AUGUST 2019

BENE DICTUS

PHOTO: JOHN RAE

p. 5 . . . . . .
PASTORAL COUNCIL

p. 9 . . . . . .
FAR-REACHING IMPACT

SAINT BENEDICT PARISH
45 Radcliffe Drive
Halifax, Nova Scotia
902-443-0725
saintbenedict.ca

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

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER?

Visit the Welcome Centre in the foyer after Mass for more information!

CONTENTS

August 2019

FATHER SIMON SAYS
2 / 3 When Lightning Strikes | Who's Leading This Parish Anyway? | Thanks & Prayers

QUANTUM FAITH
4 Finding the absolute in the chaos of life

PASTORAL COUNCIL
5 / 6 New members, new gifts, but the same mission

STEUBENVILLE 2019
7 / 8 Stories from last month's Steubenville Atlantic conference

FAR-REACHING IMPACT
9 / 10 Why one Australian man is supporting our parish

ALTAR SERVING DUO
11 A father and son serve together on Sundays

DID JESUS SAY THAT?
12 "Was Jesus really saying he is going to make it worse?"

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 September 7th/8th.

On the cover:
Saint Benedict Parish's teens at Steubenville Atlantic in July.

SAINT BENEDICT PARISH CLERGY

Pastor: Fr. Simon Lobo, CC

Associate Pastor: Fr. Alex Colautti, CC

Permanent Deacon: Deacon David Viscount

Episcopal Vicar for Parish Renewal: Fr. James Mallon

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FATHER SIMON SAYS...

Fr. Simon Lobo, CC
Pastor

WHEN LIGHTNING STRIKES

The spiritual life is full of surprises. The longer you journey, the more you come to expect the unexpected. The same can often be true for 'regular' life. As the summer began, all was starting to quiet down and then the unexpected happened: lightning struck, and it caused a power surge and a lot of damage in the church. It took out our phone system (which is now back up), our elevator and the elevator emergency phone (also back up), and the electronic sign on the corner of Dunbrack and Radcliffe (a work in progress). There is not much we can do when the unexpected happens other than try our best to be patient and respond with grace.

Special thanks goes out to the staff team that has been working extra hard to get everything back online. In a particular way, I would like to celebrate Ryan Orlando who is responsible for the Facilities and teams of people who keep this place going. Ryan is definitely the man to have in a pinch, and we are so grateful for his consistent hard work. Thankfully, the repairs won't be a big expense to the parish, as we have insurance.

Ryan, together with Greg Ewert (a parishioner), has been working on our HVAC system since it went on the fritz in the Fall. This is a major project that has required a great deal of problem solving. By the time this is published, we should have our new HVAC system and new back-up system – which didn't exist before – operating smoothly. I know we've had a few warm weeks this summer without the benefit of air conditioning, and it's too bad that it's taken so long, but we wanted to get the job done properly by re-engineering the system for efficiency. But don't worry, we should have AC before the snow flies!

continued on next page

FATHER SIMON SAYS continued

WHO'S LEADING THIS PARISH ANYWAY?

The correct answer: Jesus! I feel very privileged to be the pastor of this beautiful parish, and I am incredibly grateful that I am not alone in leadership. With that said, some of you may not be aware of how the staff team is organized and what each staff member is responsible for. I can assure you that everyone works incredibly hard, but starting next month, the Bene Dictus will have a profile on members of the staff team so you can get to know us better.

Let me explain our current structure. I am joined by Kate Robinson, Rob McDowell, Bill Scollard, and Fr. Alex Colautti to form the **Senior Leadership Team**. We meet weekly for several hours to keep the parish moving in the right direction with team-based decisions. The rest of the staff are divided into three teams: the **Mission Support Team** (MST), the **Disciple Formation Team** (DFT), and the **Worship and Sacraments Team** (WST).

Kate leads the MST and is joined by Darlene Bonang, Ryan Orlando, Matt Vaughan, and Chris Yetman. The MST focuses on office administration, facilities, communication, and finances.

Bill leads the DFT and is joined by Catherine Gould, Tanya Noye, Laura O'Rourke, Corey Robinson, Arlene Sibley, and Dinah Simmons. The DFT leads the ministry side of things, including Discipleship Groups, Alpha, Childrens' Ministry, Youth Ministry, and Sacramental Preparation (which is closely tied to kids and youth).

I lead the WST and am joined by Fr. Alex Colautti, Deacon David Viscount, Dinah Simmons, Phil Marmen, and our newest member, Peter Salah. The WST is responsible for sacramental ministry and worship, which involves music and audiovisual, and has an emphasis on the weekends. You might have noticed that Dinah is serving on two teams. What can I say? She is amazing, and the areas she leads have a lot of crossover.

