

# BENE DICTUS



P4 .....  
PRAYER MINISTRY



P7 .....  
GREATER LOVE



PHOTO: JOHN RAE

## SAINT BENEDICT PARISH

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### SUNDAY MASS

Saturday: 4pm  
Sunday: 9am, 11:15am, 6pm

### WEEKDAY MASS

Monday to Friday 9am

### CONFESSIONS

Saturday: 3 - 3:45pm  
Wednesday: 9:45 - 10:30am

Bene Dictus is your monthly newsletter available in print or in your email inbox.

## NEW MEMBERS WELCOME!

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### SAINT BENEDICT PARISH CLERGY

Pastor, Fr. Simon Lobo, CC  
Permanent Deacon, Dcn. David Viscount  
Associate Pastor, Fr. Jim O'Connor  
Intern Priest, Fr. Matthew Keshwah  
Episcopal Vicar for Parish Renewal, Fr. James Mallon



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## FATHER SIMON SAYS...



### LENT – ON YOUR MARK...

This year Lent sneaks up on us, with Ash Wednesday landing on February 14! 'Lent & Love' go together like peanut butter & jelly. Be sure to take that 'special someone' out on a date over a tall glass of water and a crusty slice of bread. In all seriousness, we do have three Masses that day which will include the distribution of ashes: 9am, 4pm and 7pm. Please take advantage of one of those opportunities to begin this Lenten season on the right foot. This might also be a good time to encourage us all to be more intentional about prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

I have to admit: self-denial has never struck me as a whole lot of fun, but it's an essential and Biblical way for followers of Jesus to strengthen their will and realize their dependence on God. The point is not to do some routine, painful thing, but to jump into a 40 day training plan for personal transformation. Leading up to Lent, I pray and ask God to show me what simple practice I can take on and what little thing I can give up. It's not about how much we suffer, but about how much love is in our hearts as we do little things to move closer to God.

### LENT – GET SET...

We have just confirmed our Lenten Mission Speaker. In talking to him over the phone, he feels like the right fit for us to get set for what God has next for Saint Benedict.

continued on next page  
[saintbenedict.ca](http://saintbenedict.ca) **2**

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# FATHER SIMON SAYS *continued*

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Jim Murphy works with Renewal Ministries (with Ralph Martin and Peter Herbeck), and serves as the country coordinator for their mission work in Mexico. He is also the current president of International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services. He'll be sharing about what God has done, and what He will do at our parish.

We are planning three evening sessions on February 26-28th from 7-9pm, with two morning sessions on February 27-28th from 10am-12pm. Be sure to mark it in your calendar.

## **LENT – GO!**

This Lent, we have an important, parish-wide initiative: we want to invite EVERYONE (and I mean that sincerely) to 'go for it' and join a Lenten Discipleship Group.

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, this year we are able to purchase access to Formed, an online library of high-quality resources (videos, ebooks, etc.). It's the 'Catholic Netflix'. We wanted to make it incredibly easy for small groups of about 4-12 people to get together, watch a video, and have a discussion. You just need the internet.

We're asking everyone to do a six-week video series on Lectio Divina. You can see more information later on in this magazine about to sign-up and get started.

## **BUT BEFORE LENT...**

The first night of our Winter Alpha was on Friday, February 2nd. However, it's not too late to sign-up or to bring someone who is looking for meaning in life and authentic community. Thanks to all of those who have been working behind the scenes of Alpha.

As you heard, after 10 years as our Finance Manager, Joanne Thibeu has decided to move on. Following due process, we put out a job posting, but it turns out the best-equipped candidate to be Finance Manager is none other than Chris Yetman. In the short term, he has been training with Joanne and is still taking care of the essentials from his previous role. Thank you Chris for saying yes to serve in this role, as we try to do our very best to be good stewards of our community's financial generosity.

Lastly, I can't believe it's true, but I somehow managed to write a series of reflections which has been compiled into a book titled Divine Renovation Apprentice: Learning to Lead a Disciple-Making Parish. It is available on Amazon, however, we will selling them directly to parishioners. This will ensure that more of the proceeds go to Divine Renovation Ministry... and the author needs to eat, too.

On Saturday, February 24th, from 7-9pm, we have an official book launch with a few special guests, in the parish auditorium. Join us for a fun evening to celebrate what God has been doing in our midst through Saint Benedict Parish.



