

STORY



PHOTO: JOHN RAE

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GRIEF SUPPORT



p. 11.....
JESUS, OTHERS, YOU



SAINT BENEDICT PARISH

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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 9th/10th.

On the cover:

A family lights a candle at the First Reconciliation service last year.

SAINT BENEDICT PARISH CLERGY

Pastor: Fr. Simon Lobo, CC

Associate Pastor: Fr. Alex Colautti, CC

Intern Priest: Fr. John Farley

Permanent Deacon: Deacon David Viscount

Episcopal Vicar for Parish Renewal: Fr. James Mallon

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BENE DICTUS - January 2019



FATHER SIMON SAYS...



Fr. Simon Lobo, CC
Pastor

ONE WORD: GRATITUDE

In his homily on the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God on New Year's Day, Deacon David challenged us to summarize 2018 with one word. His word was 'gratitude'. I am going to borrow his word as I reflect back on the last year and the last few weeks. On behalf of the clergy and staff, I want to extend our deepest gratitude for all of the kindness, the generosity, and the ways in which our parish came together to make every aspect of Christmas so beautiful.

Special thanks to Judy Savoy, Laura O'Rourke, and the whole Christmas Unplugged team (including Santa) who made this family-friendly service the best one yet. Over 300 people came! Overall, we had 270 more people come through our doors between Christmas Eve and Day, which was an increase of 12% over last year! I also managed to consume 50% more calories than last year at our parish potluck, 'Feed Father Simon'. Words aren't nearly sufficient, but I am full of gratitude.

CONFIRMATION INTERCESSION

On Sunday, January 13th, we will be celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation with a dozen of our teens at the 9am Mass. In the early Church, Confirmation was sort of like 'Part B' of Baptism. Over the centuries it has become its own unique sacrament and is a moment for young (or not-so-young) disciples to ratify the decision that their parents made on their behalf at Baptism. In essence, they are making the intentional decision to follow Jesus as his disciples. Furthermore, they are asking to be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit



FATHER SIMON SAYS **continued**

so they can be empowered for the mission. These teens have been journeying with the youth group and Corey Robinson, our youth minister, and are taking steps to get involved in our Game Plan at Saint Benedict. We look forward to sending them to the Steubenville Atlantic Conference in July to deepen their relationship with God.

Please pray for each one of the 12 teenagers, their sponsors, and their families, as they prepare to live out their Confirmation.

RESTRUCTURE UPDATE

As of January 1st, the Archdiocese has published the list of the 20 new restructured parishes. If you read the Overview last week, you will have noted that Saint Ignatius and Saint Benedict are separate. This Fall there were several meetings to discuss the proposed merger of Saint Ignatius and Saint Benedict.

There were also conversations happening between the leadership of the Archdiocese and the leadership of my community, the Companions of the Cross. In the end, given the size, complexity, and the focused mission of Saint Benedict, it was agreed to keep the two parishes separate.

Even though Saint Benedict doesn't have to undergo another major 'structural' change, we are constantly in a state of change as we journey from maintenance to mission. Let's continue to reach beyond our walls to those who need Jesus. Furthermore, I hope that we can continue to offer support to any local parishes who ask for help. For example, we are supporting at least five local churches during this upcoming Alpha season.

On a related, but different note, you may have heard that Archbishop Mancini has requested a coadjutor bishop. Rome has accepted the request and will be sending a bishop to our diocese at some point in the not-too-distant future. Given that our Archbishop is approaching retirement in a couple of years, this new bishop would be brought in to allow for a smooth succession. Please pray for the process and for the person who God intends to send to serve in this leadership position in our Archdiocese.

ALPHA (BOOK) LAUNCH

Our daytime and evening Winter Alpha sessions will kick off on Friday, January 25th. Please start inviting friends, family, and colleagues to try Alpha. I've already heard of a few people who have been away from faith but who are experiencing a new spiritual thirsting in their lives. So many are waiting for an invitation. Keep in mind that you can invite a person out for just the first night. If they really don't like it, they are not obliged to return – no strings attached.

