


S B D I C T U S



P4

 AFTER ALPHA

P7

 LIVESTREAM AT HOME

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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!

Please visit the Welcome Centre.

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CONTENTS

January 2018

FATHER SIMON SAYS

2 / 3 Be Sealed With The Gift of the Holy Spirit | Winter Alpha | New Beginnings

AFTER ALPHA

4 How to keep your Alpha Table relationships going

DIVINE RENOVATION

5 With Fr. Matthew Lamoureux from Illinois

LIVESTREAM AT HOME

7 How one family prays together when someone's sick

SHINE

9 Our Jr. Bene Dictus team talks about Sunday fun

Next issue of Bene Dictus: February 3rd/4th

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...



As we are approaching the end of the season of Christmas, there is much to be thankful for. Once again, Christmas Unplugged was a blessing for so many families – especially those who are not closely connected to church. All of our Christmas Masses were glorious and created the atmosphere for parishioners and guests to experience the gift of God becoming man. Thank you to the countless people who served regularly and in a particular way during this beautiful and busy season. Together you have all made my first Christmas as pastor very memorable.

I also wanted to say thanks – on behalf of my brother priests and all of the staff – for all of the generosity expressed through the mountain of cards, gifts, and prayers. As you know, leading a big parish like Saint Benedict is not a one-man show, and I am grateful to the whole team here.

BE SEALED WITH THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Congratulations to the 15 young people who received the Sacrament of Confirmation on January 7. And Thanks to Ronnie Lunn and all who help with our youth ministry. In case you haven't heard, the Experience takes place every Monday evening from 7-9pm in the parish hall. All teenagers are welcome! (See story on page 8).

In many churches, young people receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in May or June, around the time of Pentecost. Unfortunately, this usually coincides with another celebration: Graduation. For many, Confirmation is the last

continued on next page
saintbenedict.ca **2**



FATHER SIMON SAYS **continued**

stop in the journey of a young person before their permanent departure from the church. It is our hope that Confirmation (one of the “Sacraments of Initiation” – along with Baptism and Eucharist) would not be an ending, but a continuation of a relationship with God and the Catholic Church.

Last year we decided to celebrate Confirmations mid-year so that after Confirmation the teens could continue to participate and grow through the weekly Monday night Experience. We have decided to do something similar this year with our big day landing on the Solemnity of Epiphany. When the wise men discovered the Christ-child, the Messiah, it was the beginning of the message of Good News going beyond the Jewish people and to the whole world.

I pray that these young people would be sealed with the Holy Spirit and become ambassadors of Jesus’ light to everyone around them. For those of us who were confirmed many years ago, may we be reminded of the presence of the Holy Spirit within and be moved to continue to embrace our missionary identity.

WINTER ALPHA

We begin our next evening Alpha on Friday, February 2nd. If you haven’t had the chance to give Alpha a shot, please sign up. It is a wonderful way to get to know others in the parish and to grow deeper in your faith. We’re asking everyone to start praying for our guests and to personally invite friends, family, and co-workers to try Alpha. I am edified

by the preparation that has already been happening behind the scenes. Let’s make this Winter Alpha the best yet!

NEW BEGINNINGS

As 2018 kicks off, let me tell you about a few staff transitions. After serving for over 10 years as the Manager of Finance, Joanne Thibreau has decided that it’s time for her to move on and have a fresh start. Joanne has been a huge support to me in my early months as pastor. I am very sad to see her go. Still, I wish her well as she begins the next chapter of her life.

Over the last little while, those who serve in music ministry have expressed a desire for a closer connection to the staff. We’ve tried to listen to their concerns and have decided to increase Phil Marmen’s hours and responsibilities so that he can be part of the staff part-time in the role of Music Ministry Lead (you will recognize Phil and his wife Sarah from the 9am Band). Meanwhile, Paul Lang – who has been pulled in several directions at Saint Benedict and with Divine Renovation – will be able to devote his hours at the parish in a more dedicated way to supporting the Audio-Visual Ministry. We are excited to see how these adjustments will enable us all to enter more fully into worship of God during Mass and beyond.

Happy New Year! (Now it’s back to the treadmill for me.)

AFTER ALPHA



Peter Mallette
Bene Dictus Team

In September 2016, Joe DiPenta and his wife Jessica took the Alpha course for the first time. Joe says over the years, they had been invited by several Saint Benedict parishioners to get involved, and by the fourth or fifth invitation they took a leap of faith and signed up.

Jessica was reluctant at first, but after the third week Joe says there was a noticeable shift. As everyone got to know each other, a special bond began to form within their small group, as it became increasingly apparent how much they had in common with each other. The DiPentas began to look forward to Friday night Alpha. As it turned out, so did everyone else in their small group.

The Weekend Away was a transformative experience for Joe and Jessica. Joe says he felt like a different person because his faith had grown so substantially, and Jessica's too. But they were saddened that their Alpha journey was coming to an end, and anticipating a sense of loss that their group wasn't going to be able to get together anymore. There was a strong desire to keep it going. But how? Turns out it wasn't that difficult.

