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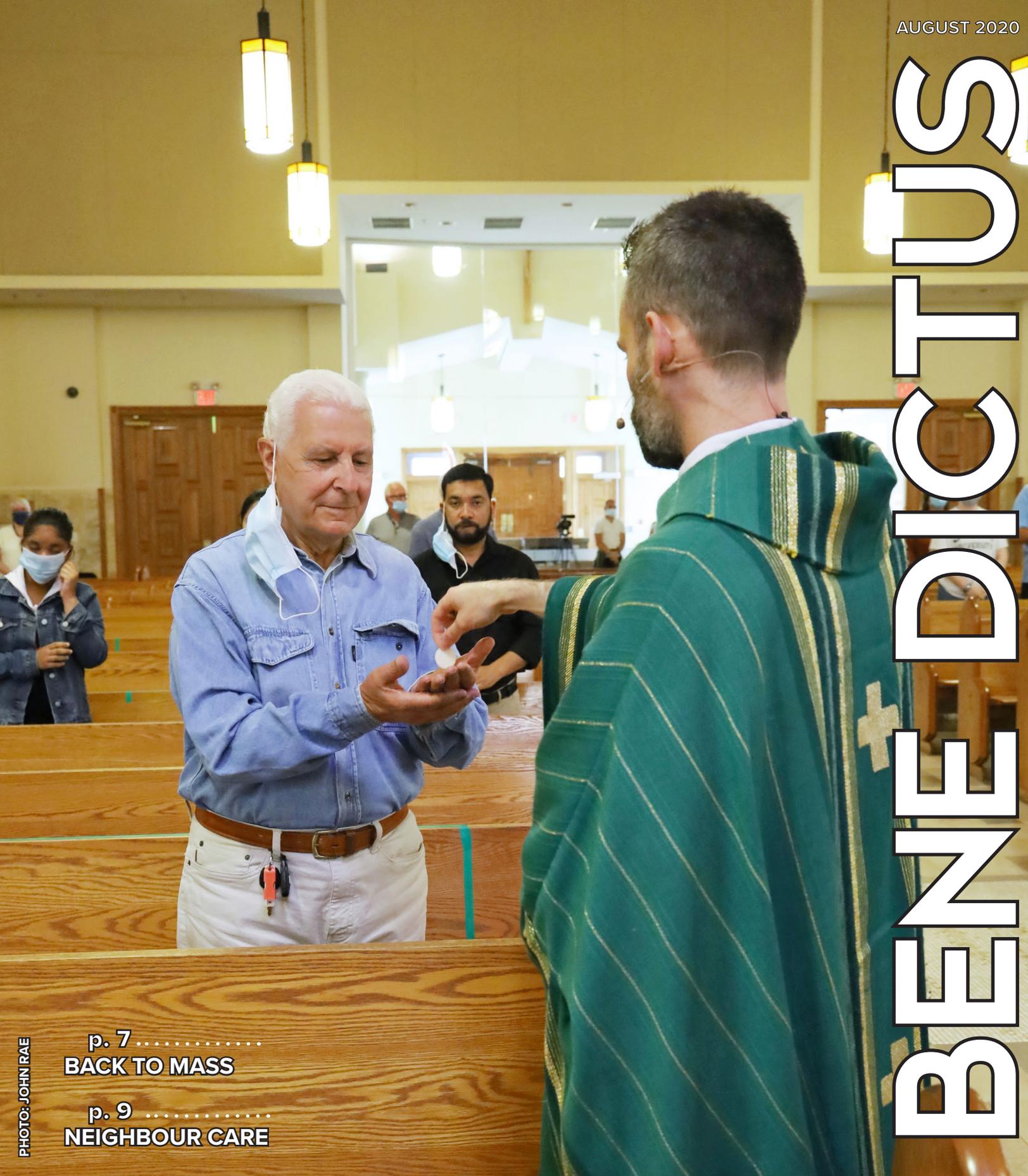