Speaking of Alpha, I am very excited to announce another book launch! Ron Huntley and Fr. James Mallon – both formerly in leadership at Saint Benedict – have co-written a book about how to use Alpha culture in a parish context. We will be celebrating the launch of *Unlocking Your Parish: Making Disciples, Raising Up Leaders with Alpha* on Friday, January 18th starting at 6:30pm. You're not going to want to miss this event. As with Alpha, all are invited! 🙏

YOUTH & CONFESSION



Peter Mallette
Bene Dictus Team

On the evening of December 11th, following the Advent Reconciliation Drama, a surprising number of teens from The Rise Youth Ministry lined up for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We were curious to know two things: why did you feel called to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and how did you feel after receiving God's grace and mercy?

Maria Fitzgerald - Grade 9

Why did you feel called? At first, I was definitely nervous. I didn't know how to do it, and wasn't sure what to say. I think what called me to do it was what Fr. Simon said in his talk the previous week at The Rise. He said it wasn't something to be nervous about, but something to be proud of. After I went to confession, I felt like a weight was lifted off of my shoulders. It feels good to get things like that off your chest, and doing it with my friends made me feel a lot better about it, too.

Elsa-Kaze Twagirayezu - Grade 9

Why did you feel called? I really wanted a fresh start. Since I'll be getting confirmed soon, I wanted to prove to Jesus that I was ready, that I wanted to get close to Him, and that I wanted Him in my life. I wasn't nervous or scared to confess my sins. We all make mistakes and I know Jesus will forgive me. There's nothing to be afraid of. After my confession, I felt so proud of the step I took with my faith. I went home happy and with a clear conscience.

Patrick Viscount - Grade 12

Why did you feel called? I could feel God and the Holy Spirit working through the

music at the Advent Reconciliation Drama. Also, I haven't been to confession since I attended Steubenville back in grade 9, and I remember feeling very peaceful and clean afterwards. After, it made me feel like a weight was lifted off my shoulders. I felt calmer and closer to God. I also found it easier to laugh and have fun with my friends knowing that in the eyes of God I was a new person, away from my previous mistakes, and ready to try and do better.

Thomas Cox - Grade 12

Why did you feel called? It had been quite a long time since I had last been to confession, and I felt like God was calling me to confession during Advent. It was also the same night as The Rise, so I had no excuse not to go. I felt great afterward, like I had a weight lifted off my shoulders.

Jacob Millette - Grade 7

Why did you feel called? I didn't go to confession the night of the Advent Reconciliation Drama. I went the next day walking home from McDonald's after school, simply because I wanted to. I was relieved to get all that stuff off my chest.

Maja Kolanko - Grade 9

Why did you feel called? I felt like I was carrying a lot of weight on my shoulders, and I wanted to be forgiven so that I could move forward with my life without anything on my conscience holding me down. I felt absolutely amazing after confession. It was a beautiful experience and I really felt a connection with God. My friend was so proud of me for going to confession that she decided to go herself.

Thank you to Corey Robinson for helping to tell these amazing stories! 🙏

ALPHA TESTIMONY

Kim Taylor

Fall 2018 Alpha Participant

Kim took part in the most recent Fall Session of Alpha, and this is her story.

I had no expectations going into Alpha, nor the night in Debert. I found myself really looking forward to spending time with everyone involved. I had no anxiety driving to Debert and not knowing where I was going. I felt guided, as I have felt these past two months. The feeling I had when I arrived was of seeing family or old friends. I had a warm embrace by Bill Scollard and seamless check in for my room. Not once did I feel I needed to be anyone but me. I never felt judged, lost, or conflicted. It was so nice to be part of something so much bigger than me and my existence.

I thoroughly enjoyed every speaker and could relate to many things that were said. I did not feel stupid at any time, due to the fact that I know very little about my religion and have had little faith in God most of my life. This has given me the opportunity to make it all real, and to find out why I have an overwhelming sense of peace every time I enter the church.

During Fr Simon's calling down of the Holy Spirit, I felt deeply emotional. My heart

and my head were having a bit of a tug of war, and that is something I will continue to work on. I feel that if I can believe in the Holy Spirit and have a relationship with God that somehow my siblings and son will be held in the light and somehow find peace, and feel the strength they need to find joy. I so badly want joy, peace, and happiness in my life. I am so tired of sitting on the pity pot and just waiting for the other shoe to drop.

I am feeling that everything will be okay. Terrible things are not around every corner. I know that by surrounding myself with good people and a faith in God that I will feel loved and, in turn, will share this goodness and caring with all the people in my life. This was how I felt when driving home from Debert... Loved.

