

# SPRING WEEK



P7 .....  
HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE



P11 .....  
BROKEN AND HEALED



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*Next issue of Bene Dictus: May 5th/6th*

## **SAINT BENEDICT PARISH CLERGY**

Pastor, Fr. Simon Lobo, CC

Permanent Deacon, Deacon David Viscount

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## FATHER SIMON SAYS...

### EASTER PEOPLE



I'd like to begin by wishing all of you and your families a very blessed Easter! Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and has changed the course of history and our eternal destiny. Jesus has made an incredible difference in my life and I pray that you would experience the same. To anyone who might be reading this magazine for the first time, I would like to wish you a warm welcome to Saint Benedict Parish. Thank you for joining us at this special time of year.

Let me also congratulate our six newest members who became Catholic and/or received Sacraments at the Easter Vigil. Yeawah Conteh and Oluwaseun Kiakubu were both baptized, and together with Rob Weld received First Holy Communion. All of them – including Liz Cosgrove, Walter Fekeshazy and Noreen Smith – received Confirmation. May you continue to grow closer to Jesus as you develop deeper connections in our parish. Thanks to Fr. Jim O'Connor and the RCIA team for preparing our catechumens and candidates over these last few months. If you are interested in receiving any of these three Sacraments of Initiation in the coming year (Baptism, Communion, Confirmation), please contact the parish office.

I would also like to welcome Fr. Matthew Keshwah's parents, Ken and Gisèle, who traveled from Ottawa to celebrate the Easter Triduum with us. Approximately one month ago, Fr. Matthew had a concussion and has had to take it easy. This has been very difficult for him because he wants

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# FATHER SIMON SAYS *continued*

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to be actively learning and serving. I am happy to say that he is in recovery mode. Let's all continue to pray for his complete healing.

I am reminded of the words of Pope John Paul II, which can apply to all of us: "Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song!"

## LOOKING BACK TO LENT

We were blessed to spend a few days 'on a mountaintop' with our Parish Mission guest speaker, Jim Murphy. He was so real, so hilarious, and his stories were powerful. I was touched by the way he spoke about his living friendship with Jesus. What I didn't expect was that I felt that his sharing and facilitating brought us closer together as a parish. Enjoy the Parish Mission article on page 4. If you were unable to attend (or missed a night), I encourage you to go back and watch online: [livestream.com/SaintBenedictParish](http://livestream.com/SaintBenedictParish)

I also want to thank all those who responded to the invitation to start or join a Discipleship Group during Lent. I enjoyed getting to know the people in my group in a more personal way, and my 'mediocre prayer life' got a little boost with the Lectio Prayer series. Please note that you can join other Discipleship Groups that take place throughout the year. Also, our parish has a one-year subscription to Formed, which gives us access to all of their state-of-the-art content. To learn more about other Discipleship Groups and Formed, visit [saintbenedict.ca/groups](http://saintbenedict.ca/groups).

## DAYTIME ALPHA

As we wrap up our Evening Alpha for the Winter season, I want to thank Bill Scollard and the great team he built for offering an amazing experience for our guests. You have all exceeded my expectations and many lives have been transformed as a result. If you haven't yet had the chance to try Alpha, or if you'd like to invite someone, we have Daytime Alpha on Friday mornings (9:45am – 12pm) starting April 13. Please register online at [saintbenedict.ca/alpha-daytime-spring-2018-reg](http://saintbenedict.ca/alpha-daytime-spring-2018-reg).

## FROM HOLY WEEK TO THE HOLY LAND

As we've just completed the holiest of days in our church calendar, I hope that you have been able to spiritually journey through these key moments in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. As I get closer to my very first pilgrimage to the Holy Land (October 7-18, 2018), I am thrilled that I will get to literally visit the holy sites where Jesus lived, died, and rose. I know that I will come back from this pilgrimage with a whole new appreciation for the Gospels.

I am delighted that a few parishioners have also registered for what promises to be a life-changing experience. At present there are half a dozen seats left on the pilgrimage. Please contact Bob Sime ASAP (902-429-5145) if you are interested. You might find the article on the Holy Land pilgrimage (page 7) to be informative and inspiring.

Finally, be sure to joyfully celebrate these 50 days of Easter (with lots of chocolate)!



