

STUDIO WZN



PHOTO: JOHN RAE

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SAINT BENEDICT PARISH

45 Radcliffe Drive
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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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

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

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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 March 9th/10th.

On the cover:

One of our young parishioners getting confirmed in January.

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 - February 2019



FATHER SIMON SAYS...



Fr. Simon Lobo, CC
Pastor

A DISCIPLE IS AN ONGOING LEARNER

As Fr. James has said on many occasions, culture is what we take for granted, the ways of doing things that are in the atmosphere. It's these things that are imbedded so deeply that have the greatest power to move us in the right or the wrong direction.

As we look to the dream of **A Disciple A Day**, one thing that I would like for us to 'take for granted' at Saint Benedict is that there is **A Next Step For Everyone** so that a culture of discipleship becomes normal. We want every single person taking the initiative to keep growing in their relationship with Jesus, learning about their faith with other believers, participating in the Sacraments, and worshipping God. The key is for each person to take ownership for their own journey.

LENTEN DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Game Plan (which you can see laid out on page 14) is an overall strategy to help us on the journey. All aspects of the Game Plan are important, but I think at this time Discipleship Groups are especially in need of more investment.

Every Lent we invite parishioners to form Discipleship Groups (made up of 4-12 people) and gather in homes. We hope that beyond Lent, Discipleship Groups are happening year-round on a variety of subjects. This Lent we will be using the new Bible Study written by Dinah Simmons, Mary Magdalene: Apostle to the Apostles. As usual, our primary approach is to invite parishioners to gather in their homes in small groups to grow with this material.

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



FATHER SIMON SAYS **continued**

Our secondary approach is that we're going to hold two large group sessions in the parish auditorium on Wednesdays, one in the morning and one in the evening. If you are unable to form your own group and would like to participate in a larger one, please save the dates of March 13th, 20th, 27th, and April 10th. In either case, you will need to purchase copies of the book ahead of time, which can be found at the glass display case in the foyer or in the parish office. These larger groups are also an excellent place to invite friends to grow deeper.

MONTHLY MEMORIAL MASS

It has come to my attention that when family members pass away – whether in Nigeria or Nanaimo – it is not always possible to attend the funeral. One can always request unannounced Mass intentions for these loved ones, given that the power of the Mass is infinite and extends beyond space and time.

We are starting a Monthly Memorial Mass to help families through the grieving process and to show that, as a parish family, we love you and are praying for you. These will be on Tuesdays at 9am Mass, and the first will be on **Tuesday, February 26th**.

Everyone is welcome to attend and to bring family members so as to offer this Mass together. The priest will be offering the Mass for the deceased, and particularly for those who have lost loved ones in the previous month or so.

'SECOND SERVE' MINISTRIES IN NEED

I am grateful that so many serve in our parish, and I see new faces stepping up

on a regular basis through our SaintBP Serve process, which you can sign up for at the Welcome Centre or on our website (saintbenedict.ca/serve). The ministries listed there are intended to be 'first serve', perhaps for those who have never served in a church before.

There are many other ministries that require a bit more formation, many of which are connected to our Sunday worship. We are in need of more Mass Coordinators, Altar Servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, people to take Communion to the Sick, others to help with decorating and with the altar linens, etc. If you're willing to step into a new challenge to grow in your own faith, and to help our parish work smoothly, please contact Dinah Simmons (dinahs@saintbenedict.ca).

As our new sound system is being installed, we are also in need of more people to serve in the AV Ministry. If you are interested please contact Paul Lang (paull@saintbenedict.ca).

INNOVATIONS IN CARE & COMPASSION

A few weeks ago we were approached by a small team, inspired to start a new ministry of Care & Compassion at Saint Benedict. The seed was planted at the last Archdiocesan Assembly. A group who had done four Discipleship Groups together and formed deep friendships felt called to serve. They will be starting small, but intend to visit parishioners who are in homes and the hospital. I am moved by this little team and their 'yes' to God's prompting. Stay tuned for ways to join this beautiful ministry. 🙏

MEET ANTOINE



Susan LeRue
Bene Dictus Team

I had the pleasure of sitting with Antoine Laviale. Antoine is a fourth-year seminarian spending some time with us here at Saint Benedict Parish and with the Divine Renovation Ministry. He arrived in August and is staying until this June.

How old are you, and where are you from?

ANTOINE: I am from Toulouse, which is in the southwest part of France. In my family, there is my mother, father, and my two sisters. I am the middle child, and I am 25 years old.

