

SAINT BENEDICTUS



PHOTO: ADELE BEATON

p. 9
FAREWELL, DAN RAMOS

p. 11
REACHING THE WORLD

SAINT BENEDICT PARISH

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

SUNDAY MASS

*Public liturgies suspended until
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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.

The next issue of the Bene Dictus will be released on the weekend of July 11th/12th.

On the cover:

A sunny day at Saint Benedict Parish.

SAINT BENEDICT PARISH CLERGY

Pastor: Fr. Simon Lobo, CC

Associate Pastor: Fr. Alex Colautti, CC

Permanent Deacon: Deacon David Viscount

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BENE DICTUS - June 2020



FATHER SIMON SAYS...



Fr. Simon Lobo, CC

Pastor

CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

Over the last few weeks, there has been a worldwide response to the tragic and violent death of George Floyd. I am deeply saddened by all of these events. Let me be clear that there is no room for discrimination at our parish, and especially not because of race. I encourage people of all backgrounds to get involved, as that is the best way for your rich heritage to bless our parish and vice versa. Please try Alpha, lead or join a Life Group, and step up to serve in a ministry.

We are praying for anyone who has been the victim of racism, whether overt or subtle. If you are carrying any shame from how you have been wrongly treated, please know that you were created in God's image, and, as a result, you have intrinsic value as a person. You are loved!

THE PH-UTURE IS PHY-GITAL

We recently gathered leaders on a video call for an online Leadership Summit. I was able to celebrate some wins that were only possible because we've been exclusively online. These include launching online Alpha, international Life Groups, SBPkids Online Church, Steubenville Online, and significantly increasing the reach and the quality of our Sunday Livestream worship experience thanks to Divine Renovation Ministry. Please pray for the impact Divine Renovation is having globally, and especially for the church leaders who would have been in Halifax this week for the DR20 conference.

My one key takeaway from the Leadership Summit was this: **"The Ph-uture is Phy-gital!"** The future of our parish, even when we reopen our doors, is going to be both physical and digital. During this pandemic, we've learned people are hungry, and we're barely starting to reach the

Continued on next page...

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FATHER SIMON SAYS **continued**

potential of what's possible online. We want to be the kind of parish that can reach your loved ones - your children, grandchildren, and friends - who don't know Jesus and don't go to church. Chances are that they are online, and we are going to go to them!

This year at Pentecost, 45 people said, "I began following Jesus." Let's pray for these new disciples and all of the others whose lives have been transformed by God in the last year. As I said on our 10th anniversary, **"A Parish is a People with a Purpose."**

BITTERSWEET SEND-OFFS

After almost six years, Rob McDowell is departing the staff team to respond to a call to plant a church in Lower Sackville that is connected to Cornerstone Wesleyan. Since I arrived at the parish, Rob has personally invested so much in me. He has expanded my thinking and focused my preaching. There will be an article in the July Bene Dictus to celebrate Rob.

Dan Ramos, our seminarian intern from this past year, has won our hearts and shared some of his tremendous gifts with us as a parish. In addition to being very balanced and good at just about everything, Dan has a particular gift for communicating. Also, his cooking skills have kept us Companions priests alive through this pandemic. You can hear from Dan on page 9.

Losing both of these fine men at the same time leaves a significant hole in our team. Earlier in the year, we were looking to hire a Managing Director, which was put on hold when the pandemic began. As a way to respond to our immediate need, we will begin the process to hire a Project Manager on a contract basis. Finally, we are rebuilding and refocusing a 'COVID Parish Pastoral Council'

to assist us with vision and strategic thinking in this season.

QUESTIONS ABOUT REOPENING

As we hear of other places around the world and across Canada that are starting to lift restrictions, you might be wondering, "When can we go back to church?" Unfortunately, the answer to that question is still uncertain. We will continue to follow the guidelines of the province, the health authorities, and those of our Archdiocese. I had the honour of being on a recent video call with Dr. Strang, Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Officer. Firstly, I can assure you that he is very intelligent and humble. He is a man of faith, and when asked how we can pray for him, he asked that God would give him wisdom to lead well. Together with his team, he is recommending a more cautious approach to re-opening than other places.