# PRAYER WITH JIM MURPHY



**Tanya Noye**  
Bene Dictus Team

It was a privilege to have Jim Murphy here with us at Saint Benedict during our Lenten Mission in February. There were so many takeaways from the three nights he spent with us, but a few things in particular really struck a chord with me. It has caused me to reflect, and I must say it has really helped me ramp up my prayer life!

I thought I would share a few quotes from Jim's time with us and how those beautiful words have become my daily prayers.

**"He [God] does not want you to do things for Him, but with Him."**

Lord, help me to see You in all things during my day-to-day work. Draw me closer in relationship with You to allow me to fulfill my purpose. Jesus, I desire to accept Your love and pray that You transform my heart to know You better, and therefore, know myself better. Help me to see You in all of my brokenness and use my shortcomings for Your great glory.

**"It's a lot easier to carry the cross when someone is carrying you."**

Lord Jesus, help me to carry my cross by lifting me up. Open my heart to receive this help from You, and in turn, share this same grace with others. Give me the gifts required to carry those around me, especially the ones



in most need of mercy. Let me be the stained glass for Your light to shine through brightly and be recognized by those around me who desperately need Your light in their lives. Help me to surrender all of this to

You, Jesus.

**"Nobody can follow Jesus without the aid of the Holy Spirit."**

Holy Spirit, wash over me and provide me with Your power to do whatever Your will is. Help me to discern Your will from my own and give me the desire to want what you want. Break my heart for whatever breaks Yours and set a fire within me to heal the brokenness within me and those around me. Breathe new life into me and everything I do each and every day. Amen.

*If you would like to see the videos of our Lenten Mission, go to [livestream.com/saintbenedictparish](https://livestream.com/saintbenedictparish) or [facebook.com/saintbp](https://facebook.com/saintbp).*



# NOT ON THE JOURNEY ALONE



**Adele Beaton**  
**Bene Dictus Team**

I completed Alpha in December 2017. I finished on a spiritual high, and I wanted that to continue, but aside from attending Sunday Mass and daily prayer, I didn't know what my options were. As it says on the Saint Benedict Parish website, "We are not meant to be on our faith journey alone!"

Early in the new year, I shared my concerns and anxiety with another Alpha graduate who kindly invited me to join a Ladies Small Group. I immediately accepted and mustered up the courage to step out of my comfort zone. Meeting new people has never been easy for me, but I said 'yes' based on the desire to explore my faith.

They were all very welcoming! There are 16 women in the group, of various ages and backgrounds. We meet every Sunday from 7pm-9pm, and take turns gathering in a different home. A typical night starts off with prayer. What follows is a personal sharing of everyone's week. Then there is a roundtable discussion on the Scripture readings for the week, and we always end with prayers for our intentions.

We have a group on Facebook where we read daily devotions and post comments. The mutual understanding is that we are all at different places with our faith, that we don't have all the answers, and that we seek a closer relationship with God. What is guaranteed is laughter, delicious food, and leaving the group feeling connected to the Spirit, and better equipped to handle whatever the following week throws our way.

*If you are also seeking support in your relationship with the Lord, there are many routes to take at Saint Benedict Parish! More information can be found on the Saint Benedict Parish website under Groups ([saintbenedict.ca/groups](http://saintbenedict.ca/groups)), along with a detailed description.*



  
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# NOREEN'S RCIA EXPERIENCE



**Jenna LeBlanc**  
**Bene Dictus Team**

*The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) is a process for adults to join the Catholic Church.*

*Candidates undergo a process of preparation before receiving sacraments – Baptism, First Communion, and/or Confirmation – at the Easter Vigil Mass. I spoke recently with **Noreen Smith**, who will be confirmed this Easter.*

## **Tell me a little bit about your faith background.**

I was involved in the Catholic Church at a young age. I have a few vivid memories of being a young child – sitting in a sunny Sunday school classroom, looking at beautiful line drawings of stories from the Bible, reading my little Mass book, and having my first conversation with God. As a teenager, I became involved in a Nazarene church. Religion was always important to me – I met my husband at Bible College! – but I never really settled at any one church or denomination. For a long time, I felt contentedly adrift.

## **How did you come to be involved at Saint Benedict?**

I'd been feeling a call from God to pray for the city of Halifax, and for our unity in faith in particular. Then a friend of mine – who is the personification of unity – told me I needed to check out what was happening at a cool new Catholic church in town. The moment I walked in the door, I started to cry. The presence of God was so palpable, in the people and in the Eucharist. I cried throughout Mass (happy tears), trying to pull myself together

for the sign of peace. I went to visit my mom afterwards and told her what had happened to me. We cried together. There was a real and immediate sense of connection to our faith.