Would you share a little regarding your call to the priesthood?

When I left home and I left my family, I was searching for the deepest foundation in me, in my heart. When we leave home, when we leave our family, we search for our deepest roots. For me, it was my faith, and my baptism. I began to ask myself what did it mean to be baptized.

In university, I became involved in a prayer group, and I was made deeply aware that everyone is called to holiness, even the laity. I fell in love with the truth that the baptized is another Christ, the Christ Himself. So, I discovered this: that I was called to holiness and to a mission, because of my baptism. I was called to bring the divine into every part of my day, sleeping, working, walking;

everything. It was during this time I discovered in my heart that the Lord was calling me to serve the baptized, to be a priest, a pastor.

What brought you to Saint Benedict Parish?

After reading *Divine Renovation*, in my heart I heard something that I think the Lord is saying to His Church. I have seen some fruit of the work of Fr. James in some parishes.

I wanted to know more about this, and I wanted to find out what I could and to then take it back to my diocese. I approached my Bishop and requested his permission to come here and learn for one year.

Can you tell me a little about the Church in France?

We have a strong Christian history in France. It is true that the Church is in crisis, but at the same time there are many, many young people who are involved in the church and vocations are increasing. There are 50 men who are with me in the seminary. We have 5,000 newly adult baptized a year in France and there are 20 adults who will be baptized in the Toulouse seminarians' parish this year. There are many signs of hope.

Is there anything else?

Yes, I would ask the people of the parish, those who will read this, to pray for me.

Thanks to Jacqueline Charlton for assisting me in translating. 🙏



SACRIFICE & CARITAS



John Rae

Bene Dictus Team

Sacrifice is an economic activity. For example, if you sacrifice a bit of your paycheck to the Canada Pension Plan, when you are 65, you receive the Canada Pension in return for that sacrifice.


Now, God did not crucify Jesus. We (humanity) crucified him. Caiaphas, the high priest, says in Luke's Gospel, "It is better that this one man [Jesus] should die than the nation perish." Caiaphas didn't want to trigger police action by the Romans. That Passover week, Caiaphas used the body and blood of Jesus to appease the mob and purchase the political peace, but unbeknown to Caiaphas, what was actually purchased was the "peace that passes all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

Like the story of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 50:19-20, God took a human activity that was meant for evil, in this case the physical sacrifice of Jesus, and repurposed it for our good. He raised Jesus from the dead, both as an example of Love triumphing over evil and as the 'judgement' that evil does not have the last word. The last word belongs to Him who is both Alpha and Omega (Revelation 21:6). The mystery of our

salvation is that God transformed our cruel rejection of Jesus into the sacrifice of our reconciliation (Colossians 1:20). Nothing is impossible with God.

Consider the petition "deliver us from evil" in the Lord's Prayer. Jesus was not delivered from the suffering of death but from the evil of death. The evil of death wanted Jesus separated from the love of the Father, but Jesus was raised from dead and into the glory of the Father.

Likewise, we may not be delivered from the sufferings of this life, but as brothers and sisters in Christ, we are promised to be delivered from the evil of those sufferings, as Jesus was, because we will share in his inheritance, as is written in Romans 8:17.

Christian sacrifice can get conflated with primitive sacrifice where a Pagan god demands the sacrifice of an infant for the return on investment of a plentiful harvest. Paul, in Romans 12:1, challenges us, as Christians, to be living sacrifices, not dead ones. If we invest ourselves in caritas, the love of God and our neighbour, that return on investment is beyond measure, it's eternal. To that end, at each Sacrifice of the Eucharist, we are offered the opportunity to sacrificially lay our lives on the line, just as Christ did. 

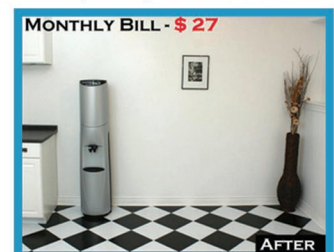
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Peter Mallette
Bene Dictus Team

After months of planning and preparation, Saint Benedict Parish launched its inaugural Youth Alpha on January 22nd.

Previous to this, Alpha was mainly for adults with a table or two set aside for youth, which wasn't always ideal. So why Youth Alpha? Why now?

Bill Scollard says the timing was perfect to try something new.

