

**CELEBRATING
10 YEARS
OF WORSHIP AT
SAINT BENEDICT PARISH**

**This booklet was produced on May 16th, 2020,
to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Saint Benedict Parish.**

These pages honour some of the history and the beautiful art that lift our minds and hearts to God in this sacred place of worship. This church is a tangible representation of the faith that existed in three communities, who had the courage to come together and, in turn, bless future generations. This symbolic building has since fostered a healthy and growing faith community where thousands have come to encounter Jesus, grow as His disciples, and be commissioned to transform the world. This concise booklet was inspired by the tireless efforts of Frank LeBlanc who compiled a longer guidebook, as a historical keepsake. Special thanks to Fr. Bernie O'Neill and the entire team of dedicated lay leaders who collaborated to make the dream of Saint Benedict Parish a reality. The story is just beginning...





A Historical Review: 1760-2010

CATHOLICISM IN ROCKINGHAM AND FAIRVIEW

Historical records show the beginnings of a Roman Catholic community in the Rockingham area around 1760, worshipping in a small chapel near what is now Kearney Lake Road and Dakin Drive. The congregation was made up of local Mi'kmaq people, ministered to by the missionary Abbe Pierre Maillard, and a small group of Acadians who settled west nearby. At the time, Catholics were not allowed to worship within Halifax's city limits, so many would come to the chapel for Mass. Later, Mass was celebrated in the Dutch Village-Fairview area, beginning around 1771.

The path was set for Saint Benedict Parish when, in June of 1986, Fr. John Campbell of Our Lady of Perpetual Help convened a meeting to discuss the building of a new church. In 1988 Archbishop James Hayes called the parish councils of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Pius X, and St. Lawrence Martyr Parishes together to speak of the need for consolidation. A year later, land was designated by the Archdiocese for a new church. In August 2006, Archbishop Terrence Prendergast gave his support for the construction of a new church in the area. Fr. Bernie O'Neill was given the responsibility to build the new faith community and erect a building to serve it.

At the beginning of 2007, it was agreed that a new church be built on the corner of Dunbrack Street and Radcliffe Drive.



EXTERIOR AND GROUNDS

Elements of the three parishes which made up the new Saint Benedict Parish (Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Pius X, St. Lawrence Martyr) were incorporated into the design of the building, both inside and out.

Bell Tower

A bell tower was built to house the bell from St. Lawrence Martyr Parish. Engraved on it in Latin is: *"I am the bell announcing the sanctity of the people."*

Statues

1. Saint Benedict
2. Our Lady of Perpetual Help - *from the garden at Our Lady of Perpetual Help*
3. Cross facing Dunbrack Street - *from St. Pius X*
4. St. Lawrence Statue - *from the garden at St. Lawrence Martyr's Rectory*



1



2



3



4



INTERIOR

Foyer

On one side of the main doors are windows depicting the original mission of the Church – beginning with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and continuing with the Church’s great missionary - St. Paul. On the other side are images representing the authority of the Church - St. Peter, and Pope Gregory.