## **Why RCIA? What's that been like?**

I started coming to Mass more and more. Eventually, my mom started coming with me. We decided to do Alpha together, which was a powerful experience that helped me to be even more rooted in God and in this parish. A friend of mine who is a convert to the Catholic faith recommended the RCIA program.

It's been absolutely amazing. Getting together with a group of parishioners is always a fun and enriching experience! We're learning about the Catholic faith through Catholicism 201 and through the Catechism, but it's so much more than a classroom experience – the focus is always on relationship. It's a warm and safe environment for people to bring their questions about Catholicism and explore what it means to them. We've wrestled together with some thorny issues and come out so much stronger in our faith. And we pray for each other often!

## **After Easter Vigil, what's next?**

I'll definitely still be involved! I'd be open to serving on Alpha again. I've also become involved in the 11:15am Choir – I grew up on contemporary music and I've fallen in love with the traditional style, it's so different from what I'm used to. I loved learning to pray with people during the Alpha Weekend Away, so maybe prayer ministry. I know God has lots of other big plans for me, and I can't wait for him to show me where I belong!



# HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE



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

It would be an understatement to say that Bob Sime is excited about the upcoming pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Sime is a veteran tourism industry executive who has been organizing pilgrimages to the Holy Land since he retired in 2010. The next pilgrimage takes place October 7th – 18th. There is room for 40 people. To date, 34 have signed up.

Sime, who acts as tour director, is quick to point out that there is a big difference between a pilgrimage and a typical tour of the Holy Land. “A pilgrimage is a spiritual journey, so the focus of our pilgrimage is on the ministry of Jesus, from his birth to his resurrection.”

Fr. Simon Lobo and Fr. Bryan Sabourin will act as spiritual leaders for the Fall Pilgrimage. Neither priest has ever visited the Holy Land, which Bob Sime says will be a huge highlight for him. “These guys are on fire because of Divine Renovation. They’re the youngest priests I have ever taken, so this is going to be a thrill for everyone.”

“I am so excited to walk in the footsteps of Jesus,” says Fr. Simon. “I expect the Gospels will come alive in a whole new way, being in the real places where Jesus was with his disciples, where miracles happened. It’s a dream, a bucket list trip for me.”

Fr. Bryan adds, “To share this faith journey with fellow pilgrims will be an unforgettable experience.”

The pilgrimage was originally created by Father James as a journey of faith designed to deepen a person’s understanding of the word of God. The 10 day pilgrimage includes visits to Nazareth, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the River Jordan where Jesus was baptized, Cana, Capernaum, the Sea of Galilee, Masada, Mount Tabor, the Dead Sea, and Jericho.

Sime is quick to point out that they don’t rush through the places they visit. “We always allow time for either a Mass on site, or for spiritual reflection specific to the place we are visiting. We’ve learned over the years that that’s what people want; the more prayerful the experience, the better.”

“To walk where Jesus walked in the Holy Land had a profound effect on me and my wife Brenda,” said Bill Spears, who has been on the pilgrimage in the past. “After being there, we will never read or hear the gospel the same way ever again.”

“It’s as though my Bible has become 3D,” said Jeanette Hung, another former pilgrim. “Every Sunday I can picture the sights and hear the sounds.”

The entourage will get together twice before the October 7th departure date.

Sime says, “We go over the itinerary in detail and connect the destinations to the gospels. We also answer questions, mostly about safety and security. It also gives everyone a chance to meet beforehand so that they get to know who they are travelling with.”



Sime says the spiritual leaders of the pilgrimage perform as many sacraments as they can. For example, at Cana, where Jesus performed his first miracle at a wedding feast, married couples can renew their wedding vows. In Capernaum, the town that served as the home base for Jesus after the people of Nazareth rejected him, the anointing of the sick will take place after Mass on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. People can also renew their baptismal vows in the waters of the River Jordan where Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist. At Mount Tabor, which ancient tradition has regarded as the place of the Transfiguration of Jesus, confessions will be heard.

Quite clearly, it's a spiritual journey that changes people's lives forever.