# PRAYER MINISTRY

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**Peter Mallette**  
**Bene Dictus Team**

It's a familiar announcement in the closing moments of every Mass: "We have prayer ministry available in the chapel, so if you feel you need extra prayer for whatever reason, make your way over to one of the prayer teams, and they'd be happy to pray with you and for you."

When Prayer Ministry first started at Saint Benedict, it was only offered once a month, on Name Tag Sundays, but because of the demand, prayer ministry is now offered every week after every Mass.

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*"For wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am, in their midst." Matthew 18:20*

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Paul Doiron is the new leader of the Saint Benedict Parish Prayer Ministry.

Paul says he initially said no when he was asked last October, because he was too busy doing this, that, and the other thing. But during a parish leadership summit, Paul realized that God was choosing him, that God was speaking to his heart, so he said yes.

Paul's vision for the Prayer Ministry is to build it up with more members and make it more visible. At present, there are a total of 37 people on the team for all four weekend Masses. Paul is working to get more youth involved – especially teens who attend The Experience on Monday nights. With more young people involved, Paul says youth who attend Mass will feel comfortable being prayed over by people their own age. That would be awesome!

Paul is also targeting people in their 20s and 30s to join the prayer ministry team and he's not shy to ask. Paul says he feels guided by the Holy Spirit when he makes the invitation because he says the Holy Spirit knows what he's doing. So far, everyone has said yes, with the exception of two people, who said they weren't ready – just yet.

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*"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you." John 15:7.*

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Paul admits that while people are okay asking for prayers for others, they are reluctant to ask for prayers for themselves. While some may think it's selfish, Paul is quick to point out that we'll be better able to serve God if we allow him to help us first.

As for making the prayer ministry more visible, Paul says he would like to see everyone in the prayer ministry take it outside the walls of Saint Benedict, to bring the prayer ministry into their everyday lives with their family friends and coworkers.

*If anyone wants more information or they're feeling called to be a member of the Saint Benedict Parish Prayer Ministry Team, contact Paul Doiron by email at [jpdoiron63@gmail.com](mailto:jpdoiron63@gmail.com).*



# DIVINE RENOVATION EXPLORED



**Mia Ryan**  
**Bene Dictus Team**

The journey of the Divine Renovation Ministry began with Father James Mallon's time at Saint Benedict Parish. In his book, *Divine Renovation: From a Maintenance to a Missional Parish*, he tells the story of how the parish embraced change, and is now known as a model of renewal around the world. The global interest in this innovative parish and vibrant parishioners led to the Divine Renovation Ministry being established in 2015 as a non-profit, seeking to help other parishes.

The Divine Renovation Ministry has a 10 year goal to inspire 50,000 parishes to become missional, to equip them for mission, and, through them, to make 2.5 million disciples every year.

"The message and story of Saint Benedict Parish has literally reached hundreds of thousands of people around the world," says Dan O'Rourke, Executive Director of Divine Renovation. "The ministry works to share Saint Benedict Parish's story, and

to help pastors and their teams with tools and resources, so they can make their own parishes missional."

The primary way Divine Renovation supports parish renewal is through a coaching network. The coaching team is currently working with 25 parishes world-wide. Divine Renovation also offers internships for priests to serve and be coached by Saint Benedict Parish staff and the Divine Renovation coaching team. The ministry offers a range of resources including books, videos, webinars, and podcasts.

To inspire others to move from maintenance to mission, Divine Renovation hosts speaking events and conferences. The next Divine Renovation Conference, DR18, runs from June 11-12, 2018, here at Saint Benedict Parish. We hope it will be a great opportunity for pastors, priests, and lay leaders to get inspired and informed about parish renewal.



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# DIVINE RENOVATION: ST. ANN'S



**Mia Ryan**  
**Bene Dictus Team**

*It was inspiring to chat with the dynamic duo of Fr. Henry Petter (pastor) and Kurt Klement (Director of Evangelization) from St. Ann Parish in Coppell, Texas, near Dallas. They are in their second year with the Divine Renovation Network, and are determined and passionate about making missionary disciples.*

## **Tell us about your parish.**

St. Ann is a large and very vibrant parish, with 8,000 to 9,000 people attending each weekend. The parishioners are a diverse mix of ages, and one third of parishioners are Hispanic.