Though we are through the worst of the first wave, a second wave of the virus could come in the Fall or Winter. We might see some restrictions lifting over the summer, but it seems unlikely that we will have gatherings of 150-200 people, let alone 500-600 (as we would see at a typical weekend Mass), for a long time. Dr. Strang said that we would be living some form of this reality for the next year or two. This is hard to accept, as so many of us yearn to be back together in our church building, receiving the sacraments again.

If the catch phrase in the early weeks was that we are living in **'unprecedented times'**, the catch phrase for the last few weeks has been a call to adapt to **'the new normal'**. Thank you for your faithfulness. Know of my prayers as we continue forward in this phy-gital reality.



BEING SEEN



Lori MacDonald
Ora Ministry

This reflection is for next Sunday's Gospel, Matthew 10:26-33.

How do you feel about being seen? Like, really seen? You wouldn't be alone if you confess that it makes you squirm a little.

Adam covered himself (Genesis 3:7). Peter covered himself (John 21:7). Before I ugly-cry, I cover myself. I heard someone say recently that God put tear ducts in our eyes so that our pain may be seen eye-to-eye. We are meant to see and be seen.

When we are before our Lord, covering up is not simply an act of respect or decency. Withholding our pain from Him, and from others, is not martyrdom. It is an act of hiddenness—perhaps even mistrust, uncertainty, insecurity. All of creation, with the exception of humanity, glorifies God by its very being. Would the birds of the air cover themselves before Him? The fish of the sea? Any living thing that breathes? They wouldn't, because they can't help but serve their Creator by operating out of their chosen design. They have nothing to hide. We, though, are the fallen.

I have found this season to be a time of uncovering. I love Jesus—there's no denying that. But over the course of the last few months, I have found myself wrestling with aspects of my faith. On one particular day, I was so dispirited by my circumstances, I threw on my running shoes, and though it was cold and the rain poured down, I hit the

road. I ran hard and fast (for an out-of-shape middle-aged woman who has no business running in the first place). I ran until I had to stop to breathe—and then, I cried. I didn't simply cry tears, I cried out to God. I shook my fists at Him. I told Him in no uncertain terms that I was feeling so lost, I was on the edge of faithlessness. And then, I listened. And as I listened, I heard... nothing. Furious at His unresponsiveness, I continued running back to my house—sad, soaked, and cynical. I was able to sleep that night, though, and I soon experienced an overwhelming peace—even joy. I had finally uncovered my heart, and Jesus responded through grace upon grace from that day forward.



Could it be purity of soul, then, that He is calling me to, here? He designed my being—mind, body, and soul—to glorify Him. I cannot do this in deceit, under cover. I cannot glorify Him if my relationship with Him is severed

through my own inauthenticity.

Pouring out my heart, my honest-to-goodness heart, to God emptied me of more of my hidden layers, my secret self. And as I poured myself out to Him, all that remained was an empty vessel. This vessel of emptiness, of openness, is His intended design for us so that we may be positioned to receive Him. Because it is only in receiving Him that we can be fully integrated into our intended state of purity.

Be seen, my friends. Be pure.