Buoyed by the power of the Holy Spirit, Joe and Jessica invited members of their small group over to their home for a potluck get-together. While the kids played downstairs, the adults enjoyed a nice meal, then watched Nicky Gumbel's week #1 Alpha talk (on YouTube) as a refresher. That was followed with prayer and a discussion. Joe says it felt good to have the Alpha group back together. It was like they picked up where they left off. They now take turns hosting, and they've done it about six times now.

Joe says it doesn't require a lot of work. Everybody takes turns hosting. The person who hosts, sends out the email invitations and coordinates who brings what for the meal. There are about ten people in total. They meet from 6:30-9pm, just like Alpha. Joe always brings along a list of questions to help get the discussion going, but he says the Holy Spirit always talks the lead.

Joe says the success of their After Alpha get-togethers is the "buy-in" of the group. "People want to be there, and that's the magic! Most of the time there's 100% attendance. We've created equity in these relationships. Why let that go? We feel comfortable sharing our faith with each other and that strengthens all of us. There's something special that happens in the small groups at Alpha, thanks to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit."

Joe and Jessica just completed their second Alpha course. Joe was the table host. Jessica, who Joe describes as extremely hospitable, was a table helper. Joe says as Christians, we need other Christians. He says his "After Alpha" strategy is simple, and a wonderful opportunity to continue these relationships for the long haul – not just the 10 weeks of the Alpha course.

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DIVINE RENOVATION: FR. MATTHEW



Mia Ryan
Bene Dictus Team

Father Matthew Lamoureux, MIC, is the pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Yorkville, Illinois.

Tell us about your parish.

St. Patrick Parish is situated one hour west of Chicago and, on average, 1400 people attend mass on the weekend.

How has Divine Renovation impacted your parish?

A few years ago, I was becoming disillusioned and was going to go on a sabbatical, but then I started researching parish renewal and discovered Divine Renovation. The book really hit home so my team and I went to the Divine Renovation Conference in 2016. I felt really connected to the mission so I said "Yes" to being a part of the network.



Divine Renovation has also helped us with the direction of our parish and supported us to be more welcoming and more 'alive' in our faith. Father James Mallon and Ron Huntley have given us so many innovative ideas such as: prayer partners, having homily series and ensuring that our Senior Leadership Team

holds each other accountable. We really value the openness and humility of the coaching that we are receiving – we learn from Divine Renovation and Divine Renovation learns from us.

A funny thing happened the other day. After Mass a parishioner asked me, "Father, has someone been helping you with your homilies?"

I had to eat a little humble pie, but I'm so glad that I now work with some of my staff when brainstorming and planning my homily series.

What is your dream for your parish?

To be known to bring people to Christ in a joyful way.



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THE EXPERIENCE



Jenna LeBlanc

Bene Dictus Team

The Experience is the cornerstone of youth ministry at Saint Benedict. Every Monday evening, young people from grades 7 to 12 gather to grow in faith together. I was able to attend recently and I was welcomed with open arms!

We began with a game to help make people feel more comfortable. The room was split into two teams of 30 people, with teens and leaders mixed. Each team had to line up according to specific instructions, ranging from home country/province to hair length. There was plenty of laughter, fun, and a pinch of chaos.

Then we settled down for a talk: *Does God Speak to Us?* The speakers were Christian Huntley and Mark Saldana, two young men who were teen participants in the program only a couple of years ago. They gave a fantastic talk on how we can listen for God's voice in our lives – through Scripture, nature, our friends, music, in tough circumstances, and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Their talk was filled with practical advice: Mark spoke about reading the Bible in the morning to start his day off right, and Christian talked about praying with praise

and worship music on long bus rides. They also gave their honest take on the importance of the occasional social media detox. It was fantastic to hear from fellow young people about why it's important to them.

We broke off into small groups and the grade 11 and 12 teens let me crash their party, complete with card tricks and full-size chocolate bars! I was blown away by the trust between the young people in this group and their small group leaders. They shared about times in their lives when prayer worked and other times when it was hard to hear God's voice. There was a lot of honest discussion about making room for God in their busy lives, and they shared great advice with each other on what's worked for them. There was no judgment or expectations, just honesty and openness. Small group wrapped up in prayer for one another, and then the night closed out with some fantastic praise and worship led by a music team of both leaders and young people. Prayer ministry was also available for people to receive one-on-one prayer for specific needs and intentions in their lives. The Holy Spirit was so present!

The Experience begins again on Monday, January 8 from 7-9pm. All young people are welcome, and please feel free to bring a friend!



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LIVESTREAM AT HOME



Jenna LeBlanc
Bene Dictus Team

The Potters are a family at Saint Benedict who occasionally watch Mass on Livestream, and they generously took some time out of their busy lives to share with us how Livestream affects their family.

Can you tell me a little bit about yourselves?

We're Stephanie and Tim Potter. We have seven kids ranging in ages from 10 years to 3 months (Hannah, Robert, Joseph, Rebecca, James, George, and Rachel).