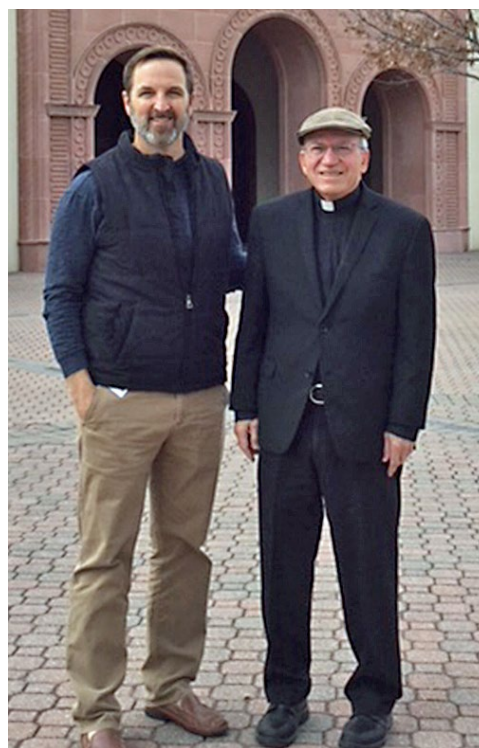
## **What do you love about your parish?**

I love that our parish is full of so many people who desire to grow in holiness. I also love the challenge that the size of our parish brings: how do we make that largeness feel smaller?

## **What changes have you seen in yourselves since joining the Divine Renovation Network?**

*Kurt:* A key change has been an increased awareness of my strengths and weaknesses. I'm a big ideas person, and I can sometimes come across strongly, and even steamroll other people's ideas! So I've learned how to be a better leader and a healthier member of our parish team.

*Fr. Henry:* I've grown in feelings of confidence and competence. Through the guidance of Ron Huntley, our Divine Renovation coach, I



am now guiding our Senior Leadership Team to coach the heads of department. So now, the responsibility is shared.

## **How has Divine Renovation impacted your parish?**

Recently, we asked for people to come to the altar if they had had a new, life-changing and decisive encounter with Jesus Christ at our parish. We were blessed to have 330 people come forward over that weekend. It was such a beautiful witness. Also, we have become a more hospitable parish. So many of our Alpha participants have joined our hospitality team, so now we can work towards our goal of having welcomers everywhere, even in the parking lot, at Masses!

## **What is your dream for your parish?**

For people to live our vision, so for people to go out and invite people to join us at our parish. We are called to be people for others.





**Peter Mallette**  
**Bene Dictus Team**

*Greater Love Canada is a Halifax based, youth-led organization founded by Saint Benedict parishioner Mark Saldanha. Greater Love ministers to the homeless, the elderly, refugees and immigrants by providing friendship and food.*

## **How did Greater Love originate?**

This past summer I attended the Alpha Leadership Conference in London, England with some staff from Saint Benedict Parish. We heard lots of inspiring speakers, especially Jean Vanier. During the Holy Spirit session I kept seeing and feeling this need to show a greater form of love to vulnerable people in our community, and I prayed to God to use me, to work through me. I kept imagining Jesus in his last week of life. He was homeless. He was suffering. He was lonely. I realized that I just didn't want to help one of those groups; I wanted to help all of them. When I returned from the conference, I called a few of my friends, and shared my vision and they bought into the idea.

## **Were you surprised by that?**

It became clear that many of my friends also had a heart for service but never had an opportunity to work with vulnerable people who are excluded from our community. Walking down Spring Garden Road, you don't have to go far to realize that we're living in a throw-away culture. If someone is inconvenient to us or a burden to us, we tend to push them off to the side, so the greater act of love, the greater act of service is sitting down with these people, listening to them, and acknowledging them. Sometimes we

bring food or blankets.

## **Where do you get the money for that?**

We pay for the food out of our own pocket, and make the sandwiches ourselves. Some stores have said they'd be willing to help us. We're looking at different funding mechanisms and we're close to becoming a registered charity which will make it easy for people to donate. We're excited about that.

## **How often do you venture out and where do you go?**

We venture out once a week – usually Saturday or Sunday afternoon. There are about 15 of us. Turns out many of us have taken Alpha. We split up in teams of two or three. We do all of Spring Garden Road and some of Barrington Street. If we get more volunteers it might be possible to add another day and location.

## **What's the response been like on the street?**

Initially, some are surprised. Others are confused because they're not used to this, but you can really see God's love at work as we build these friendships.

## **What's the response been like with your volunteers?**

It's so cool! Almost everyone in our group right now, if they're not going to church, if they don't already have a faith, they're starting to open up and they're seeing a different side of the church. Every time we go out, you can see and feel something very powerful taking place; things that these volunteers wouldn't otherwise experience if they weren't involved in Greater Love.