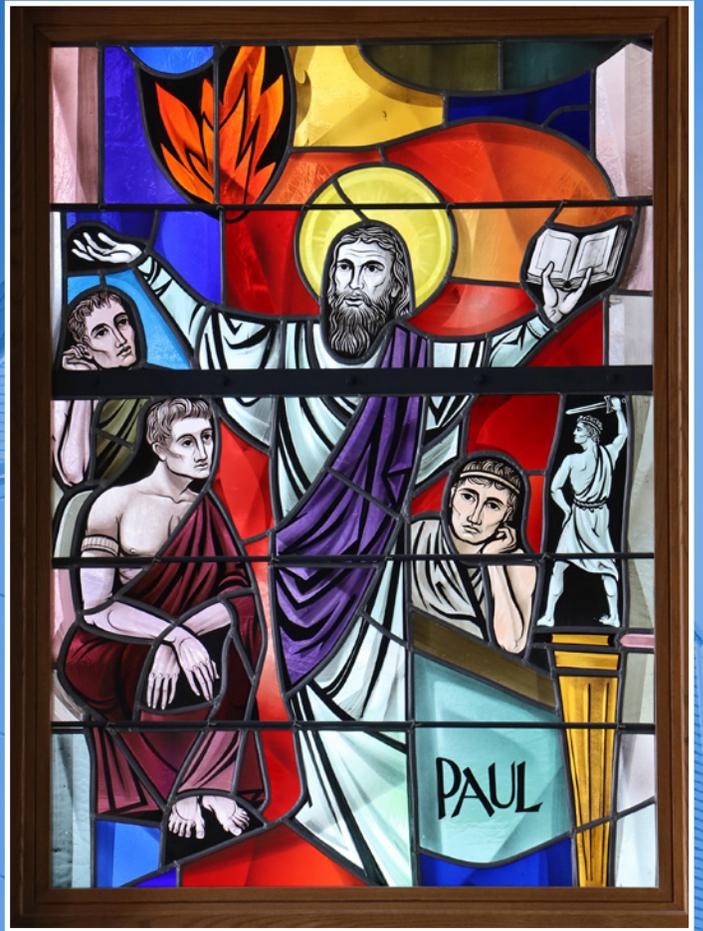


Bridge

The church’s entrance leads to the bridge. It bridges the gap between the world outside and the sanctuary within.

Tree of Life

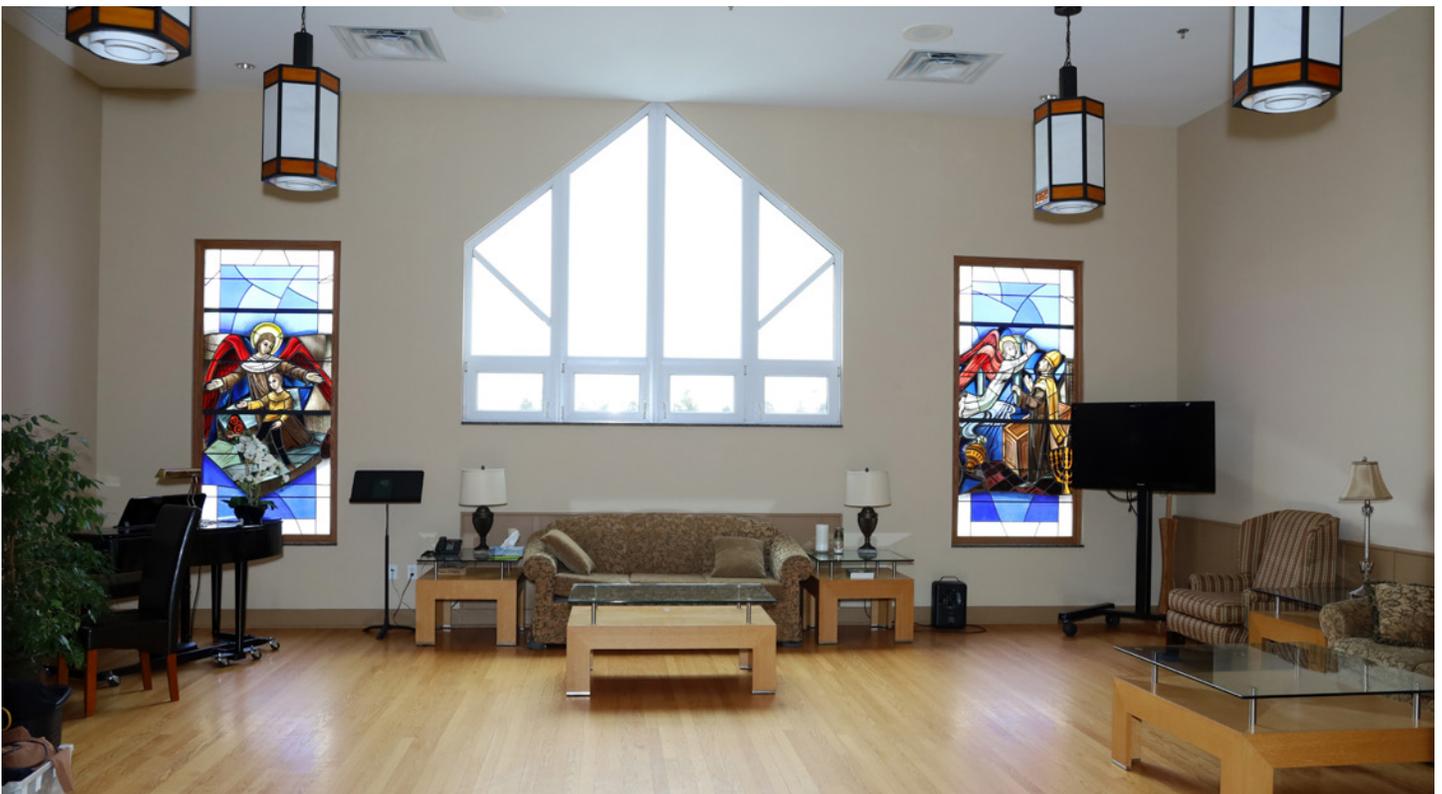
Inlaid on the floor of the foyer is the Tree of Life. It comes from Revelation 22:14, *“Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates.”*