I'm not expecting a miraculous transformation, but I am hoping to find my true self. Someone who can love and be loved without so many conditions. I know I will stay this path and strengthen my new relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... Amen.

Registration for Winter Alpha is now open! Go to saintbenedict.ca/alpha to register and find out more information. 

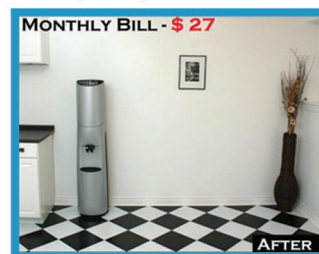
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GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP



Susan LeRue
Bene Dictus Team

I had the opportunity to sit with Anne MacMillan and discuss an important and sensitive ministry here at Saint Benedict Parish, the Grief Support Group.

How long have you been involved in this Ministry?

ANNE: It is nine years that I have been on team. I was a nurse, so I felt I had a little experience and background that maybe I could share with others that would help them. It's the most beautiful experience of my life, of all the ministries I've been involved in.

What more can you share?

We were people who loved people, cared for them, who had experience with grief ourselves, and we were to be listeners and friends.

The Grief Support Group provides friendship, prayer, love, and support as the bereaved ones journey through the grief process to healing. This support takes place in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality.

Here are some testimonies from parishioners who recently took part in the Grief Support Group.


"I have attended other grief groups but none have offered the spiritual side of grief and what God can do to help heal the grief that cripples an individual after a loved one has died. I get a peace and love from the Saint Benedict Parish Grief Support Group. And yes, I would wholeheartedly recommend it to

anyone going through the suffering of losing someone." - Carol

"This Grief Support Group has had a great impact on my grief journey. In the beginning I was undecided about coming, but it helped me so much. I could not have done this without the support group that helped me so much. I still come after eight years, because I still have difficult times, and this is such a peaceful two hours. I thank the leaders from the bottom of my heart – the ones who have helped me through all my tears and even later through my smiles." - Pat

"It has given me assured quiet time in the midst of confusion and busyness that follows the death of a loved one. It has given me the chance to relate to people who have gone through the same and profound experience, people I would never have met or related to in other circumstances. It has given me time on my quest. Time to reflect and perhaps understand, and has given me purpose and courage for my solo journey." - Anonymous

"I joined the bereavement group in May of 2016. The group has helped me tremendously on my grief journey of my beloved son and beloved husband. I feel great peace when I return home after spending two hours with wonderful people, and having focused on and discussed wonderful topics." - Teresa

If you, or someone you know has recently suffered the loss of a loved one, the Grief Support Group meets in the St. Joseph Room on the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 7pm-9pm. It is open to everyone, parishioners and non-parishioners alike. All are welcome. For more information please contact Anne MacMillan: 902-443-1646. 

CHRISTMAS IN PHOTOS





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SO MANY MIRACLES



Peter Mallette
Bene Dictus Team

By the time you read this, 23-year-old Matt Campbell is hoping to be completely over his jet lag from his flight back from Australia. Matt first went to Alpha at Saint Benedict in 2017 while he was a student at Saint Mary's University. His priorities were friends, school, and soccer.

"I thought I had everything in my life. If you would have asked me in my first year of university, I would have said that I was 10 out of 10 happy. I didn't see a need for a relationship with God. I thought a girlfriend would validate me, solve all my problems and make my life perfect. I had never had a serious relationship. I felt like a loser. That was my focus."

But that changed during Matt's first year at SMU when he signed up for a weekly faith study offered by Catholic Christian Outreach. Matt says it was the first time he had ever met people his own age who were really into their faith, people who he could relate to.

"During the faith study, I was asked to make God the centre of my life, but I didn't really know what that meant, so I said no. I thought I had to give up all kinds of things, and I wasn't ready for that."

Matt did meet a girl. They dated on and off,
9 saintbenedict.ca

but broke off the relationship in his third year of university. He reacquainted himself with his friends at CCO and registered for a Rise Up conference for young adults in Vancouver.

"I felt God was calling me because I needed him. I wanted to explore my faith on a deeper level."

That exploration started on the plane ride to Vancouver when Matt met Mark Saldanha and other conference delegates from Halifax.

"Mark and I basically became super solid friends. These people are some of the best people I have ever met in my life and a true definition of what friends are."

