special needs.

These needs include 1. **A cry-room**, such as we have at Hollerich, for mothers with crying babies, of whom anything up to 25 may be there at a time. It will need to be a place where the mothers can see and follow the mass 2. A room for the **children's liturgy** 3. A room or hall where we can conduct the **First Communion preparation** course. 4. **A place to store our hymn books**, missals, catechetical books and other materials 5. A sizeable **notice-board**. 6. A place where we can **prepare and serve coffee etc. after Mass**. I pointed out that this is very important for a community that is not 'territorial', so that people can get to know each other and new-comers can be welcomed and begin to feel at home.

I asked that all these points be discussed openly between a group from our community and the parish council of Cents **before there could be any question of a move**. We need to know where we stand and what freedom we have e.g. in regard to baptisms, weddings etc. I mentioned that, of course, we would be more than willing to contribute financially to the upkeep of the church.

That's where the matter stands at present. Nothing has been decided. Everything depends on whether our needs can be met in Cents. I await a reply from Abbé Hamus. I decided to write about it here so that you may think about it. I'll be very anxious to hear the views of the parishioners and we'll provide an opportunity some time in the coming weeks to do so.

5. **CHEESE AND WINE EVENING**: Jan. 25th 2008

Every year the European parish runs a cheese and wine evening to launch our Lenten project. There is plenty to eat and drink and a tombola (organized by the English-speaking community) with excellent prizes. I'll have more detail on our 2008 Lenten project in the Advent bulletin. But for the moment the date (for your diaries) of the Cheese and Wine evening is **Friday January 25th**, from 7.30 on. The location is the Salle Paroissiale, Strassen. Numbers have been falling off over the past few years, so it would be nice to have a good turnout this year. Think about it.

6. Looking for a poem to finish this bulletin with, I fell back on an old favourite of mine by the Scottish poet Edwin Muir:

ONE FOOT IN EDEN

One foot in Eden still, I stand
 And look across the other land.
 The world's great day is growing late,
 Yet strange these fields that we have planted
 So long with crops of love and hate.
 Time's handiworks by time are haunted,
 And nothing now can separate
 The corn and tares compactly grown.
 The armorial weed in stillness bound
 About the stalk; these are our own.
 Evil and good stand thick around
 In the fields of charity and sin
 Where we shall lead our harvest in.

Yet still from Eden springs the root
 As clean as on the starting day.
 Time takes the foliage and the fruit
 And burns the archetypal leaf
 To shapes of terror and of grief
 Scattered along the winter way.
 But famished field and blackened tree
 Bear flowers in Eden never known.
 Blossoms of grief and charity
 Bloom in these darkened fields alone.
 What had Eden ever to say
 Of hope and faith and pity and love
 Until was buried all its day
 And memory found its treasure trove?
 Strange blessings never in Paradise
 Fall from these beclouded skies.

And with these encouraging words I wish all our parishioners God's blessing and peace in your hearts!

 Eamonn Breslin, parish priest.

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