Resurrection Cross

The Oblate Fathers were running St. Lawrence Martyr Parish when construction of their nave (the main body of the church) was completed in 1971. This wooden crucifix, depicting the risen Jesus with open arms, comes from St. Lawrence Martyr Parish.



St. Joseph Room

Even some of the rooms at Saint Benedict Parish are made with material from our former parishes: the hardwood floor and wood panelling of the St. Joseph Room were made from the pews at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.



The stained glass windows, originally from Mount Saint Vincent Motherhouse, depict scenes like the Annunciation and the Angel appearing to St. Joseph in a dream. Sections were added to the top and bottom of the stained glass to make them fit better with the windows.

The statue of St. Joseph comes from the Mount Saint Vincent Motherhouse and was originally in Evaristus Hall.



Paintings

On the lower level of the parish, in the Cana area, three paintings hang on the wall. Each is a depiction of one of the three churches that came together to form Saint Benedict Parish. There is also a painting of the Korean Martyrs.



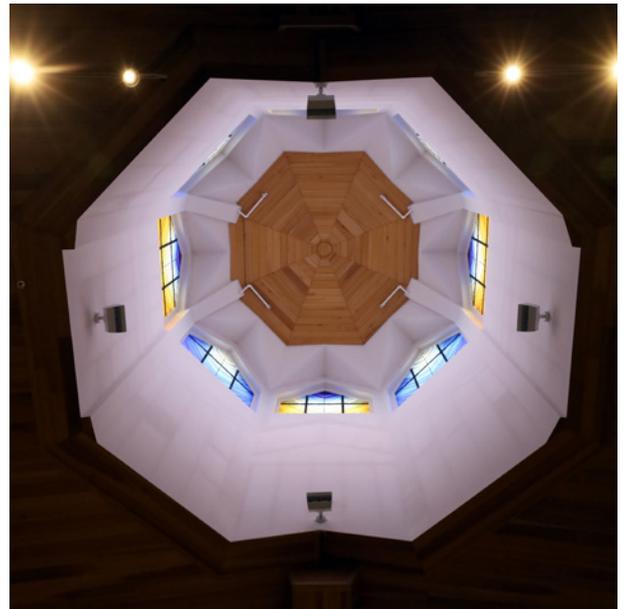
Baptismal Font

Our baptismal font is made of re-purposed marble that came from the altar rail at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish. Like most churches, it is located at the entrance of the church, as baptism is the entry point of our faith.



Icon

On the wall next to the baptismal font is a glass icon of a dove representing the descent of the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit comes to dwell inside of us when we receive the Sacrament of Baptism.



Cupola

The cupola, located above the Sanctuary, is strategically placed to bring light into the church. The cupola windows were designed to be a welcoming beacon, bringing to mind Psalm 119:105, *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."*



Rose Windows

The East Rose Window

This rose window is on the back wall above the altar, and it acts as the centrepiece of the mural on the wall. The red and purple flowing from the left side and the golden wheat represent the Eucharist (the Body and Blood of Christ).

The West Rose Window

The flames represent the fire of the Holy Spirit. Just as we encounter the Eucharist when we enter the church itself and see the East Rose Window, we see the fire of the Holy Spirit burn as we leave to spread the Good News in our community.



Wheat Mosaic

The wheat mosaic (located on the floor of the centre aisle) symbolizes the Eucharist, our food for the journey. Jesus uses wheat as a symbol for believers in the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13. Throughout the church, you can see that the colour of the floor tiles becomes lighter as you approach the altar, where we encounter God.



