

STRICTLY BENE



PHOTO: JOHN RAE

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GREAT COMPASSION



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THE LONG REACH OF MERCY



SAINT BENEDICT PARISH
45 Radcliffe Drive
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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SUNDAY MASS
Saturday: 4pm
Sunday: 9am, 11:15am, 4pm
WEEKDAY MASS
Monday to Friday: 9am
CONFESSIONS
Saturday: 3 - 3:45pm
Thursday: 9:45 - 10:30am

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January 2020

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The Bene Dictus is your monthly magazine featuring stories about how Saint Benedict Parish forms disciples who joyfully live out the mission of Jesus Christ. It is available in print or in your email inbox.

The next issue of the Bene Dictus will be released on the weekend of February 8th/9th.

*On the cover:
Sunday morning smiles at Saint Benedict Parish.*

SAINT BENEDICT PARISH CLERGY

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Associate Pastor: Fr. Alex Colautti, CC

Permanent Deacon: Deacon David Viscount

Episcopal Vicar for Parish Renewal: Fr. James Mallon

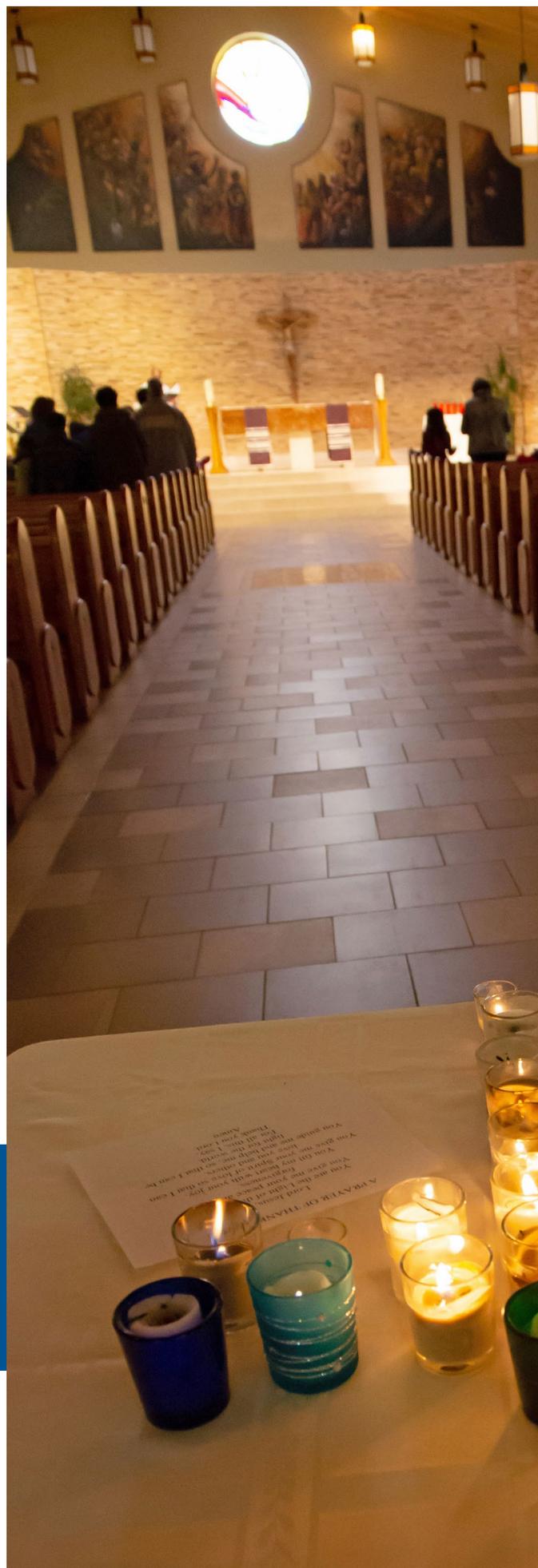
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BENE DICTUS - January 2020



FATHER SIMON SAYS...



Fr. Simon Lobo, CC

Pastor

A MOMENT TO SAY THANKS

After another incredible Christmas Season, I have to extend a huge **THANK YOU** to everyone who

helped to make our liturgies and church so beautiful for the birth of Jesus, the Saviour of the World. Every single detail related to Christmas Unplugged and our Christmas Masses didn't just happen to fall into place; parishioners offered their time and talents as a gift to Jesus and as the warmest of welcomes to our guests. Thanks also to those who chose to give up their parking space and pew at the 7:30pm Mass on Christmas Eve. Your sacrifice is so meaningful.