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

PRAISE & WORSHIP NIGHT

JOIN US ONLINE:
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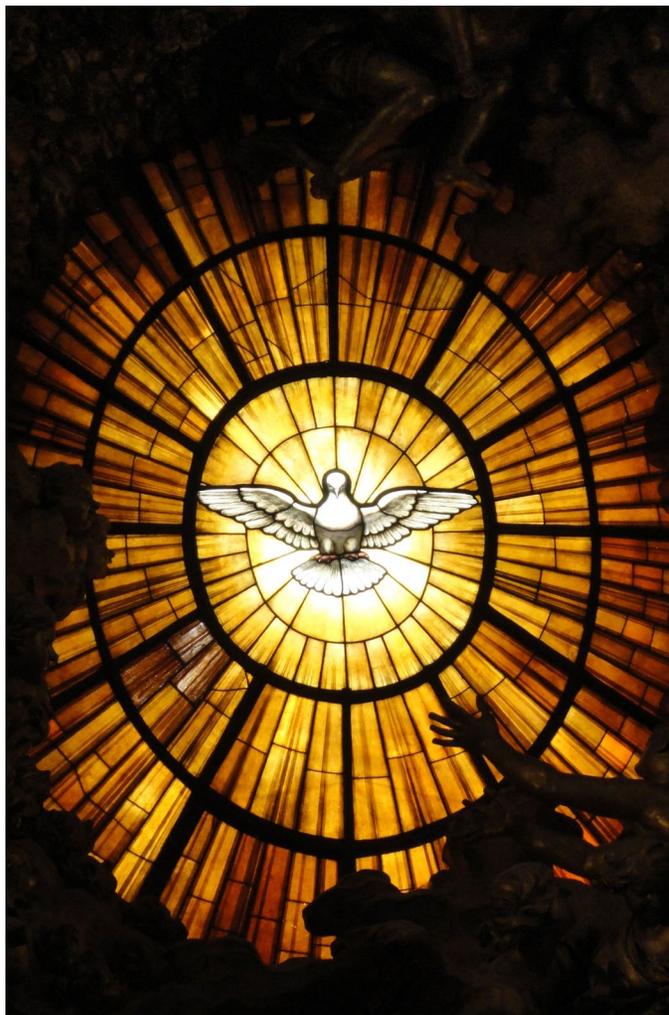
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THE PARACLETE



John Rae
Bene Dictus Team

Over my lifetime, I have lived inside various spiritualities, and just prior to being received into the Catholic Church in 2012, I had spent 20 years exploring the land of ‘modern’ spirituality. In that world, the notion of the search for the truth was put on the back burner, and instead what was cooked up and served was a buffet containing various offerings of religious diversity. The table manners were structured to ensure that it was the spirit of fraternity that animated our interactions. Traditional Christians were accused of having an unhealthy interest in the truth, in the claims of Christ.



It is significant that one of the names of the Holy Spirit given in the New Testament is an ordinary Greek word that means ‘the lawyer for the defence’; the Paraclete. When you think about it, before you need a defence lawyer, you first must be accused of something. In the process of acting and speaking on your behalf, the defence lawyer is attempting to ‘enlighten’ your accuser as to the false nature of their accusations, and to hopefully trigger an act of repentance on their part. “When the Spirit of truth [the Paraclete] comes, he will guide you into the full truth”, (John 16:13). For in labouring under their false perception of reality, your accusers “... know not what they do,” (Luke 23:34).

In Matthew 5:11, Jesus says, “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.” If they revile you because you are a bit of a jerk, that is one thing, but if you are reviled because of your faith in Christ, that is another. Our bearing the cross of a false accusation can be the means of our accuser’s salvation. Think of those first Christians who facilitated St. Paul’s conversion from accuser to apostle. In this way, our sufferings are joined to the sufferings of Christ.

In Luke 9:22, Jesus says, “It is necessary for the Son of Man to suffer many things, and to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and on the third day to be raised.” Christ, through his Passion, enlightens us to and frees us from our bondage to the falsehoods of evil, and he turns the Paraclete loose on the world. Whatever false declarations that may have been directed at Christ’s Church during this pandemic will hopefully bring the Paraclete even more business. 

STAFF PROFILE: BILL



Matt Vaughan
Communications Coordinator

Each month we'll be featuring a profile on one 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. This month, we're featuring Bill Scollard.

What's your job at the parish?

Bill: I lead Life Groups at Saint Benedict Parish.

What staff team are you on?

I'm on the Community and Growth Team.

How long have you worked at Saint Benedict Parish?

I've been here about 2.5 years, since September 2017.

What does your job entail?

We are currently in the process of aggressively expanding our Life Groups to allow more of our parishioners to experience the benefits of living in an authentic Christian community. As our Life Groups grow, we need to build the back-of-the-house, which includes all the processes and infrastructure to make sure we can effectively take care of everyone. This involves many of the different functions at Saint Benedict Parish all working together, since we are all connected to the multitude of steps

we are taking on our faith journeys.