*For anyone needing more information about the Holy Land pilgrimage, call Bob Sime at (902) 429-5145 or visit [www.privatelabeltours.ca](http://www.privatelabeltours.ca).*





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# DIVINE RENOVATION



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

*It was a joy to interview **Fr. Jim Proffitt**, the pastor of St. John the Evangelist in Severna Park, Maryland.*

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

St. John the Evangelist is a large parish with 2000-2500 people attending on the weekend. The parish also has a school, which has classes from preschool to Grade 8.



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

I love the renewal that is taking place. It has really strengthened our culture of welcome. Parishioners are spending a lot of time getting to know one another

after Mass so they feel connected to their faith community. People know that they are not alone in their faith.

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

There has been a greater awareness of the need to address our parish culture. Firstly, there is much more of a focus on leading out of our strengths. I am not doing anyone any favours by asking people to do ministries when they really don't have those gifts. It has also impacted me significantly, as I surround

myself with people who have the strengths that I do not have.

Secondly, Divine Renovation has had a great impact on the prayer life of our parish. People are so much more comfortable praying with people, which is so wonderful! I am reminded of a time when there was a woman in the gathering space after Mass, and she looked very upset. She was speaking to a couple of women, then more women joined her and laid hands on her and prayed for her. It was so uplifting to see this beautiful moment happening in our parish. People are giving voice to their faith rather than keeping it private.

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

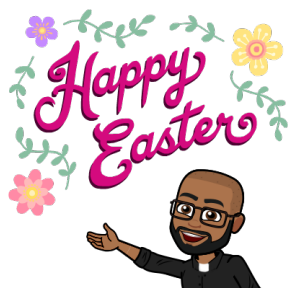
I want everyone to know how much more God wants for them, how much God loves them and how they are the instruments that God is going to use to renew the Church and transform the world.





# Any questions?

## Visit the Welcome Centre!



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# [saintbenedict.ca/serve](http://saintbenedict.ca/serve)



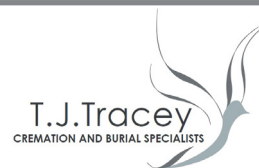
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# AUDIO VISUAL MINISTRY



**Paul Lang**  
**AV Coordinator**

There are a lot of ministries that are behind the scenes here at Saint Benedict Parish, and our Audio Visual team is one of them. At every weekend Mass, and each special event, there is at least one member of our team in the sound booth taking care of all the technology.

Our 9am Mass is unique in that we have cameras set up that allow us to broadcast our Mass online with Livestream. But on top of that, it's also a great way for people who might not be able to make it to Mass physically to still feel like they are part of the community. Typically, we have 50 to 60 people worshiping online with us live, and hundreds of people that go back and rewatch the homily every week!

Our AV team handles two other major roles: slideshows and audio engineering. Here are two witnesses from members of the team.

## **SLIDE OPERATOR - Peter Salah**

Serving as a slide operator over the past several years has been a positive and fruitful experience. We play an important role in making the Mass more accessible to regular parishioners and our many visitors. What might seem like a simple prayer or routine to our regular Mass-goers can be daunting and uncomfortable to a visitor, so the slides provide a simple way to help everyone follow along.

Once or twice a month, I get a bird's-eye view of the Mass when I take my seat up in the AV booth. Thanks to the efforts of the AV team, I only need to arrive a little early, and the slideshow is all ready to go. I enjoy a sneak

peek of the homily slides and what songs will be sung that day, and then run the slideshow during the Mass.

Being part of this ministry has been a great way to get involved @SaintBP, and be part of a great team. I have met many wonderful people. Operating the slides has also helped me become tuned in to the different parts of the Mass, and it has brought my Mass experience to a new level, whether I am up in the booth or not. I have moved from being a passive observer to an active participant of the Mass.

## **AUDIO ENGINEERING - Aidan Cole**

Besides the time I used to play the trumpet in my middle school band, I really don't know that much about music. Despite not knowing how to play any scales or sing (very well!) I've still found a way to be part of the music you hear every week at the 6pm Mass. Instead of playing an instrument myself, I'm able to control all the audio from the AV booth in the back of the church. My job is to make sure everyone can be heard while speaking, singing, or playing an instrument. Every week I arrive an hour early to set up the speakers, microphones and the instruments for our musicians, and take down when the Mass is finished.

In the time that I've been serving, I've met many new people who I have grown to become very fond of and would consider my friends. I am thankful to God for the opportunity that I have been given to serve my parish in a way that suits my ability.