After considering the advice of my team, I did not publically thank all who served in ministry at the end of Mass. Since there is such a high volume of visitors coming through our doors throughout Christmas, we decided to keep the focus on our guests. Please know that I truly appreciate your service.

Thanks also to all those who sent cards, gifts, and food (including at the Feed Father Simon gathering on January 1st). Fr. Alex and I feel overwhelmed by your generosity. It's a huge team effort, and I encourage you to express your gratitude to the staff team that works so hard year-round to help make Saint Benedict such an awesome parish.

Finally, thanks for your financial support for a refugee family. I want to acknowledge Kevin Riley and the Knights of Columbus who have done the legwork for this initiative. We are hopeful that we will be able to welcome a family of four to Canada who are also Catholic. Perhaps they will worship with us here one day! Stay tuned...

continued on next page

saintbenedict.ca **2**



FATHER SIMON SAYS **continued**

SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

It is a joy to be able to periodically celebrate baptisms during Sunday Mass with the parish community. We will celebrate Confirmations at both morning Masses on January 12th and First Holy Communions at both morning Masses on January 19th. The reason that we try to celebrate these sacraments during our 'regular' Sunday Masses is because these children and teenagers are being initiated into our Catholic faith, which is meant to be lived out with the support of our parish community. It's a blessing for our parish community to be present, cheering them on as they receive these sacraments.

Great efforts are made to prepare families for baptism over a series of weeks by a wonderful Baptism team. There is another dedicated team that spends many weeks preparing children and families for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, which runs a program called PACT (Preparing and Celebrating Together). Confirmation preparation is part of our youth ministry, and I recently learned that 10 of the 12 teens who were confirmed last year are still actively involved at our parish! I wish that every single one would remain, but I am thrilled to know that over 80% are continuing to grow as disciples. (I suspect that many churches would have a 20% retention rate at best.) May we continue to do whatever it takes to form disciples who joyfully live out the mission of Jesus.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE COMPANIONS OF THE CROSS

Fr. Alex, our seminarian intern Dan Ramos, and I belong to a religious community called the Companions of the Cross. We are part of a larger community made up of 2 bishops, 38 priests, 1 transitional deacon, and almost 20 seminarians (men in formation for the

priesthood). The Companions are spread across North America.

We will all be gathering for our General Assembly from January 27th-31st. We will be entering into discussions about our life and ministry, making proposals for the future, and electing a new community government. Our Executive Council consists of five priests: a General Superior and four Coordinators. Any priest who has been ordained for at least five years is eligible to be elected to any of these positions.

I am asking Saint Benedict Parish to support us with your prayers leading up to and during our General Assembly. We have experienced some internal challenges over the last year and we need the Holy Spirit to allow for honest discussion and healing so that we can reunite as brothers to focus on the mission of evangelization.

Thanks to all who already support our community so generously. To find out more please visit: companionscross.org

A FEW LAST THINGS...

Our next Alpha begins on Friday, January 24th. If you haven't tried Alpha, why not give it a shot? Please also pray about who you can invite to try Alpha.

The innovations to our weekend Masses are underway. Thanks to all of those people who have stepped up to serve. If you are drawn to the style of worship at the 4pm Sunday Contemplative Mass, we need more people to serve in a variety of ministries. Please contact Dinah Simmons (dinahs@saintbenedict.ca) to find out how you can contribute.

I'm praying that your New Year is off to a great start! 🙏



THE DAY BEFORE



Noreen Smith
Ora Ministry

This reflection is for next Sunday's Gospel, John 1:29-34.

If I come into a room where people are mid-conversation and someone says, "The next day I...", one sure thing is I wish I'd entered the room a moment earlier to hear what happened the day before. I hate missing the setup of a good story.

The day before this Gospel reading, John was hanging out on the eastern shoulder of the Mount of Olives, near Bethany, where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived. He had landed himself in a conversation with some Levites and priests that the Pharisees had sent John's way on a fact finding mission.

The question they carried with them was one about identity. "Who are you?" is what they all wanted to know. John answers them by saying, "You're asking the wrong question. It's not about who I am. It's about who He is."