What's a typical week look like for you?

Since the beginning of the pandemic, there really hasn't been anything typical about any of our weeks, which has been challenging, yet very exciting! The immediate challenge from Fr. Simon was to keep our church open, even if our doors were shut. An incredible thing happened, and the Holy Spirit blessed us beyond our wildest dreams. He has opened our eyes to new opportunities to bring people to know Jesus. We need to continue to be completely open to hear His voice and be bold to act. The Holy Spirit never wavered from the mission,



and He expects us to do the same.

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

I worked for Alexander Keith's Brewery (a small arm of the global beer company AB InBev) for 26 years in a variety of sales and marketing roles. Seven years ago I found my faith, and soon after that I walked through the doors of Saint Benedict Parish for the first time. Four years ago I was offered a full-time position at Saint Benedict and, through a truly remarkable series of events that could only have been orchestrated by God, I retired early to accept a full time position at Saint Benedict.

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

I am blessed to serve in an environment where I get a front row seat to witness people falling in love with Jesus, who changes their lives forever!

Do you have a favourite memory



from your time working here?

In my time at Saint Benedict, I have had many incredible memories witnessing Jesus working in and through others. If I was forced to choose one, it would have to be my daughter Gabby giving her first talk at Alpha. Gabby found her faith just a few years prior, and to witness her sharing her faith story to 100+ people at Alpha was a moment I couldn't have imagined just a few years earlier. God is SO good!

What do you like to do outside of work?

I like playing tennis, reading, and baking. 🍷

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FAREWELL, DAN RAMOS



Taya Vaci
Bene Dictus Team

Ten months ago, I had the honour of interviewing

Dan Ramos for the October 2019 issue of the Bene Dictus. You'll remember that Dan was a seminarian coming to Saint Benedict Parish for his internship. Approximately halfway through their time in Seminary, students pause from their studies and spend a year serving in a parish. Saint Benedict Parish was Dan's first choice parish to intern for, and he was eager to come. Now that Dan's internship is complete at the end of June, I connected with him once again to reflect on his time at the parish.

Do you have a favorite moment from Saint Benedict that stands out?

DAN: One that I absolutely loved was the parish mission. On the third night of the mission, parishioners were randomly paired up with prayer partners and encouraged to try an exercise in hearing God's voice in the form of a prophetic word. The words my partner shared were spot on. When other parishioners were asked how many of them were responsive to what their partner had shared, more than half of the group raised their hands. Right in front of our eyes, in a concrete way, God was speaking. To see in the people's faces how real it was, how their faith was being built up right in front of



me was incredible.

What have you learned during your time at Saint Benedict?

What I'm taking away is that everything we do is all about conversion, all about people coming to know Jesus. Being in ministry, immersed in the culture of Saint Benedict, you get to see firsthand people coming to Jesus. I wish all parishes were "on fire" like Saint Benedict Parish, and now I have a true vision of what all parishes are supposed to be like.

In seminary, you live in community with other seminary students. What was it like to live with four priests?

In Detroit, where the seminary is, there are about 15-25 men living together as a community. This year was a really joyful, life-giving time. I was blessed that all five of us got along so well and enjoyed each other's company, it took no effort to live together. We all love being around each other, hanging out, and praying together.

It was such a healthy place to be and it felt like I was a member from the get-go.

Now that the internship is complete, what does the next chapter look like for you?

Coming into this internship, I knew my time at the parish would be ending in June. The usual next step is that I would return to the seminary in the Fall to complete two more years of theology studies before ordination to the priesthood. However, being a seminarian is an ongoing discernment. And at this time, I've decided that, when my internship concludes, I will be stepping away from seminary formation and will be taking my vocational discernment in a different direction. I sense that this is the next step that God is asking me to take, and I know that nothing will satisfy me more than doing God's will. I am very peaceful about this decision, but there is a natural difficulty in transitioning to a new path. I ask that you pray for me, that I will continue to have a heart that is surrendered and engaged with what the Lord is doing, that I continue to trust in His process. I will keep praying for you all, for the reach of the parish to extend and bring more people to Jesus.