It's opening up their eyes and their hearts because helping the vulnerable helps heal their own brokenness. It really resonates with me when Jesus says, "I am most present in the beggar on the street, or the sick person in the hospital." Every time we go out, Jesus is also ministering to us as well.

### **Is there a role for Saint Benedict parishioners or the public to play in Greater Love?**

Absolutely! It doesn't matter how old you are. We have a plan to visit a senior's home to play music and bingo. We are also being offered space at the Keshen Goodman library to begin working with refugee families, so there's a lot to be done. We need blankets, clothes and food.

### **Where does your desire to serve come from?**

I can trace it back to where I was born in Bombay, India. In some parts of Bombay the poverty is horrible. There are beggars lying in the streets. Some are dead, and people walk right by. I witnessed that as a kid. I recall one key moment with my mom. A leper was begging in the street. I handed him money, but I dropped it on the ground because I was afraid to touch him. In that moment, my mother told me that the man needed to be treated with respect and love. That changed my life. Ever since I was a kid, I always had a heart for service, but felt that the most I could ever do was sort cans at the food bank or deliver meals in hospitals. I could never really get "hands-on" which is what I really wanted to do. And now I'm doing it.

### **So what's next for you?**

I'm taking neuroscience at Dalhousie University, because I have always wanted to be a doctor. But I don't want to be just another doctor in another hospital. I also plan to pursue an MBA and somehow combine the two. As much as I want to be a doctor, I really want to help people in the community. I don't really know what that means yet, but I have a lot of hopes and I am excited to see what God has in store for me.

*Anyone interested in volunteering or donating to Greater Love can do so by emailing [greaterlovecanada@gmail.com](mailto:greaterlovecanada@gmail.com).*



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# ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY



**Susan LeRue**  
**Bene Dictus Team**

*I recently chatted with Sr. Sheila Moore & Sr. Christine McDonald, who serve with the St. Vincent de Paul Society at Saint Benedict.*

The mission of the Society is to serve Christ in the poor with Christian faith, love, respect, justice, and joy.

There are approximately 42 member serving with the Society at Saint Benedict Parish. They serve in a variety of capacities: answering phones, dispatching, referring people to outreach workers, obtaining translators when necessary, visiting teams of two who deliver to the needy.

The Society helps with crisis intervention, assisting with gift cards for food, power, heat, rent, medications, bus tickets, and more. There are many people living in dire need in our area. When the bills are higher, and longer term assistance is required, they are referred to a caseworker.

Sr. Moore says, "The main aim of the Society is not to be just a food bank that delivers food to the door, it's to meet people and to let them know that there are people out there who really care about them, and that this Parish is happy to be able to help you.

The Sisters pray before each visit that they will be able to show the same compassion that Christ has shown to the needy.

Sr. Christine McDonald sums it up beautifully, "I've been thinking a lot about the line where Jesus said, 'you will always have the poor with you.' If we keep it in mind, and realize that we are all part of the poor as well, recognizing a certain need which someone else has, it's a call to share and to be grateful for what we have."

From some people the St. Vincent de Paul Society has visited: "Tell the Church, thank you. We really appreciate it."

***A message from Carol Horne, President of St. Vincent de Paul Society, Saint Benedict Parish:***

***On behalf of the society and the people we serve, thank you for your generosity last year. We would have a difficult time serving all the people in this area without your continued financial help. In the last year we have assisted just over a thousand families in the following ways:***

<b>Food assistance:</b>	<b>\$91,643</b>
<b>Rent:</b>	<b>\$1,540</b>
<b>Power bills:</b>	<b>\$6,126</b>
<b>Oil bills:</b>	<b>\$1,731</b>
<b>Bus tickets:</b>	<b>\$2,303</b>
<b>TOTAL HELP:</b>	<b>\$103,445</b>

***Saint Benedict Parish contributed \$82,354 towards these costs.***

***If you feel called to serve in this Ministry, please contact Carol Horne at our parish office: 902-443-0725***



Connect Groups

Alpha Team



Ministry



Alpha



Discipleship  
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Invitational  
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How Saint Benedict Parish  
forms disciples who  
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Worship



# THE GAME PLAN



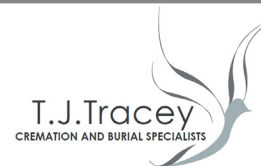
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# LENT AND YOUR HEART



**John Rae**  
**Bene Dictus Team**

Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, falls this year on February 14th, Valentine's Day, a day dedicated to hearts and love.