The next day, he's standing in the Jordan River and Jesus walks toward him. And John answers the question:

*The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world
After me in history, before me in time
After me in the river, before me in relevance
Resting place of the Spirit of God
Fountainhead of the presence of the Spirit in us
The Son of God*



When John had explained that they were asking the wrong question, he quietly slipped in something else. John told them, "Among you stands one whom you do not know." Was Jesus right there, in Bethany, listening to the fact finders, and they couldn't see him for who he was? The next day John says of himself, "I myself did not know him." He said it twice. He grows up with Jesus, son of Joseph, but not until this moment when his cousin steps into the Jordan does John know Jesus the Lamb, the

Fountainhead, the Son. And he knows it as he stands in the river, doing what his Father told him to do. "Baptize people in the water and wait. Wait until you see my Spirit. He will descend, land, and remain on my Son. The whole reason I'm sending you to stand in the water is to make Him visible, to make Him clear, to make Him known. To Israel. To yourself, even." And then

John says, "I myself have seen... This is the Son of God."

So this is where it comes down to me in this moment. How often do I move through the ins and outs of my day and miss Him? How often do I walk right on by as He is waiting for me to see Him, waiting for me to point Him out to someone else who can't see Him yet?

Help me to ask the right question, Jesus. To face You and see who You are. And to turn and look at others in the light of what I've seen.

Noreen is a contributor to Ora, where you can read reflections for the weekend Mass readings. Go to oraminiistry.weebly.com to read more.

GREAT COMPASSION



John Rae
Bene Dictus Team

In Hebrew the word *rechem* is the root word for compassion, mercy, and womb. It is also the root for one of the Biblical names of God. In Deuteronomy 4:31 God is referenced as, "...The LORD your God is a merciful God [*El Rachem*]."

Several times in the Gospels, Jesus is said to be moved with compassion, and, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Samaritan is moved with compassion towards the beaten man. A pregnant woman can literally feel the movement of her child in the womb and be overcome with a deep sense of intimacy, compassion, and the desire to protect. There is another person existing within the boundaries of her personal space who needs her nurturing to survive. The Good Samaritan exhibited all the attributes of the *rechem* response. He takes the beaten stranger into the womb of his compassion and sees that he is nurtured back to wholeness. He sees the stranger as an extension of himself and is the means of the man's salvation.

There is a prerequisite to the *rechem* response, and that is humility. We tend to fill the container of our life to the brim



with our personal issues so that there is no room in our inn when compassion and mercy come looking for a place to stay. Humility syphons off some of our self so that our spiritual womb has room to receive whatever *El Rachem*, our merciful God, wants to gestate within us.

There is another name of God mentioned in Isaiah 12:2 — "Behold, God is my salvation [*El Yeshuati*]." In the Christmas season, we celebrate Yeshua (Hebrew for Jesus) as Son of God, coming to earth as the Saviour, as the Great Compassion. He comes to give us the gift of Himself, and we have the honour to be nurtured by Him in the Eucharist. As the culmination of this season, let us be filled with gratitude and wonder as the gift of our salvation comes to us wrapped in the womb of the Virgin. 🕊

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MEET PETER SALAH



Matt Vaughan
Communications Coordinator

This month, we'll be featuring two staff profiles for two of the Saint Benedict Parish staff members, so parishioners can get to know them a little better and get a better sense of what they do at the parish. First up: Peter Salah.

What's your job at the parish?

PETER: I am the Audiovisual Coordinator for Saint Benedict Parish.

What staff team are you on?

I am on the Worship & Sacraments Team.

How long have you worked at Saint Benedict Parish?

I have worked for the parish since July 2019.

What does your job entail? What's a typical week look like for you?

I am responsible for the growth and maintenance of all audiovisual systems in the church building. This includes ensuring there is A/V support for weekend Masses and our many special events. In particular, at the weekend Masses we have three distinct A/V teams which I lead - slide creation and operation, Livestream, and audio mixing.

My typical work week can be quite interesting because I also have a full-time job outside of my parish ministry. So in between working my 40 hour a week engineering job, I work to recruit and schedule volunteers for all weekend Masses, along with making sure the slides, as well as the Livestream broadcast, are

created and ready to go. Dealing with all this technology, I seem to spend a fair amount of time troubleshooting problems, and I also work to make sure the other events such as Alpha, Praise & Worship Nights, Leadership Summits, and so on and so on, are supported in their A/V needs.