It's also important to note that we rebooted the parish's Pastoral Council in late 2018 and have been meeting monthly ever since. Pastoral Council provides a broader, outside perspective, a sober second thought, and innovative strategic thinking when it comes to making plans for the future. Please read the article on Pastoral Council on page 5.

THANKS & PRAYERS

Thanks so much to Laura and her huge team that put on another amazing Vacation Bible School. We had 136 children participate and many, many leaders help out!

Please pray for the Stella Maris Pilgrimage, when people from around the Archdiocese, including several from Saint Benedict, will be walking over 100km over five days in August. Yours truly will be a pilgrim. We hope to arrive at the Cathedral for 12pm Mass (please note the earlier time) on the Solemnity of the Assumption on Thursday, August 15th. All are welcome to join us there.

Finally, please pray for the Companions of the Cross who will be gathering for our annual retreat days as a community in the week leading up to Labour Day. When Fr. Alex and I return, we will be joined by a seminarian, Dan Ramos, who will be doing an internship at Saint Benedict Parish this ministry year. To learn more about Dan, feel free to read his profile at companionscross.org/meet-our-seminarians.

QUANTUM FAITH

John Rae
Bene Dictus Team

Regis Nicoll uses the analogy of skydiving into the ocean to describe the trajectory from classical to modern physics. Descending through the classical atmosphere, you observe definite boundaries between land, sea, forests, and fields, but once you have plunged into the ocean, the environment becomes a quantum world of chaotic undulations, bubbles, foam, and subsurface currents.

This analogy can function as a description of my voyage into the Catholic Church. Now that I have been 'plunged in' to the current church environment, the level of ambiguity is not quite what I expected. There is always the temptation to try and find the passage back to some religious safe space. But maybe there is a quantum Catholicism? Without quantum mathematics we would not have cell phones and MRI machines, so interacting with the mysterious can bear tangible fruit, and the Church has over 2,000 years of experience in handling mystery.

The quantum world presents itself as a topsy-turvy place where everything appears relative. Theoretical physicist Werner Heisenberg comments on this by saying that the idea of the 'relative' presupposes the absolute. The 'relative' must be 'relative' to some standard, because pure relativism becomes pure disorder, which is not the quantum world. For quantum physics, that absolute is the speed of light. As Christians we have our light standard, as well, from the Nicene Creed: "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light."

Acts chapter 27 tells a story about being tossed into the churning sea. The ship carrying the apostle Paul to Rome ran into a Nor'easter and was driven by that wind for fourteen days. They lost all their lifeboats and the vessel sustained heavy damage. Paul told the passengers and crew not to abandon ship, but to stay with her. Eventually she ran aground on a sandbar and started to break up in the surf. Everyone ended up in the roiling water, but all prevailed and got to land by clinging to bits and pieces of the shipwrecked vessel. In some circumstances our 'salvation' may be a salvation facilitated by 'bits and pieces' that provide us with just enough buoyancy to get our feet back under us.

PASTORAL COUNCIL

Matt Vaughan
Communications Coordinator

In December 2018, Saint Benedict Parish's Pastoral Council had a reboot, bringing in new members and meeting for the first time in over a year. I spoke to Sharal Riggs, the chair of Pastoral Council, and Morgan MacKenzie, a new addition, to hear how the council has been working in its new incarnation.

How long have you been on Saint Benedict Parish's Pastoral Council? What's your role on the council?

SHARAL RIGGS: I've been on Pastoral Council since November 2013. I became chair in December 2018, though we didn't have an active Pastoral Council between July 2017 and December 2018.

MORGAN MACKENZIE: I joined the council this past January.

What does Pastoral Council do?

SHARAL: Pastoral Council is strategic in nature, and it provides Fr. Simon with a group that he can receive feedback from. We look at the parish's needs in the future and determine how to best achieve it. Our primary purpose is to develop initiatives that support our mission. Strategic planning helps us solve problems and remain flexible to adapt to changing needs and priorities. Our previous councils weren't as specifically strategic in nature, and we have changed to focus on that.

MORGAN: Sometimes smaller groups will also meet at another time to discuss a particular topic and then report back when we all meet again.

How are members selected?

SHARAL: In Fall 2018, Fr. Simon invited parishioners to express an interest in joining Pastoral Council at the parish's Leadership Summit as well as in his *Father Simon Says* in the Bene Dictus. Those intereted were required to complete the CliftonStrengths Assessment and provide the top five strengths to Fr. Simon. The data was used to form the Council's strengths profile and make final selections, ensuring a balanced team.