PHOTO: JOHN RAE

p. 7
BACK TO MASS

p. 9
NEIGHBOUR CARE

SAINT BENEDICT PARISH

45 Radcliffe Drive

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SUNDAY MASS

Visit saintbenedict.ca/reopening for details

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IN THIS ISSUE

.....
August 2020

FATHER SIMON SAYS

2 / 3 Summer Reopening | Pre-Recorded Online Mass | Sacraments of Initiation | Receiving the Gift of Rest

LORD, HELP ME

4 When self-reliance fails

THE MOB AND SALVATION

6 From possessed by a legion to missionary disciple

BACK TO MASS

7 / 8 The experience of Mass in a COVID-19 world

NEIGHBOUR CARE

9 / 10 Loving your neighbour as yourself

CELEBRATING SACRAMENTS

11 / 12 Photos from our recent RCIA Mass and First Reconciliations

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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 September 12/13.

On the cover:

Receiving communion at a recent in-person Mass.

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 - August 2020



FATHER SIMON SAYS...



Fr. Simon Lobo, CC
Pastor

SUMMER REOPENING

We officially reopened our doors as of July 11th, with Masses on Saturday at 4pm and Sunday at 11:15am. Thanks to all who have stepped up to help in new ministries that are required to follow all of the health and safety protocols. A special thanks goes out to the staff who, after four exhausting months adapting to the lockdown, rallied to get ready to reopen.

In most places where churches are reopening, they are seeing approximately 10-40% of their congregation returning. We've counted a little over 10% back at Saint Benedict, so we are in the ballpark of what's considered normal. You can find everything you need to know at saintbenedict.ca/reopening (be sure to scroll to the bottom of the page to click on the link to sign-up for Mass). I do recognize that many of you are part of the more vulnerable category. There is no pressure for you to rush back to Mass until you feel comfortable and ready. If you would like to return now, we will be glad to welcome you back. We kindly ask that you sign-up ahead of time and not just swing by hoping for a seat.

I realize that following all of these new procedures is challenging. We are bombarded with conflicting advice from voices around the world, including Catholics on social media. Furthermore, as restaurants are reopening in a quasi-normal manner, it seems like there is a double-standard between what is being expected of us at the church as compared to other establishments. I truly understand the struggle. Yet we are seeing the negative impact on places that are experiencing a prolonging of the first wave and others that are beginning a second wave of this pandemic. As a parish, I invite you to join me

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



FATHER SIMON SAYS **continued**

in following our local directives from the province and the Archdiocese with docility and humility.

PRE-RECORDED ONLINE MASS

As mentioned last month, we've been working on creative solutions to balance the goods of reaching and nourishing people online. Approximately 90% of our parishioners are still watching Mass from home, and we are joined by many, many new people online. After much discussion, consultation, and prayer, the team decided that pre-recording our Mass would be the most sustainable option, offering the highest quality prayer experience for you, the viewer.

We have been supported closely by the Divine Renovation Ministry in this endeavour and are working to take full ownership of it going forward. We record the Mass on Wednesday to allow time for video editing. We celebrate Mass as normal, from start to finish (in one take), but with one camera capturing the whole experience. A few elements are added in post-production, like the text of the scripture passages to make it easier to follow along. Since it is extremely complex to capture the band both visually and with a good audio mix, we've decided to record the four main songs separately. We've deliberately put those elements in black and white to indicate clearly when something has been recorded separately. Mass parts (Kyrie, Gloria, etc.) are sung live when we film on Wednesdays.

Our desire is to offer a truly beautiful online Mass that is intimate and draws you into prayer. We hope that this will be a profound part of your Sunday, and that you will see this as an opportunity to share it with friends and family, so that they too can be spiritually nourished by our Mass.

SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

We had seven people this year in our RCIA group (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults). Ordinarily, they would have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion at the Easter Vigil back in April. But everything had to change due to the pandemic. We were able to formally and sacramentally welcome them into the Church on July 30th at a special Mass. It was a powerful experience, and the Holy Spirit's presence was felt. It was a special moment for me; I really felt like a father again! It is always so rewarding to see people at different places on the journey – some who have been around for years, others who just started more recently with Alpha – make the personal choice to come into full communion with the Catholic Church.

As I said to the group during our rehearsal, "We've been waiting and waiting for this, and it might feel like we've finally made it to the finish line. But in one sense, the spiritual race is just beginning!" Please pray for Ben, Mati, Bruce, Greg, Matt, Stephen, and Chris, that their relationship with Jesus will grow deeper and deeper.

RECEIVING THE GIFT OF REST

I kicked off our previous preaching series, In Your Head, with a homily on July 5th about rest. Ultimately, rest for the soul is a gift from Jesus. I have had to make time for rest over the last few weeks, often at the urging and with the support of others. I have also had to encourage others around me to intentionally receive the gift of rest. I believe that we have all grown accustomed to a pace that humans were never meant to sustain. Please receive the gift this summer, and help others around you to take time to rest. 🕊️

LORD, HELP ME



Morgan MacKenzie
Ora Ministry

This reflection is for next Sunday's Gospel, Matthew 15:21-28.

Prayer is our ongoing conversation with God throughout our lives. In prayer we are invited to bring our experiences, thoughts, questions, hopes, doubts, struggles, and dreams to God with honesty and with confidence. It doesn't need to be rehearsed, prepared, or filtered. We can say as much or as little as we like.

I tend to overcomplicate prayers. I often try to work out my thoughts, feelings, opinions, and plans before I bring them to God. As if I had to be put together before I could pray. But it's not necessary. In today's Gospel we see an example of how we can approach God in prayer. In this passage a woman boldly comes up to Jesus, kneels before him, and says, "Lord, help me." (Matthew 15:25). He sees her exactly as she is, listens intently to what she has to say, and accepts her. With her simple request, we can learn a lot about who Jesus is, who we are, and how we can approach prayer. By calling him 'Lord', she acknowledges that he is God and she is not. She asks for help, recognizing that she cannot help herself, and she asks for his presence in her life.

We live in a society that rewards self-

sufficiency. Our world celebrates and rewards a strong work ethic, a do-it-yourself-er, a self-made person. Asking for help can be incredibly challenging, making us feel weak and inadequate. Our focus on self-reliance can make us feel like complete failures when our lives are, inevitably, blown apart by something unexpected. The events of the last six months have certainly shown us there is a lot that is beyond our control. On

some level, I think most of us have always known our hopes, our dreams, our plans for our lives can all come crashing down in a moment – with an unexpected medical diagnosis, an abrupt end to a relationship, a phone call with surprising news, a market dip, or a slip on the ice.

The truth is it can be incredibly freeing to acknowledge, like the woman in this passage, that we are limited. We

are not and we never will be God. We need his help. We are finite. But we are known and held by a God who is not. Through prayer we are invited to sit with the God who sees us just as we are, who loves us unconditionally, and who invites us to boldly ask, "Lord, help me." Praise God. Thanks be to God.

Lord, help me.