After the conference, Matt struggled. He lost all interest in school and dropped out.

"My parents encouraged me to finish because I was almost done, so did my friends, but my heart wasn't in it. I ended up failing miserably, but it was my own fault."

It was summer. Matt focused on his landscaping business, but within six months of dropping out of school, he applied for National Evangelization Team (NET) Ministries Australia, a Roman Catholic organization dedicated to spreading the Gospel to youth. Matt flew to Brisbane, Australia in January 2018. After about a month of training, Matt was assigned to be Team Leader for the Australian Catholic



University in Melbourne.

"Being a Catholic missionary on a university campus with a strong passion to journey and influence people my own age really was a gift from God."

Matt's team ran faith studies several times a week. A big part of their job was to get students involved in campus ministry, and make themselves available to students who needed one on one conversations about their faith.

"We had free coffee and comfy chairs in our lounge. The whole idea was to make campus ministry this beautiful, loving, supportive place that everyone could benefit from. The biggest thing people want is love and supportive relationships with their friends and family. At the very least, that is what you get from Jesus. That's what I wanted to share with people. There was nothing to lose. Only to gain."

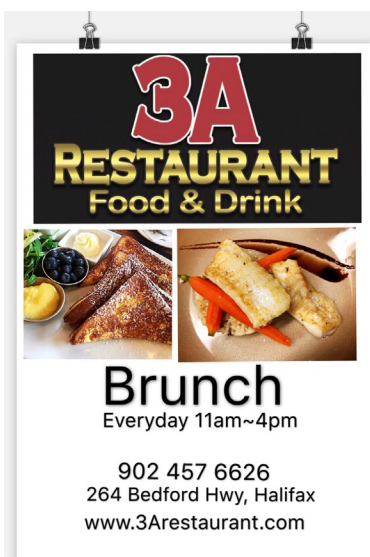
Matt returned home in December after a

grueling flight from down under.

"This past year has given me a passion and fire for people to know Jesus. Even my parents are delving deeper into their faith. It's bringing everyone together in my family. My buddy, who was inspired by what I did this year, wants to take Alpha in January. I don't have any solid plans. I'm praying for direction."

Matt is also deeply grateful for the way his faith has been enriched and the badly needed boost of self-confidence this experience has given him.

"I have never been a fan of the male culture of putting people down. My whole life I have wanted to be good. I wanted to love people but I often felt picked on for that. This year has shown me that who I was created to be is actually right. I'm not ashamed of that. That's what a true man is and that's how Jesus created me. I am more confident in myself than ever. The things that Jesus has done in my life is incredible. So many miracles." 🙏



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JESUS, OTHERS, YOU



John Rae
Bene Dictus Team

Christianity is not so much a system of beliefs as it is a way of life. Before Christians were called Christians, they were called the “people of the Way.” In Acts 9:2 it says, “so that if he [Paul] found any belonging to the **Way**, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”

In my day job I teach marine navigation, which is the science of determining way points and calculating the course to steer between them. In those calculations there is an order of precedence: when plotting your course, you always factor in the value of the geographical variation before applying any deviation found on your magnetic compass. In our efforts at spiritual navigation there is also an order of precedence: the key factor is **J**esus, followed by variable of the **O**ther, and finally the quantity known as **Y**ou. This is called the **JOY** method of navigation. In this sense, joy is the word that can be used for both the means and end of our voyage. There are echoes of this in the Men’s GYM (God, You, and Me) group at Saint Benedict.

In Hebrews 11:2, referring to Jesus, it says, “For the joy set before him he endured the way of the cross,” and that joy... was us! Christ died and rose from the dead that we might enjoy an intimate relationship with Him, with the bonus gift that with Jesus as our pilot we are saved from running our lives aground on the shoals of sin.