The members of Pastoral Council: ***Top row*** *- Kate Robinson (from the Senior Leadership Team, or SLT), Morgan MacKenzie, Mike McAllister, Liz Venezuela, Scott LeBlanc, Dan O'Rourke.* ***Bottom row*** *- Fr. Alex Colautti (from SLT), Sharal Riggs, Karen Gibson, Fr. Simon Lobo (from SLT).* ***Not pictured*** *- Rob McDowell (from SLT).*

How often do you meet?

SHARAL: We meet monthly, with the exception of Christmas and Easter months, and during the summer when we'll only meet once.

How is the Pastoral Council different from our parish's Senior Leadership Team?

MORGAN: The Pastoral Council is made up of people who are on staff at Saint Benedict and people who are not, people who work in ministry fulltime and people who don't. In the group, we have a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences, both within and outside of church. We are meant to advise the Senior Leadership Team and the pastor on issues relating to the vision and direction of the parish and how that vision and direction could be executed.

Ultimately, decisions are made by the Senior Leadership Team and the pastor.

Please keep Saint Benedict Parish's Pastoral Council and its members in your prayers as they do their best to faithfully guide the parish in cooperation with the Holy Spirit and God's will.

God, give our Pastoral Council the understanding and perseverance to know Your Will, along with the strength and courage to make Your Will our own. Guide them by Your Wisdom as they seek to discern the plans You have for our parish. Unite them in the love of Jesus Christ, and keep them faithful to all that is true.

STEUBENVILLE 2019

Corey Robinson
Youth Ministry

In July, many young parishioners from Saint Benedict went to Steubenville Atlantic, a Catholic youth conference held each year at Dalhousie University. Here are some stories about Steubenville from a few of this year's participants.

How did you hear about Steubenville?

ELSA-KAZE TWAGIRAYEZU, GRADE 9: This year I attended The Rise youth group, and I heard people talking about a conference.

ISABELLE DE LA SALLE, GRADE 12: I heard about Steubenville from a family friend several years ago. She raved about it and recommended that we try it out sometime.

Why did you decide to go?

ELSA-KAZE: I'd never done anything like it, and the way everyone talked about it made me feel like it would be a great experience. My friends and I thought that at least we would be able to spend the weekend together and have fun.

ISABELLE: After attending youth group for a period of time, I realized pretty much all my friends were going this year, and they made Steubenville sound like a really cool experience.

GABBY DE LA SALLE, GRADE 10: I just started attending The Rise youth group this year, and people would often come up to me and ask if I would be going to Steubenville. They would tell me all about it, and it sounded very appealing to me, so I thought about it more and the next thing I know, I'm all registered and set to go.

What was your favourite moment of the weekend?

GABBY: It's always hard for me to pick a favourite, but I would say the Eucharistic adoration was one of my favourite parts

of the weekend. It was an emotional time, but it was also such a special and precious moment. I really felt Jesus' presence there. It's hard for me to put it into words, but it made me feel like I wanted to go to adoration every day.
MARIA FITZGERALD, GRADE 9: My favourite moment from the weekend was all the prayers and worship. The music was so amazing, and the songs were so powerful.

Have you changed since going to Steubenville?
ELSA-KAZE: I have, for sure. During adoration I felt God not the way I'd always heard it, but in a way I knew he was there. I felt overwhelmed with a feeling of hope, and since then I try my best to never give up hope.
ISABELLE: Yes, since Steubenville I feel much more proud of who I am as a Catholic, as a daughter of God, and I am now more ready to make a stand for His name and tell others of His great love for us.
GABBY: I feel like my love for Christ has grown much more since going and I make much more time in my day to pray to Jesus, and whenever I'm struggling now I just turn to Him and it helps a lot.

What would you say to someone who was thinking about going to Steubenville?
GABE JON, GRADE 10: I say go for it. You learn a lot, it's actually a lot of fun, and it's just a great way to try to become a stronger Catholic.
GABBY: To anyone who would consider going to Steubenville, I would say don't hesitate at all! This was my first time attending and it was an awesome experience! I feel like it's the best thing that's happened to me in a really long time. I've totally changed since going. As soon as I got there, and things got started, I felt like I never wanted to leave. I felt so much at peace throughout this weekend. Also the fact that I'm around so many other people my age who are going through the same thing. It's another reminder that I'm absolutely not alone in this journey. All these other teens are with me, we're all united, we all love Christ, and we all want to grow in our faith.

If you want to go to Steubenville Atlantic next year, check out The Rise youth ministry when it starts up again in September. Stay tuned for more exciting details about The Rise!