"We were discussing content for our Youth Program and thought, 'Why don't we run Alpha as part of our regular youth night, The Rise?' Alpha is an incredible tool to invite people to participate, and bring them into a deeper relationship with Jesus, so we couldn't think of one reason not to try it for our youth."

Tayna Noye says the launch of Youth Alpha is being done under the watchful eye of Alpha International and Global Alpha.

"Because Saint Benedict Parish is one of the gold standards for Alpha, we are in close contact with them. They have told me that because of that, and because of Divine Renovation, Alpha is growing exponentially in Catholic Churches all over the world."

Youth Alpha is for students in grades 7 to 12. It is fashioned after the traditional adult Alpha. The evening begins with a sit-down meal, followed by a video presentation, then small group discussion. Each table has an adult in case some direction is required, but the table leaders are all youth. On the first night, 74 young people showed up.

Corey Robinson is expecting even more to show up in the coming weeks.

"We are trying our best to empower these young people to invite their friends to meet Jesus in a way that Alpha can provide. It's just a simple invitation. We love these kids where they are, and we'll love their friends when they come, too."

Sabrina Hussein, a grade 12 student at Sandy Lake Academy is a table host. It took a lot of time for her to say 'yes' to Corey's invitation.

"I literally said 'yes' 10 minutes after the deadline. I don't know where I belong. don't even know if I have a relationship with Jesus. I know that there is a God, but when I go deeper into it, there is a big 'I don't know.' Perhaps people on my team can relate to that."


Ben Lupien is a table helper. He moved here five months ago from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and was confirmed in early January.

"My sister, my mother, and my grandparents just completed Alpha in the fall. I'm here to help out. Hopefully my faith will grow."

Maria Fitzgerald accepted the invitation to be a table host. She's in grade 9 and like Ben, was just confirmed.

"I am hoping it moves me forward in my faith, and hopefully I can help other people grow in their faith, too."

"These young leaders are starting to understand that it's not about them," Corey says. "It's about Jesus. I am so impressed that they are driving this on their own and making it their own."

Youth Alpha will run for ten weeks on Tuesday nights from 6:45–9pm and concludes on March 26th. 

BOOK LAUNCHES



PRAISE & WORSHIP NIGHT

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD
7:30PM IN THE CHURCH

ASH WEDNESDAY MASS

MARCH
6TH

9AM,
4PM,
& 7PM

On the opposite page: some photographs from the two book launches we hosted at Saint Benedict recently. Dinah Simmons' book *Mary Magdalene: Apostle to the Apostles* came out on December 8th. The book *Unlocking Your Parish*, by Ron Huntley and Fr. James Mallon, was launched on January 18th. Thank you to all those who came out to celebrate!

Photo credit: John Rae



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FINDING A HOME



Taya Vaci
Bene Dictus Team

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, or RCIA, is a platform that introduces aspects of the Catholic faith for those interested in converting to Catholicism. People from all walks of life who discover a home in the Catholic Church take part in this program. During the Easter Vigil, they enter into full communion with the Catholic Church through Baptism and Confirmation.

This year Saint Benedict Parish will grow just a bit bigger. We have 13 RCIA participants who are looking forward to April 20th, when they will be welcomed into our Catholic family! A theme echoed amongst the RCIA candidates: there was a deep desire for change in their lives. Experiencing Catholicism through an assortment of circumstances led them to a relationship with Jesus. RCIA changed their perspective on faith and the Catholic Church, ultimately transforming their lives. Some current and RCIA alumni have happily shared their journey.

RCIA candidates are encouraged to pick a patron saint. Saint Sebastian was the name chosen by one of the RCIA candidates. When asked why he chose that saint, he quickly corrected, "Saint Sebastian chose me." The name Sebastian had inexplicably been stuck in his head. A quick search revealed that Saint Sebastian was the patron saint of athletes. This long-time athlete and RCIA candidate felt an immediate connection to the saint.

One RCIA candidate shared that their conversion started like many others, with Alpha. They attended the course and formed

friendships with people in their small group, subsequently developing a curiosity about the Catholic faith. After accepting a small group member's invite to Adoration, they were hooked. Any faith community that observed the Eucharist with such reverence needed to be their homebase.

One candidate decided his wife would be his sponsor. Her support through the years had inspired him to start this new journey, and he wanted to do it together. In becoming a Catholic, he says that he was most looking forward to receiving the Eucharist. He had watched his family receive it for years, and now he could partake. His personal relationship with Christ had opened his heart, to understand what a gift the Eucharist truly is.