Do you have a message you would

like to share with the Saint Benedict parishioners?

I want to give a huge thank you to the parish community! It makes me sad to say goodbye for the foreseeable future, but I'm so grateful to this parish. This has been such a heartwarming and a consoling experience. Right away I never saw myself as being a visiting seminarian, I immediately felt that I was a part of this parish. You are my family. I see you that way and thank you for seeing me that way. To be able to say that I am family to the famous Saint Benedict Parish is something I'm going to brag about for the rest of my life.

Do you still think that West Coast = best coast?

I admit that I still love the West Coast, but I have such a heart for the East Coast. This is my second home. The place is beautiful, but really, it's the people that are amazing! In a heartbeat I would live here if God called me to. 🇺🇸



Rafah Di Costanzo
MLA - CLAYTON PARK WEST

397 Bedford Hwy. (902) 443 8318
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Matt Kerrigan
Bene Dictus Team

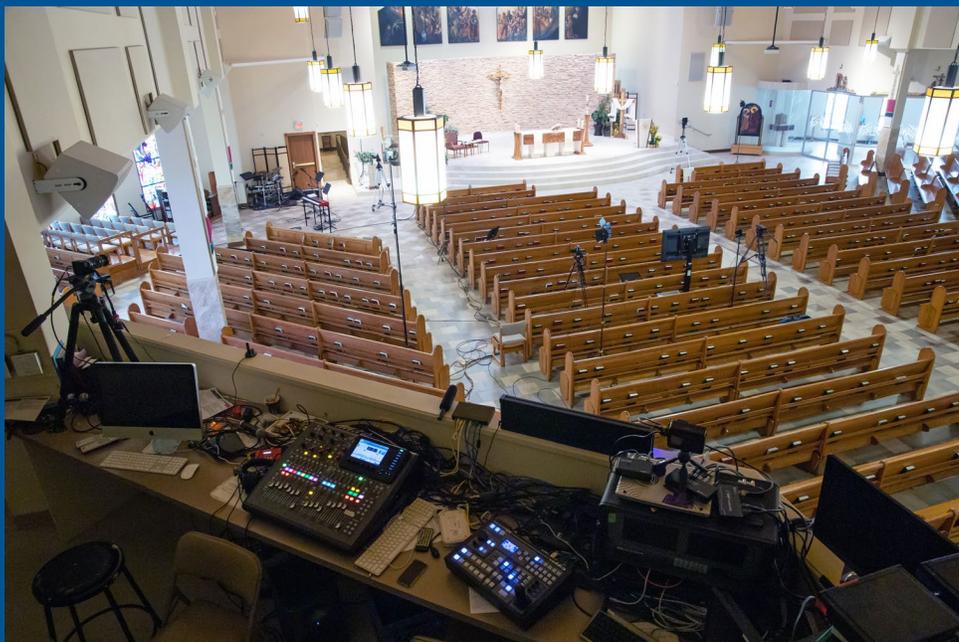
Until the middle of March, the Livestream broadcast of the 9am Sunday Mass from Saint Benedict Parish was a means for parishioners who were away from home or not physically able to attend Mass to join digitally for worship, as well as a way for new people to check out Mass. Then, with the outbreak of COVID-19, we were all not able to physically attend Mass. In that moment, Livestream Mass went from being a convenience for some to being a necessity for all of us.