Pews

When St. Joseph Parish was closed in 2006, its pews were put in storage. When Saint Benedict Parish was being built, they were made available to the parish. Before they were installed, they were completely refurbished by Atlantic Institutional Furniture and Pews, who also had them modified to fit our building. Even though our building is now 10 years old, the pews are 54 years old!



Ambo and Altar

Both the ambo (where the Word of God is proclaimed) and the altar come from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish. They are both made of dark red and white marble, and their design shows the close connection between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Prayer Wall

Our prayer wall is modelled after the Western Wall in Jerusalem. The Western Wall is all that remains of the great Jewish Temple, and it is considered by the Jewish people to be one of the most sacred places on earth, as the Temple was where God dwelt. Our church, like the Temple, is also a special dwelling place for God.



Chapel

The four stained glass windows in the chapel represent the seasons of life.



CRUCIFIXION
DESSENT FROM THE CROSS
RESURRECTION

Crucifixion Triptych

The style of the artwork of this triptych (a three-panelled piece of artwork) is based on Russian iconography, but it also features some contemporary styling. Part of the wood used came from a former cathedral in New Brunswick.

Some of the followers of Jesus are depicted at the foot of the Cross. Mary and some of the women are on the left. John is on the right with the soldier who proclaimed, *"Truly this man was the Son of God!"*



Icon of the Annunciation

The wood that the icon sits on comes from St. Lawrence Martyr Parish, along with material from the same former cathedral in New Brunswick as the triptych.



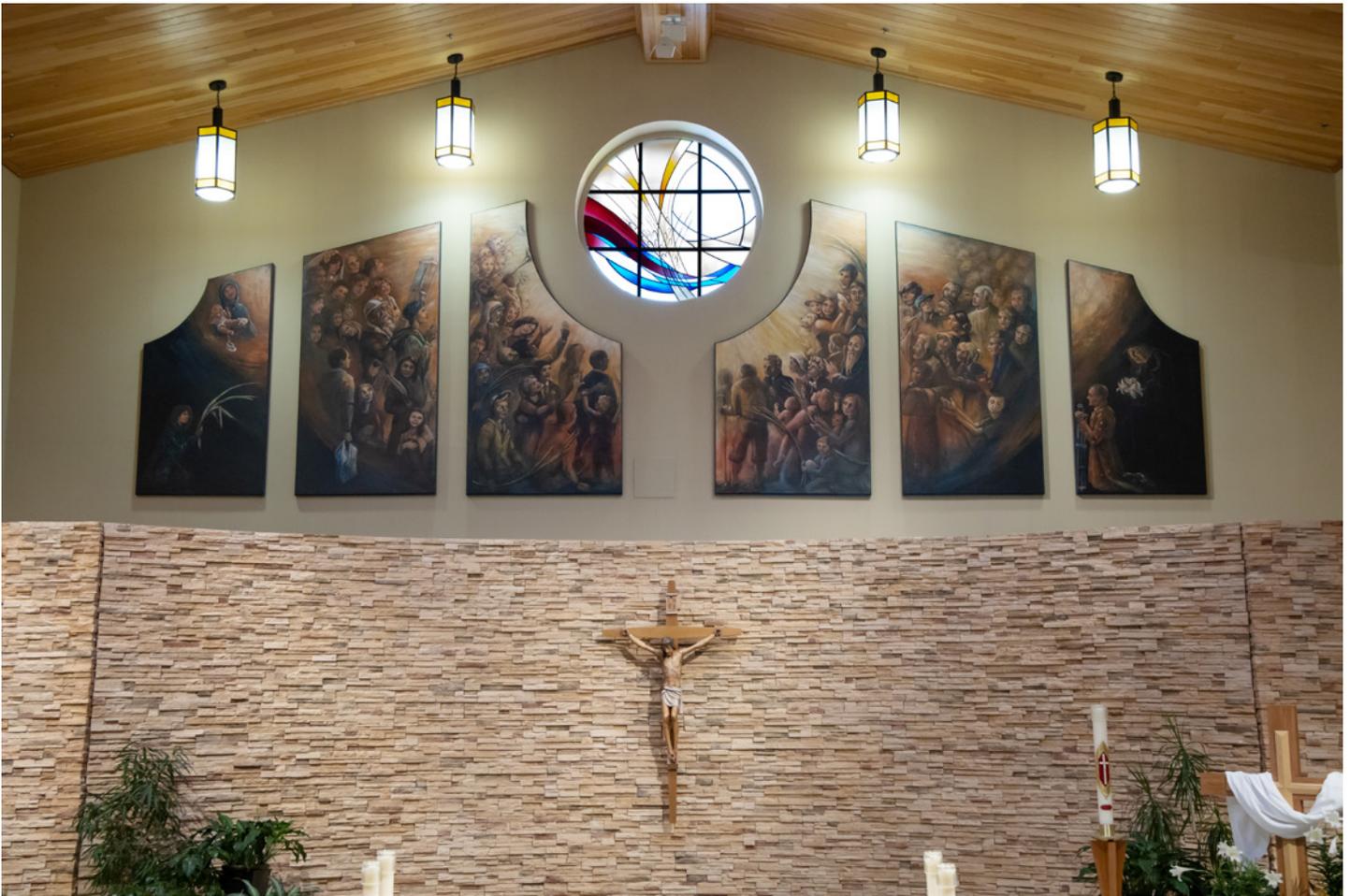
Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross at Saint Benedict Parish come from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish. They were carved in Italy in 1967.