What did you do before you worked at Saint Benedict Parish?

I worked and continue to work as a Civil Engineer! I am currently the Team Leader of Materials Engineering for Englobe, a company which I have worked for since starting as a student in 2008.



What do you like most about working at Saint Benedict Parish?

Everything! But to be a little more specific, I love the culture of support and love, and the dedication of staff and parishioners to genuinely strive to be a church that forms disciples who joyfully

live out the mission of Jesus Christ.

Do you have a favourite memory from your time working here?

The Liturgical Ministry Come & See was an amazing event for me, it definitely stands out as a highlight. It was so wonderful to see so many parishioners come down and give their 'Yes!' to serving in ministry.

What do you like to do outside of work?

I love spending a quiet evening at home with my wife, and I love spending time with family. My wife and I are also involved in Bible studies, Alpha, and a Connect Group, so we stay pretty busy. 🙏

SPONSORING REFUGEES



Susan LeRue
Bene Dictus Team

I recently spent some time with Kevin Riley of the parish's Knights of Columbus council regarding some very exciting news!

Saint Benedict is at the beginning stages of sponsoring a refugee family. This process could take quite some time, but we are moving forward in this endeavour in hopes of sponsoring a family of four or five. Thanks to the Knights of Columbus who have graciously accepted the task of heading up this project. This is a wonderful way for our parish to concretely be the eyes, hands, and feet of Jesus by caring for our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world who are in desperate need. "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me," (Matthew 25:40).



Although we are only beginning this journey, here is an explanation of how it all starts:

The United Nations Refugee Agency, The

Government of Canada, and private and community sponsors identify refugees for resettlement. A person cannot apply to be a refugee.

Refugees leave their country for many reasons, including war, discrimination, poverty, and religious persecution, which all affect their safety. Private sponsors, like our parish, agree to raise enough funds to cover all expenses for the refugee family for a minimum period of one year.

These are some other expectations of sponsoring a family:

- Welcoming them to Canada.
- Assisting them in getting settled into a residence, assisting with furniture, bedding, clothing, groceries, utilities, etc.
- Assisting them with registration with all levels of Government, including the healthcare system, school, driving lessons, transportation, library, recreation, etc.
- Assisting them in enrolment in English as a second language classes if needed.
- Assisting with employment needs.
- Checking in with them on a regular basis until they can function on their own.
- Helping the family integrate into their new community and to fulfill their religious and other needs.

There will be more information shared in the months ahead as we move forward with this campaign and receive specific details on the family we will be sponsoring. We ask all our parishioners to pray for the family that God has intended for us.

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in," (Matthew 25:35). 

MEET PHIL MARMEN



Matt Vaughan
Communications Coordinator

This month, we'll be featuring two staff profiles for two of the Saint Benedict Parish staff members, so parishioners can get to know them a little better and get a better sense of what they do at the parish. Up next: Phil Marmen.

What's your job at the parish?

PHIL: On paper, it's 'Staff Member Responsible for Music Ministry', but functionally I am the Director of Music.

What staff team are you on?

I am on the Worship and Sacraments Team! I think this works very well, given how closely tied music and the Liturgy are.

How long have you worked at Saint Benedict Parish?

I have held this role since the beginning of 2018.

What does your job entail? What's a typical week look like for you?

I am responsible for all of the music that takes place in the parish. Thankfully, we have very gifted and capable people who are responsible for each ministry, so I support them in their roles. I am directly responsible for the music at the 9am Mass, so I coordinate schedules, choose music, and run rehearsals for that ministry. I also typically have a small pile of meetings! I meet with ministry leaders, musicians, event planners, priests, people from other parishes...



What did you do before you worked at Saint Benedict Parish?

When I took on this role I was finishing my Electrical Engineering degree, and since this role is part-time, I also work full-time as an Electronics Design engineer.

What do you like most about working at Saint Benedict Parish?

I love that we embrace change for the sake of building the Kingdom of God, and that our leaders foster clear communication and don't shy away from healthy conflict. It's so easy for our workplaces and communities to become toxic because of poor communication, so I value the honesty and clarity we encourage and support.

Do you have a favourite memory from your time working here?

The Triduum is always a favourite!

What do you like to do outside of work?