The verse before the Gospel in the readings for Ash Wednesday is Hebrews 3:8: *"If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts."*

It appears that the hardness of our hearts is a consequence of how we choose to respond to the voice of the Beloved, and that it is possible for us to suffer from the disease of having hardened spiritual arteries.

What are the side effects of a hardened heart? Jesus says in Matthew 13:15: *"For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear... and their eyes cannot see... and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them."*

In our hardened condition, we become hearing and visually impaired, no longer able to hear the "still small voice of the Spirit," and lacking in spiritual insight. We enter into the world of spiritual paralysis.

Paraphrasing Matthew 6:21: *"For where your desire (treasure) is, there your heart will be also."*

There are lots of sales pitches (myths) out there angling for your desires, so that they can 'reel' in your heart. Myths can be 'fishers of men'; myths of power, myths of success, and myths of prestige (like the temptations in the desert). Interestingly, our English word myth comes from the Greek 'muthos' whose root is 'mu' which means to close the ears and eyes. It is where we get our word 'mute'. Myths are in the business of pressing our spiritual mute buttons.

The antidote to Myth is the Gospel. In Matthew 11:5, Jesus, in summarizing his ministry for the disciples of John, says: *"...the blind receive their sight and the lame walk... and the deaf hear."* In the Liturgy of the Mass we respond to this offer, from Jesus, by saying, *"Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."*

In Psalm 51:10, the psalmist prays, *"...make in me clean heart."* And in Ezekiel 32:26, God answers that prayer, and says, *"I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."* The Great Physician offers us a heart transplant, and in our post-op condition, prescribes a set of spiritual exercises to help us convalesce into completeness.

Maybe this Lenten season is a good time to consider starting a regimen of Spiritual Cardio!



**ASH WEDNESDAY  
MASS**

**FEBRUARY  
14TH  
9AM, 4PM,  
& 7PM**





# BOOK LAUNCH

SATURDAY  
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7:00PM

## Discipleship Groups - Lent 2018

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# LENTEN MISSION

## FEB. 26-28TH

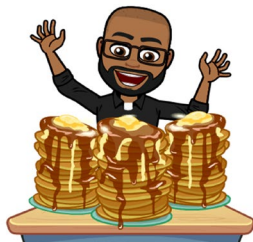
### JIM MURPHY, RENEWAL MINISTRIES

*Evening sessions at 7pm, morning sessions after 9am Mass on 27th & 28th*



# CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT DATES FEBRUARY 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
4 SBP KIDS	5 THE EXPERIENCE	6 GYMTOKNIGHT	7 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	8	9 MEN'S GYM  ALPHA	10 PRAISE & WORSHIP NIGHT
11 WORLD DAY OF THE SICK  SBP KIDS	12 THE EXPERIENCE	13 SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER	14 ASH WEDNESDAY  EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	15	16 MEN'S GYM  ALPHA  STATIONS OF THE CROSS	17
18 NAME TAG SUNDAY  SBP KIDS	19 CIVIC HOLIDAY  PARISH OFFICE CLOSED	20 THE ENCOUNTER (GRADES 5-6)  GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP	21 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	22	23 MEN'S GYM  ALPHA  STATIONS OF THE CROSS	24 FR. SIMON'S BOOK LAUNCH
25 SBP KIDS	26 PARISH MISSION  THE EXPERIENCE	26 PARISH MISSION	28 PARISH MISSION  EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	1 MARCH	2 MEN'S GYM  ALPHA  STATIONS OF THE CROSS	3 MARCH BENE DICTUS COMES OUT



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ChrisYetman@SaintBenedict.ca

If you're interested in the sacraments of baptism or matrimony at Saint Benedict Parish, please note that in addition to preparation, we require that you get in touch with us a minimum of 3 months in advance of your hoped-for date for baptism and one year prior to your desired wedding date.

For more information on baptisms, please contact Carol: **baptisms@saintbenedict.ca.**

for more information on weddings, please contact Deacon David: **weddings@saintbenedict.ca.**

For information on preparation for the sacraments of First Reconciliation/First Communion, please send an email to **PACT@saintbenedict.ca** (PACT stands for 'Preparing and Celebrating Together').

For information on becoming Catholic contact: **RCIA@saintbenedict.ca**

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For funerals, please call the parish office (and listen to the prompts) to be connected with our funeral ministry team.


A photograph of the J.A. Snow Funeral Home building, a large, modern structure with a brick facade and a gabled roof.

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