As the Stations progress, Christ's robe begins in tones of red which gradually intensify.

Good Friday Cross

Used for veneration on Good Friday, this cross is made of oak, but it is hollowed out to reduce weight. It was stained to match the colour of the pews.



Mural

The figures in the mural panels represent both saints and people from all nations of the world. Among the figures represented are Saint Benedict, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. André of Montreal, St. Teresa of Calcutta, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Pius X, St. Lawrence, and others.

The panels were made with the ashes of burnt palms from the three parishes that came together to make up Saint Benedict Parish. It was created by Renee Forrestall and Nick Webb.



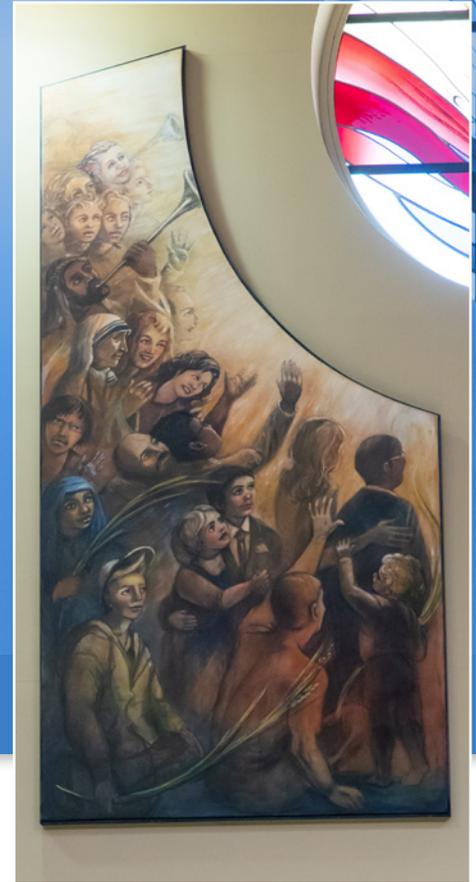
1st Panel

Our Lady of Perpetual Help with Jesus and Mary Magdalene with broken palms, crushed reeds.



2nd Panel

Bride, Doctor, Construction Worker, Mi'kmaq woman with an eagle feather, pregnant woman.



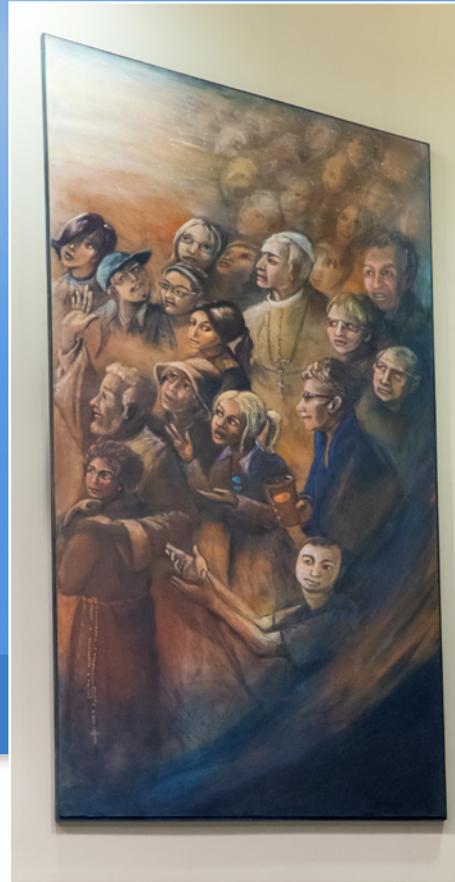
3rd Panel

St. Teresa of Calcutta, St. Pio of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio), Nun (in blue habit), young couple