Over the past three months, this weekly broadcast has undergone a



transformation. In the past, Mass was filmed using four wall-mounted cameras with limited mobility. Now, our Sunday Mass has taken on all of the production values of a major television studio. There are now seven cameras, three of them with a complete mobility, which can create more intimate and engaging shots. Inside the church,

cables snake their way over pews and up aisles. Large spotlights are placed to enhance the picture quality. Large screen TV monitors are strategically placed to give visual feedback to the presider and homilist. In the production booth, extra computers allow smooth switching. There are pre-taped video segments with a familiar host that



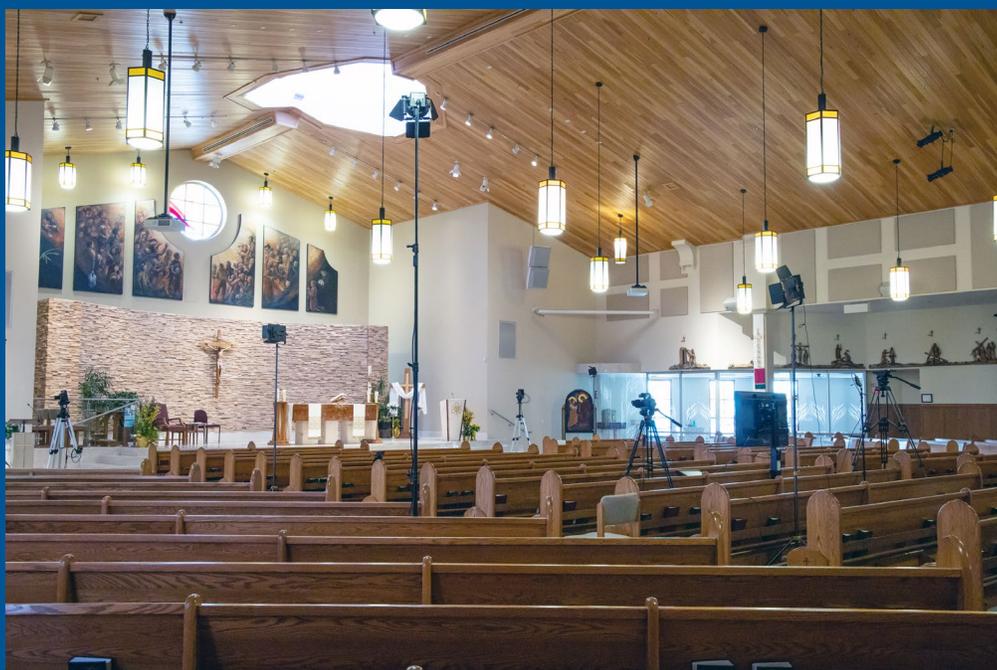
opens the broadcast with essential information. All of this results in a very professional presentation.

Peter Salah, our parish's AV Coordinator, is the key person who pulls all this together week after week. Peter is an engineer who is balancing working from home during the pandemic with many hours preparing and coordinating the team that produces our livestream events. Peter shared some time with me recently to talk about ramping up the Livestream to its current status.

He emphasized that it is a team that puts the broadcast together. Each job is as important as any other. Sometimes team members switch from one role to another. Fortunately, this team came together with a wealth of technical experience from doing years of Livestream Mass at Saint Benedict.

Matt Vaughan, Communications Coordinator for the parish, prepares the pre-Mass announcement slides as well as the notes for hosting. Along with Matt, Kate Robinson, Corey Robinson, and Noreen Smith have all had turns at being congenial welcoming Livestream Hosts. They also double as

lectors and keep the hospitality going at the end of Mass in the Digital Foyer. The Digital Foyer has become a popular interactive feature. Fr. Simon, Fr. Alex, and Deacon David (if he gives the homily) chat with the host and respond to questions and comments that come in through the chat. In the Digital Foyer, viewers get to see our clergy as people; to enjoy their wit, humour, and dedication to the parish community.



On the technical side, Mike McAllister and Kelly Bray take turns operating the switching computer and slide sequencer in the booth. Divine Renovation Ministry (DR) has been a generous and essential partner in producing the Mass. Paul Lang and Nathan Myatt from DR handle the audio feeds and camera with Peter. All these folks do their magic unseen to us

Continued on next page...

while maintaining social distances and health protocols.

There is a run through of the homily on Saturday afternoon. This rehearsal allows anticipation of camera angles and the sequencing of slides. At 7:30am on Sunday, Peter does a physical equipment check. By 7:45, it is all hands on deck. Each person is in their location doing final preparations. At 8:45, all participants meet in the foyer for a final briefing. They pray together for technical and spiritual success. Then, things start rolling.