Most of all, I love to spend time with my beautiful wife and daughter (who is soon to be a big sister)! I also like to spend time with friends and family, play music, and do some hobby electronics things at home. Oh, and I have a thing for single malt Scotch. 🍷

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THE LONG REACH OF MERCY



Matt Kerrigan
Bene Dictus Team

Imagine for a moment that rival groups are viciously fighting for power where you live. Friends and family members are being displaced, hurt, or killed in the crossfire. In a fight for survival, you and your family make your way to a refugee camp in a neighbouring country. There you live in temporary shelter with the bare necessities of life. The camp is not a place where you can live forever, and you begin to dream of another life. You register with the United Nations at the camp to migrate to a safe country in the world where you and your family can start life anew. After months (in some cases years) of living in the camp, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees designates you and your family to be sponsored as refugees in Canada.

It's at this significant turning point that a sponsoring refugee committee springs into action. The refugee committee and parishioners at Saint Benedict Parish have a remarkable record of leaping in and providing a safe landing for those escaping the brutality and chaos of war, leaving behind their homeland, their culture, friends, and extended family.



I had an opportunity to talk with Chris Yetman, Finance Manager at Saint Benedict, about his extensive previous involvement as chair of the Refugee Committee.

“I can remember back in 2004, we sponsored a man from Ethiopia who later brought over his two sisters. He immediately found work washing dishes and began working seven days a week and saving everything he could to sponsor his two sisters he had left behind. Before long, he had brought them over and had gained considerable financial independence.

“Having individuals and family from many different countries with differing languages, cultural tradition, and faiths makes it a learning experience for us. Most of the refugees we have sponsored are from war-torn Africa: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Syria, Somalia, Congo, and Chad to give you some idea.

“There are wonderful success stories. A consistent characteristic for the refugees we have worked with is a commitment to hard work and financial independence. Long before the day of their arrival, our committee members are busy gathering furniture, household goods, and clothing to have on hand. Through the giving hearts of our parishioners, we put together a fund that will support our newcomers for at least a year. When we get word that the refugees will be arriving in a matter of days, the ranks of volunteers swells. We are never lacking for kind, generous hearts and willing hands.

“Volunteers meet the newcomers at the airport and get them settled. You can imagine how baffling and intimidating it might be to have your first encounter with an ATM, having never seen one before. It helps to have a friendly guide beside you.

“While these experiences transform the newcomers, it also transforms our lives. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time working with refugees. I try to stay in touch with them and enjoy hearing about their successes. When all the cultural differences get sorted out, it’s always uplifting to discover we’re very much the same at heart.”🙏

UPCOMING EVENTS

at Saint Benedict Parish

JAN 21 - Memorial Mass

JAN 24 - Alpha Launch

JAN 26 - First Communion

FEB 12 - Anointing of the Sick

FEB 15 - Praise & Worship Night,
7:30pm

For full event details, be sure to subscribe to The Overview by visiting saintbenedict.ca

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

For information on baptisms, please email Carol:
baptisms@saintbenedict.ca.

For information on weddings, please email Deacon David: **weddings@saintbenedict.ca.**

For information on preparation for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion, please email **FACT@saintbenedict.ca.**

For information on becoming Catholic, please email **RCIA@saintbenedict.ca.**

For funerals, or to be connected with our funeral ministry team, please call the parish office at **902-443-0725** and listen to the prompts.

FINANCIAL UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2019

SUNDAY COLLECTIONS	RECEIVED	TOTAL	AVERAGE
ENVELOPES	1,197	\$32,389	\$27.06
PAR (PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE)	425	\$60,253	\$141.77*
LOOSE	-	\$6,419	-
ONLINE	-	\$869	-
TOTAL	-	\$99,931	-
PARISH DEBT REDUCTION	RECEIVED	TOTAL	AVERAGE
ENVELOPES	127	\$3,539	\$27.87
PAR (PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE)	58	\$2,782	\$47.97*
MORTGAGE BALANCE (AS OF MONTH END)			\$379,842
PRINCIPAL PAID (ON MORTGAGE)			\$10,012
INTEREST PAID (ON MORTGAGE)			\$1,426
TOTAL PAID (ON MORTGAGE)			\$11,438

*NOTE: PAR average includes weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly withdrawals, which are totalled and divided by the number of givers.

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