4th Panel

St. Andre of Montreal assisting
an elderly person, Saint Benedict,
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton



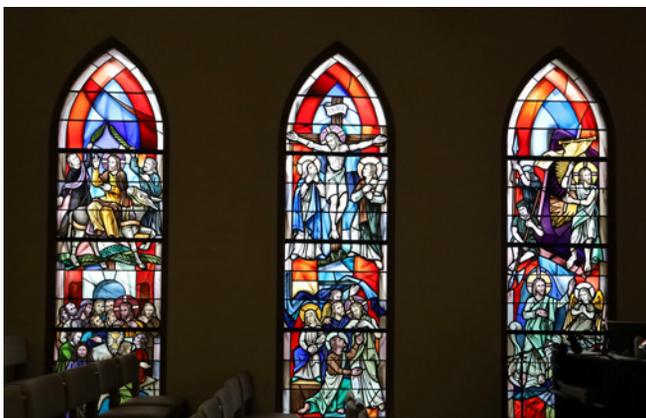
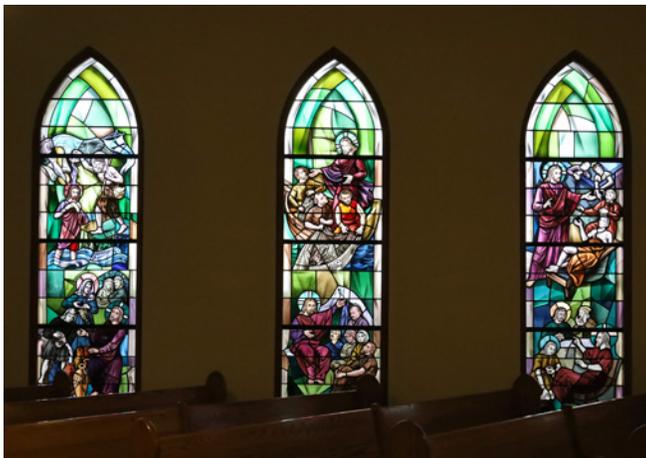
5th Panel

St. Pius X, Fr. Bernie O'Neill,
Franciscans



6th Panel

St. Lawrence



Stained Glass

Many of the stained glass windows at the parish come from the Mount Saint Vincent Motherhouse. They were originally created in New Jersey in 1958. In the church, the windows are grouped in three sets of three. The first three depict scenes from Jesus' infancy.

The next three feature moments from Jesus' public ministry.

The final three show key moments from Holy Week and Easter.



Our Patron

Saint Benedict of Nursia (c. 480 AD – c. 543 AD)

Benedict founded twelve monastic communities at Subiaco, Lazio, Italy before moving to Monte Cassino in the mountains of southern Italy.

Benedict's main achievement is his Rule of Saint Benedict, containing precepts for his monks. It has a unique spirit of balance, moderation and reasonableness, which persuaded most religious communities founded throughout the Middle Ages to adopt it. As a result, Benedict is regarded as the Father of Western Christian Monasticism.

Benedict is depicted in the two stained glass windows in the reconciliation rooms. He is shown with a book and a shovel, representing the famous precept of his rule: 'Ora et Labora' (pray and work).

The bird represents his softer side; it is said that a bird would come from the neighbouring woods to be fed by Benedict daily at dinnertime.

The thorn bush alludes to his ability to resist temptation and live an austere existence.

The image of the broken glass refers to a time when he was almost poisoned when offered something to drink; he blessed the glass and it broke before he could drink the poison.





**Let us turn to our patron, for his intercession, for the next 10 years.
May we continue forward as a parish that worships God and is focused on the mission of Jesus.
Saint Benedict, pray for us!**