I asked Peter about technical challenges that may crop up during a broadcast. He mentioned microphone malfunctions, unfocused cameras, out of sequence slides, and even the time that there was a loss of the streaming feed for five minutes. All have been quickly overcome by a responsive team drawing on their experience. Peter says that these minor glitches only add to the 'live' feel they want the broadcast to have.

When Saint Benedict Parish decided to technically enhance the Livestream Mass for parishioners, no one predicted that the rest of the world would tune in, too. Since the pandemic

temporarily closed the doors of churches throughout the world, an average of 11,000 people from as many as 105 countries have tuned in to the 9am Mass at Saint Benedict Parish. The virtual web of personal and church connections and the expanding reach of Divine Renovation Ministry have created a path for the world to come and worship with us.

Eventually, we will be able to return to be physically present to celebrate Mass at Saint Benedict. Anticipating that those who have tuned in from afar may wish to continue to worship with us through Livestream, the broadcast team are taking steps now to be able to adjust the deployment of technical equipment in order to maintain the production quality we have now even when the pews are filled with parishioners. In the spirit of our mission we will be **Still Sent**, inviting the world to worship with us. 🙏



UPCOMING EVENTS

at Saint Benedict Parish

JUNE 16 - Holy Hour at 12pm
(weekly)

JUNE 16 - Praise & Worship Night

JUNE 18 - Mass at 12pm
(weekly)

JUNE 21 - Father's Day

JULY 5 - New Preaching Series begins



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

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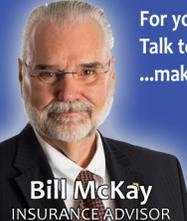
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PARISH STAFF TEAM

CATHERINE GOULD
Life Groups & Neighbour Care
CatherineG@saintbenedict.ca

LAURA O'ROURKE
Children's Ministry
LauraO@saintbenedict.ca

BILL SCOLLARD
Life Groups
BillS@saintbenedict.ca

MATT VAUGHAN
Communications
MattV@saintbenedict.ca

ROB MCDOWELL
Preaching Support
RobM@saintbenedict.ca

COREY ROBINSON
Youth Ministry
CoreyR@saintbenedict.ca

ARLENE SIBLEY
Game Plan Support & Pastor's Assistant
ArleneS@saintbenedict.ca

CHRIS YETMAN
Finance
ChrisYetman@saintbenedict.ca

TANYA NOYE
Alpha & Engagement
TanyaN@saintbenedict.ca

KATE ROBINSON
Operations Team Leader
KateR@saintbenedict.ca

DINAH SIMMONS
Worship & Sacraments
DinahS@saintbenedict.ca

FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES
Office@SaintBenedict.ca

RYAN ORLANDO
Facilities
RyanO@saintbenedict.ca

PETER SALAH
Audiovisual
PeterS@saintbenedict.ca

NOREEN SMITH
Neighbour Care
NoreenS@saintbenedict.ca

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 Viscount: **weddings@saintbenedict.ca.**

For information on preparation for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion, please email
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For information on becoming Catholic, please email
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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 - APRIL 2020

SUNDAY COLLECTIONS	RECEIVED	TOTAL	AVERAGE
ENVELOPES	-	\$9,937	-
AUTOMATIC GIVING	428	\$59,565	\$139.17*
LOOSE	-	-	-
ONLINE	-	\$17,132	-
TOTAL	-	\$86,634	-
PARISH DEBT REDUCTION	RECEIVED	TOTAL	AVERAGE
ENVELOPES	-	\$1,226	\$28.83
AUTOMATIC GIVING	55	\$2,807	-
MORTGAGE BALANCE (AS OF MONTH END)			\$349,625
PRINCIPAL PAID (ON MORTGAGE)			Payments deferred due to COVID-19
INTEREST PAID (ON MORTGAGE)			\$1,108
TOTAL PAID (ON MORTGAGE)			\$1,108

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