FAR-REACHING IMPACT

Susan LeRue
Bene Dictus Team

I had the extreme pleasure of corresponding with Dan Baker, who hails from Brisbane, Australia. Read on to find out why Dan, half the world away, has decided to be a regular financial contributor to our parish.

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

DAN BAKER: I am an 'older' retired, single person who lives in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. During my younger adult life, I was a member of the Christian Brothers, a religious order. Most of my working life was spent in Catholic Primary Schools. In my parish life, I have been actively involved with parish pastoral councils, liturgy groups, RCIA, visitation groups, and currently the parish choir.

How did you hear about Saint Benedict Parish?

A year ago, in preparation for a seminar at which Ron Huntley was going to be a keynote speaker, I read the book *Divine Renovation*. As a result of reading that and going to Ron's seminar, I Googled Saint Benedict Parish. I had been involved in a very similar parish renewal project in the 1980s, and I was keen to learn about your parish.

How did you follow up from there?

I watched a 9am Mass on Livestream. Your pastor, Fr. Simon, was the celebrant. I was immediately moved by everything I witnessed at that Mass: full, active, joyful, and prayerful participation by all. Fr. Simon led the Mass with such

enthusiasm, passion, and a great teaching. I looked forward to the following week.

A pattern quickly developed, and I found myself tuning in every Monday morning (because of the time change) to watch your 9am Mass. In every homily I heard, there would be something at which I could smile or laugh, and they all empowered me in some way. By the way, I really enjoyed the arrival of the 'baby priest' (Fr. Alex), and I look forward to when he becomes the 'teenage priest', to see the challenges he presents.

In those early months of viewing, I could see that much of which Fr. James had spoken about in his book had taken shape at Saint Benedict Parish. It had evolved into a very vibrant and dynamic community of missionary disciples who proclaim and share the Good News. I could see how Alpha was driving much of

the renewal. I appreciated listening to the testimonies from different parishioners.

As well as tuning in to Saint Benedict Parish, I started listening to the Divine Renovation Ministry podcasts whenever they were available. I love the Divine Renovation vision! I love that the Spirit is moving so powerfully through this movement and through your parish!

What made you decide to donate to Saint Benedict?

I guess I just want to say thanks. I have received so much by listening to you all each week. I have laughed. I have wept. I have been challenged. I have been motivated. I have been inspired. I have been called to prayer. I have been more missional.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with us?
The Australian Church is having a Plenary Council in 2020. In preparation for that council, we have been invited to respond to a question: *What is God asking of us in Australia at this time?*

As a result of my journey with Saint Benedict, Divine Renovation, and the Companions of the Cross, I have been able to make many responses to that question. Each submission I made started with the quote from Fr. Bob Bedard: "I see the Church waking up and becoming explosively alive to the point where it, with the power of the Holy Spirit, will shake the earth and the nations with its dynamic presence." That's how I see Saint Benedict Parish, so I thank your parish for giving me a vision to speak to.

Thank you for your wonderful support, Dan. It is still so surprising, and very humbling, to hear how we are reaching people everywhere, even half the world away in Australia.

If you would like to join Dan in giving to Saint Benedict Parish online, there are a number of different options available at saintbenedict.ca/give. Thank you for your generosity!

ALTAR SERVER DUO

Gabbie Ricafort
Bene Dictus Team

Altar serving is one of the many vital ministries we have at Saint Benedict Parish. Both kids and adults serve at weekend Masses. I asked Michael and John Gonzales, a father and son altar serving team, about their experience.

Michael, can you tell us a bit about your family?

MICHAEL: We are the Gonzales family. We came to Canada in 2010, and joined Saint Benedict Parish in 2013. Since then, our lives have changed so much, and we are so thankful to all the people who have helped and supported us in our journey.

How did you get started in this ministry?

MICHAEL: It started when we were attending 6pm Mass on Sunday with Father James. We noticed that he was alone coming to the altar. He asked the parishioners if somebody could be an altar server and assist him during Mass. We answered that particular call.

How has altar serving impacted your faith journey?

MICHAEL: It gives me one more important reason to attend Sunday Mass, because I know I am serving Jesus himself. It helped me be humble and love my family more than I already did. Serving with my son and seeing my wife in the front pews brought our family closer together. As an altar server, I have a whole different perspective of the Mass and of the church.

John, how did you feel when you first began serving?

JOHN: When my dad first told me about an opportunity to serve at the church, I'm not gonna lie, I did have some mixed emotions. I thought, "What if I messed up, or did something embarrassing in front of all the people?" But as I was thinking about it, I knew God wasn't going to let anything bad happen during Mass, and that this was going to be an awesome experience for me to learn more about faith and the church. I was right! I am so glad I made that decision, that 'yes' to serve God, because it has helped in my faith and as a follower of God.