How are you involved at Saint Benedict, and how does Livestream contribute to your involvement?

We've been members of Saint Benedict for more than six years. Our goal is always to make it to Mass in person – to receive Eucharist, to allow our children to participate in SHINE (the children's ministry offered at 9am Mass), and to be fully present in our faith community. But at least once every few months, we can't make it – usually because some of our family is sick.

Livestream maintains our connection to our community when our circumstances don't allow us to be there in person. It's a way for us to still participate in worship. It also helps us show our kids that our faith is always a priority in our lives.

How does Livestream help you develop your children's faith?

We make sure that we all participate to the fullest extent possible when we're joining Mass via Livestream. This means enthusiastic singing (or if we've lost our voices, toe tapping), saying the responses, and being attentive to the Scriptures and prayers. The kids who aren't sick even dance at the end! Livestream lets us keep our faith as a family active.

What are some other ways Livestream has been helpful for you?

It also gives us an opportunity to share important faith events with our extended family. Our family and friends across the country were able to see our three oldest children receive their First Communion, witness the Baptism of our three youngest children, and see our daughter Hannah proclaim the Scriptures during Mass. It can be handy in other ways, too: Stephanie was away for work and couldn't make it to Mass, but felt blessed to have a piece of home through Livestream.

Saint Benedict Parish offers the Sunday 9am Mass through Livestream, available on the parish website and on our Facebook page.

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The Potter kids watching Mass attentively

“I like that we get to stay home with Daddy when he’s sick when we watch on Livestream. Being at Church makes me happy, because I get to see my friends. I miss seeing them when we watch on Livestream. I like that we can still be part of our community when we watch on livestream.”
- Joseph

“I like listening to the readings and the music. When we’re sick, we love being together watching Church. We can always be at Church because of Livestream.”
- Rebecca

“I like going to the Church better than watching on Livestream, but if we have to stay because we’re sick, it’s okay if we watch Livestream. I love having Communion. That’s my favourite part of Church.” - Robert

“I really like that if you’re feeling sick and you want to go to Church, you can still sit down with your family and watch it. Saint Benedict is a really nice community. There are fun groups like SHINE, the Encounter, and Alpha. You can get close to God in almost any way in this Church. I like at the end that we dance.”
- Hannah



**Sarah, Nikki, & Aslyn
Jr. Bene Dictus Team**

What is SHINE? You may be wondering. SHINE, or Seeking Him In Everything, is a children's program that happens at the same time as Mass, it's where kids learn about Jesus in a fun way!

During the 9am and 11:15am Sunday Masses, kids meet downstairs for SHINE. We start off with the "circle game", or ice-breaker, where kids in the circle take turns saying their names and something about themselves. It is a great way to get to know each other better.

Praise and worship follows, with Laura leading everyone in some singing and dancing. We then do a quick opening prayer, thanking Jesus for how we could all be there. In SHINE, we are provided with a kid's version of the readings. Laura does an awesome skit based on the gospel so it is easy for us to understand. We really enjoy learning a "big lesson" at the end of each skit. After some dancing, singing, praying, crafting, and learning, some of us head up to Mass for Communion, while the others stay behind for more crafts.

SHINE is awesome! We love seeing friends and making new friends there. But what we like most about SHINE is that we actually "get" Jesus. We are happy Saint Benedict Parish has this program that lets us fall in love with Jesus more and more each day.



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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
7 EPIPHANY SBP KIDS CONFIRMATIONS	8 THE EXPERIENCE	9 ANOINTING OF THE SICK THE ENCOUNTER (GRADES 5-6)	10 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	11	12 MEN'S LEADERSHIP GYM	13
14 NEW PREACHING SERIES: ON YOUR MARK... SBP KIDS	15 THE EXPERIENCE	16 GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP	17 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	18	19 MEN'S LEADERSHIP GYM	20
21 NAME TAG SUNDAY SBP KIDS	22 THE EXPERIENCE	23	24 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	25	26 MEN'S LEADERSHIP GYM	27 NEW @SAINTBP EVENT
28 SBP KIDS	29 THE EXPERIENCE	30	31 EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	1 FEBRUARY	2 MEN'S LEADERSHIP GYM WINTER ALPHA BEGINS!	3 FEBRUARY BENE DICTUS COMES OUT



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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 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**

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


FINANCIAL UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2017

PARISH DEBT REDUCTION	REC'D	TOTAL	AVG/
ENVELOPES	159	\$4,899	\$30.75
PAR (PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE)	66	\$3,517	see note
MORTGAGE BALANCE (AS OF MONTH END)			\$629,007
INTEREST PAID (ON MORTGAGE)			\$1,940
PRINCIPAL PAID (ON MORTGAGE)			\$9,497

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	1,327	\$33,688	\$25.39
PAR (PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE)	381	\$51,441	see note

Note: PAR options include weekly, bi-weekly and monthly withdrawals; therefore a 'weekly' average is unavailable.



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