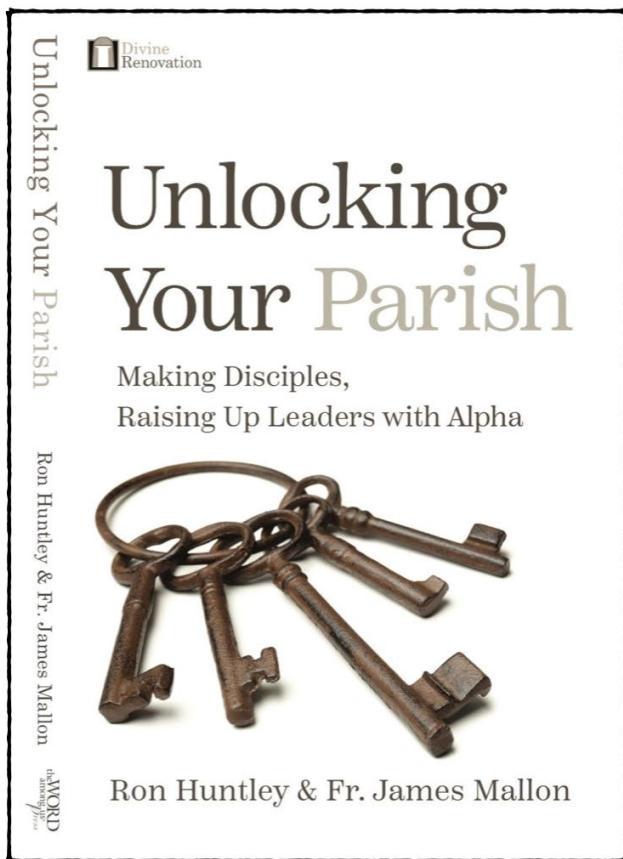


In visiting one of the local nursing homes, occasionally I would chat with a lady who belonged to the Salvation Army. Her condition caused her a fair amount of physical suffering but she always managed to be quite the character. After she died I was gifted with the wall hanging that she had in her room, and it had the nicest definition of joy: “**Joy is the echo of God’s life within you.**”

We have just gone through the season where the theme song has been:

*Joy to the world, the Lord has come
Let earth receive her King
Let every heart prepare him room*

As you prepare to embark on the way of the Lord, for another year, you may want to consider the JOY method of navigation. 🕊



BOOK LAUNCH

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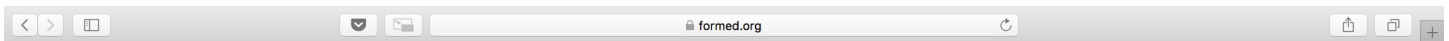
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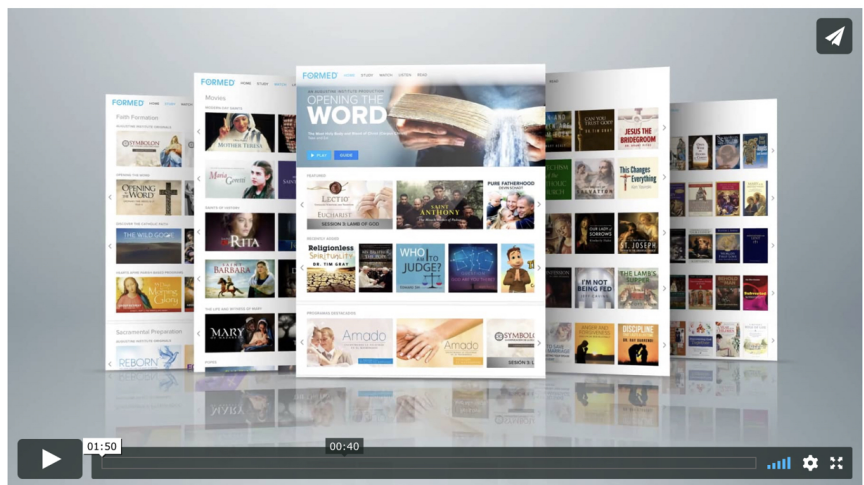


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If you're interested in the sacraments of baptism or matrimony at Saint Benedict Parish, please note that in addition to preparation, we require that you get in touch with us a minimum of three months in advance of your hoped-for date for baptism and 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 - NOVEMBER 2018

PARISH DEBT REDUCTION	REC'D	TOTAL	AVG
ENVELOPES	124	\$3,116	\$25.13
PAR (PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE)	62	\$3,227	see note
MORTGAGE BALANCE (AS OF MONTH END)		\$497,356	
INTEREST PAID (ON MORTGAGE)		\$1,853	
PRINCIPAL PAID (ON MORTGAGE)		\$9,585	
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	1,189	\$33,444	\$28.13
PAR (PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE)	405	\$53,532	see note
Note: PAR options include weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly withdrawals; therefore a weekly average is unavailable.			



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