*If any of these ministries sound like some thing you would like to get involved with, go to [saintbenedict.ca/serve](http://saintbenedict.ca/serve) or contact Paul Lang at [paull@saintbenedict.ca](mailto:paull@saintbenedict.ca).*

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# BROKEN AND HEALED



**Peter Mallett**  
**Bene Dictus Team**

Pam Millett grew up in Riverview, New Brunswick. An only child raised in a Christian household, Pam admits she was bored in church until her mother suggested she join the children's choir. Her passion for her faith began. She became an altar server, and later began reading at Mass. When she was 14 years old, Pam travelled to Paris, to participate in World Youth Day. She was among 1.2 million young people from all over the world who witnessed Mass celebrated by Pope John Paul II. She remembers it being a fantastic experience.

But back home in the Maritimes, it was anything but. Pam says she was always bullied in school for being chubby and what she describes as a 'little bit different.' She felt she had a calling to help people, but was always told that there was something wrong with her, and started believing that there was. She made some terrible life choices, entered into some bad relationships, and got really beat down to the point where she quit going to church altogether.

When her fourth child was born in 2013, Pam became an occasional churchgoer and, thanks to her mother, started serving at Saint Benedict Parish. It didn't take long for the invitations to Alpha to start rolling in, but she resisted, thinking she didn't need Alpha because it was for people who were 'way up there' in their faith, and she considered herself an average Christian.

That changed the day she heard Bill Scollard talk about his Alpha experience, and the profound effect it had on his personal life and his faith. Pam says she related to Bill's brokenness because she had been hurting for so long. Not knowing where it was going to take her, Pam signed up for Alpha, and while she was afraid that everything was going to change, deep down, she says she wanted everything to change.

In a strange turn of events, friends she hadn't seen in more than 20 years had also signed up for Alpha. She remembers thinking, "This has to be the sign I'd been looking for to indicate that I was on the right path." At the urging of her boyfriend, she decided to attend the Weekend Away.

During prayer ministry, Pam was overcome with emotion. She says she was begging God to open her heart, because she couldn't do it on her own. That's when she felt a physical transformation take place. As she prayed, Pam says the pain and tightness in her chest that she was so accustomed to living with disappeared. It was replaced by a feeling of peace that told her she was okay, and that everything was going to be just fine.

Pam says she now has a personal relationship with God and feels like the Holy Spirit is calling her toward something. Despite the wrong turns she has taken, she acknowledges that God has been calling her all of her life, and she's dumbfounded that He has patiently waited so long for her to answer His call. Pam says she doesn't know how it's going to end, but she knows the path.

# CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT DATES APRIL 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 EASTER SUNDAY  SBP KIDS	2 THE EXPERIENCE	3 GYMTOKNIGHT	4 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	5	6 MEN'S GYM  DAYTIME ALPHA  EVENING ALPHA	7
8 DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY  SBP KIDS	9 THE EXPERIENCE	10 THE ENCOUNTER	11 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	12	13 MEN'S GYM  DAYTIME ALPHA  EVENING ALPHA	14 LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
15 NAME TAG SUNDAY  SBP KIDS	16 THE EXPERIENCE	17 GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP	18 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	19	20 MEN'S GYM  DAYTIME ALPHA  EVENING ALPHA	21
22 SBP KIDS	23 THE EXPERIENCE	24	25 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	26	27 MEN'S GYM  DAYTIME ALPHA  EVENING ALPHA	28 MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST





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# PARISH STAFF TEAM

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

For 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**

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

For funerals, please call the parish office (902-433-0725, and listen to the prompts) to be connected with our funeral ministry team.

## FINANCIAL UPDATE - FEBRUARY 2018

PARISH DEBT REDUCTION	REC'D	TOTAL	AVG/
ENVELOPES	149	\$3,927	\$26.36
PAR (PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE)	65	\$3,377	see note
MORTGAGE BALANCE (AS OF MONTH END)		\$583,436	
INTEREST PAID (ON MORTGAGE)		\$1,796	
PRINCIPAL PAID (ON MORTGAGE)		\$9,642	
Principal payments include principal portion of monthly mortgage payment plus additional principal payments made from Parish Debt funds received.			
SUNDAY COLLECTIONS	REC'D	TOTAL	AVG/
ENVELOPES	1,242	\$31,661	\$25.49
PAR (PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE)	380	\$49,435	see note
Note: PAR options include weekly, bi-weekly and monthly withdrawals; therefore a 'weekly' average is unavailable.			



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