An innocent "what church do you go to?" question from a Salvation Army kettle volunteer shockingly started one RCIA candidate's conversion. She explained that answering, "I have no church," left her with a feeling of sadness and longing. A decision to reconnect with an old friend led to an invitation to attend Easter Mass at Saint Benedict. The invitation to Mass led to an invitation to Alpha. "I did not expect that I needed Alpha," she said, and it left her with "a burning desire to become Catholic." Now, if asked about her church, she can joyfully respond that Saint Benedict Parish is her home.

Another candidate recalls that while he had no formal faith foundation as a child, he always believed in God. Curiosities lead him to read the Bible and study different faith denominations. He concluded that the Catholic Church aligned with his beliefs. He then committed to check out Mass in addition

to attending the Alpha program. He describes being “blown away” by how welcoming and understanding everyone was. He felt so encouraged and valued by all the invitations to be involved with the community.

One alumni shared that prior to his conversion, he was yearning for something more. That something turned out to be a faith-filled life, which had come to fruition through his journey in RCIA. When asked what he looked forward to the most as a Catholic, he said it was getting to celebrate the sacrament of Marriage with his now wife and community. Since then, his community has continued to grow. He gives a shout out to his connect group, which he affectionately refers to as his family.

“You should come meet my friends at the Men’s GYM,” is exactly what started the journey of this RCIA candidate. He had loyally attended Sunday Mass for over 10 years, but felt no connection. The Men’s GYM allowed this candidate to journey with the Lord in a more relatable way. A simple invitation to

grow in faith beyond the pews translated into the formation of this new disciple.

This journey through RCIA has formed thirteen new disciples. Thirteen people who can confidently say that Christ has made a difference in their lives. Thirteen people excited to share their witness of God’s love. As a community that actively strives to form disciples and transforms lives, these thirteen new disciples are a testament to God’s work in our Parish.

In preparation for Easter, let’s be mindful to keep these newly formed disciples in our prayers. Pray that these next few months will provide them with a sense of belonging and purpose, that they will continue to grow closer to God in this journey. Let’s get ready to celebrate the multiplication of our Catholic family at Easter. Welcome home, RCIA graduates!

Taya Vaci joined the Catholic Church through RCIA in 2005. ☺

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DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS



Taya Vaci
Bene Dictus Team

Interested in connecting with fellow parishioners? Or learning about a new faith topic? Do you want to experience a new way to joyfully live out the mission of Jesus Christ? Perhaps you should give a Discipleship Group a try!

Discipleship Groups gather 4 to 12 people to meet over a course of a few weeks, with the intention to grow together as disciples of Jesus. The basis is not only to foster individual growth, but to experience growth together. After all, Saint Benedict Parish's mission is to be a healthy and growing faith community, and Discipleship Groups are part of the Game Plan.

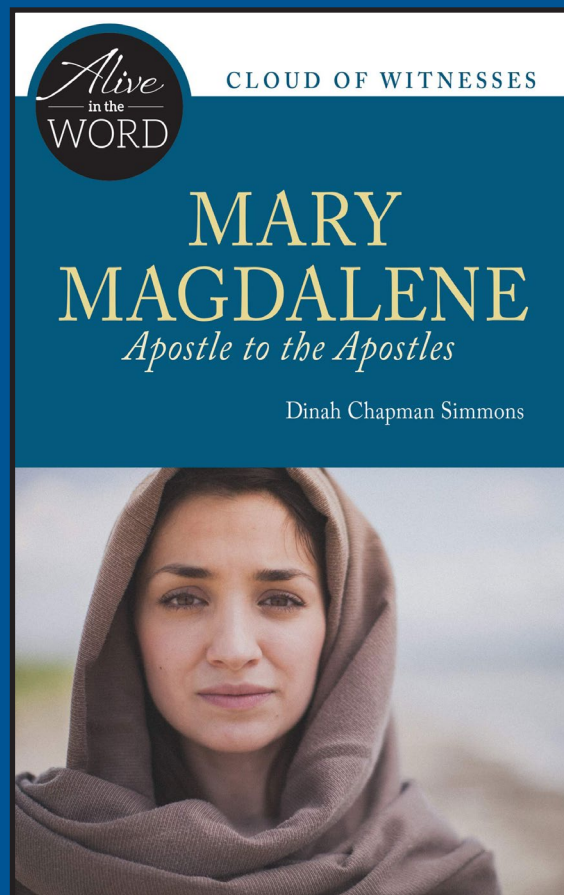
Discipleship Groups are hosted throughout the year. Groups pick a topic of study that is based on adult faith formation. Saint Benedict Parish has a library of materials, with a plethora of content to choose from.