Michael and John carrying the candles on Palm Sunday

What was it like serving alongside your dad?

JOHN: Some people might think that it's awkward serving with your parent, and sometimes it is! They see the little mistakes you thought no one would spot. But having my dad at my side also gives me the biggest confidence in the world that I can do things right.

We're always eager to have new people join the Altar Serving team. Kids – if you would like to join this ministry, we prefer that you be in Grade 4 or above and have already celebrated First Communion. Adults – you are also welcome, with or without your kids! Go to ***saintbenedict.ca/serve****, and under* ***Altar Setup and Service****, and check off* ***Sunday Mass Altar Servers****.*

DID JESUS SAY THAT?

Morgan MacKenzie
Ora Ministry

This reflection is on next Sunday's Gospel, Luke 12:49-53.

"I came to bring fire to the earth," (Luke 12:49). "Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division!" (Luke 12:51). I read the passage again and actually laughed out loud. At first glance, it's puzzling and it seems surprising for Jesus. So I sat with it for a very long while. I thought Jesus was a peacemaker. What was he talking about? I'm not sure I'm up for this. Life's hard enough. There is enough division around me as it is. Was Jesus really saying he is going to make it worse?

I know God is consistent. He never changes. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). So when faced with a seemingly confusing passage of Scripture, I've learned it can be helpful to look at it through the lens of who we know God to be. We know God is not contradictory, unreliable, unstable, or fickle. So if a particular passage makes me question the character of God, I should probably re-examine how I am reading it.

If there is one thing I know about God, it's that he is love (1 John 4:7). It's at the very core of His identity. I recently went on a silent retreat. I spent a week not talking with a bunch of Jesuits, and they taught me that, try as we might, we really can't understand the depth of God's love for us, for every single person – past, present, and future. Our limited human brains are just not capable of grasping love that big and that deep, love that is truly unconditional. If that's true, how could Jesus possibly say he has come to bring fire and division?

It's pretty apparent there are things in our world that are not as God intended them to be – violence, sickness, war, disaster, loneliness, rejection, pain. There are also things in my life and in my heart that are a bit mixed up, that are not in keeping with the good plans God has for me – unhealthy habits, guilt, anger, resentment, sadness, pride, selfishness. What does God's unimaginable, unconditional, perfect love look like in a life and a heart that are a bit mixed up? It might look kind of like fire, burning away those things that aren't helpful, that aren't from God to build something new.

Jesus is a peacemaker, but the peace He offers is not a simple soothing. It's not fake, or superficial. Jesus is not offering us an everything-is-fine-when-really-it-isn't kind of peace. The peace He offers comes from a deep recognition of who God is and who I am in God. It's a better understanding and acceptance of the immense, unimaginable love He has for me. He's the Almighty God, the Creator of the universe, the Forgiver of sins, and our Heavenly Father. And, astoundingly, I am a well-loved child of God – not because of who I am, or what I have done, but because of who He is and what He has done for me through Jesus on the cross. Jesus has been called both a disruptor and an interrupter. When we really meet him and experience His love, our lives will never be the same again. They are forever divided into before and after our encounter with Him.

Scary as it is, I'm slowly learning to welcome the fire Jesus brings as part of His love for me. I'm learning to welcome the division He creates between me and my former self. I'm learning to say, "Come Lord Jesus, come Holy Spirit. Burn away the things in my heart that are not serving you, clear some space, and build something new. Amen."

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

register for fall alpha today!
saintbenedict.ca/alpha

Luke 11:02

On August 30th, we launch
21 Days of Prayer
It's simple:
- Think about three people to invite to alpha
- Set an alarm at 11:02 am as a reminder to pray daily for them
- Be open and expectant to see how God might use you

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How Saint Benedict Parish forms disciples who joyfully live out the mission of Jesus Christ

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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 **PACT@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 - JUNE 2019

SUNDAY COLLECTIONS	REC'D	TOTAL	AVG/
ENVELOPES	1,508	$41,523	$27.54
PAR (PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE)	405	$55,227	$136.36*
LOOSE	-	$7,197	-
ONLINE	-	$1,658	-
TOTAL	-	$105,605	-
PARISH DEBT REDUCTION	**REC'D**	**TOTAL**	**AVG**
ENVELOPES	158	$4,249	$26.89
PAR (PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE)	60	$3,127	$52.12*
MORTGAGE BALANCE (AS OF MONTH END)			$439,220
PRINCIPAL PAID (ON MORTGAGE)			$9,743
INTEREST PAID (ON MORTGAGE)			$1,695
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.