If you have not yet had the experience of a Discipleship Group, your chance is coming! Each year, Saint Benedict Parish launches a parish-wide initiative with a recommendation for specific content. All

members are encouraged to partake in at least one group annually to take our faith journey beyond the pews and make a step towards growth. This parish-wide initiative is an opportunity to ensure all our members are growing in faith together.

This Lent, Discipleship Groups will feature *Mary Magdalene, Apostle to the Apostles*, a recently published book written by

Saint Benedict Parish's Worship & Sacraments Coordinator, Dinah Simmons. Through this book, we can reflect on Mary Magdalene's position as a disciple of Jesus, from the time of his public ministry to encountering him as the risen Lord.



Two options are available for taking part in a Discipleship Group this Lent. Firstly, you can assemble some friends and host a group in a welcoming location of your choosing, such as your home. Or secondly, the parish will also be hosting morning and evening groups on

Wednesdays, starting March 13th.

Visit saintbenedict.ca/discipleshipgroups to learn more about Discipleship Groups. Or connect with Catherine Gould (catherineg@saintbenedict.ca), the Discipleship Group Coordinator, for more information. 🙏



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TURNING POINTS



Peter Mallette
Bene Dictus Team

In the past 27 months, Lauren Goodyear has experienced two major turning points.

The first one occurred on a cold evening in November 2016 when Lauren, then 20, was hit and dragged by a vehicle while out jogging not far from her home in Bedford.

“When the car finally stopped, I was pinned under it. I remember laying on the pavement and praying for the first time in a very long time. I thanked God that I was still alive and asked Him to help me through the next few minutes, because I knew I couldn’t do it alone.”

Lauren says that because of all the pain and suffering in the world, she had decided there most likely was not a God. That changed the night of her accident. Lauren says God showed up for her in the love she experienced.

“My mother, my father, my family, my friends, and my entire health care team. It was a beautiful, personal love, and it changed me.”

Lauren says the accident started her on an entirely different path. It had been a very long time since she had been to church, and she asked her mother if she’d accompany her to Sunday Mass at Saint Benedict Parish. Then, almost exactly a year after the accident, Lauren’s second turning point occurred when she accepted an invitation to attend Alpha.


“I was very nervous showing up to my first week of Alpha. It had been a while since I was involved in anything remotely Christian. I didn’t know what to expect, but as I listened to people’s beautiful stories of how they let Jesus into their lives, I was struck by how He

never failed to show up for them.”

The most profound moment of Lauren’s Alpha experience was the night she was prayed over by Fr. Alex.

“As he prayed over me, he said that God wanted me to know that as I was calling out for help that night, and fearing that I was going to die because no one could hear me, that He was there with me the whole time. That has been such a beautiful, powerful, and healing thing to hold on to. I was always curious to know if God was there that night. Alpha helped me find my answer.”

Lauren is studying neuroscience at Dalhousie University. Because she missed so much time after the accident, she will complete her degree in five years instead of four. In the meantime, she is an executive volunteer with Greater Love and started her third Alpha in January, where she is co-hosting a group.

“Alpha has shown me real life examples of people who have beautiful relationships with Jesus. That’s made me believe in the possibility that I can have one of those relationships, too. It has also helped me turn to Jesus for healing, not just from my accident, but to also rely on Him to point me in the right direction when I forget where my worth truly lies. Jesus showed up for me at Alpha and I know that if you let Him in, He’ll show up for you, too.” 



Connect Groups

Alpha Team



Ministry



Discipleship
Groups



Alpha



Invitational
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forms disciples who
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Worship



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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 - DECEMBER 2018

PARISH DEBT REDUCTION	REC'D	TOTAL	AVG
ENVELOPES	170	\$5,409	\$31.82
PAR (PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE)	62	\$3,212	see note
MORTGAGE BALANCE (AS OF MONTH END)		\$487,796	
INTEREST PAID (ON MORTGAGE)		\$1,878	
PRINCIPAL PAID (ON MORTGAGE)		\$9,559	
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	1,656	\$62,177	\$37.55
PAR (PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE)	405	\$55,498	see note
Note: PAR options include weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly withdrawals; therefore a weekly average is unavailable.			



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