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





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THE MOB AND SALVATION



John Rae
Bene Dictus Team

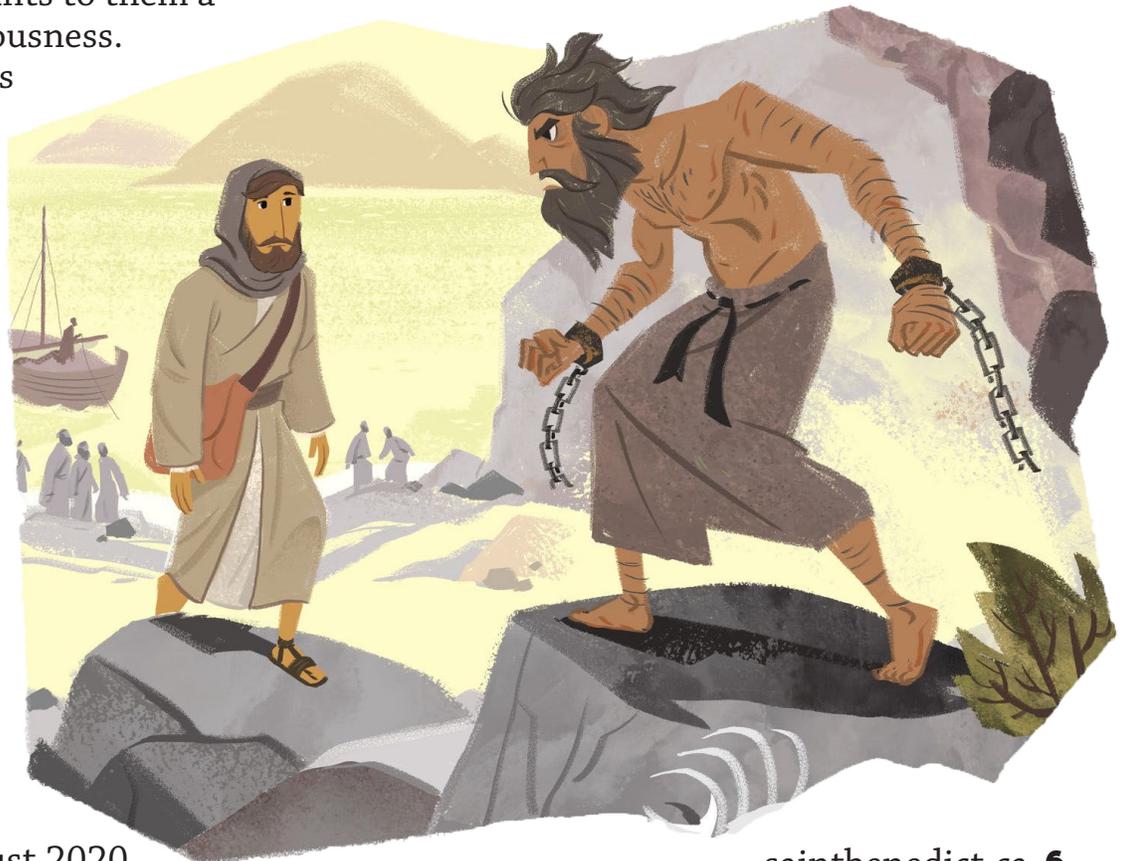
In the New Testament, there are many characters: Jesus, the Disciples, the Pharisees, the woman at the well, etc. But there is one prominent character that we don't often think about, and that is the mob. It is the mob that tries to throw Jesus off the top of the hill in Luke 4, and because of their fear of the mob, the Pharisees censored themselves in Mark 11. The agents of Jesus' crucifixion were the religious leaders, the mob, and the secular authorities. In the Old Testament, Joseph's brothers acted like a mob when they ganged up against him and sold him into slavery.

The mob is an interesting creature, for it sees itself as the bearer of truth and operating from the moral high ground. The mob grants an experience of unity to its members and grants to them a self-proclaimed righteousness. Belonging to the mob is empowering; it feels like a kind of salvation. The mission of the mob is to mobilize and attack. It is in the business of creating 'missionary disciples', but they are only single-use missionary disciples; they are disposable. The mob is both immensely attractive and inherently unstable. To paraphrase the rock band The Northern

Pikes, "It ain't pretty, it just looks that way."

In Luke 8:30, Jesus comes upon a man possessed by demons, and when he asks his name, the demons repond "Legion," because many demons (a mob) had entered him." The poor guy had the spirituality of the mob living within him, and they were mobilizing to drive him mad. And as it turns out, a mob from his city would occasionally chase him down and harass him. He was in a bad space; he was being doubly victimized.

Jesus casts out the demons, and then he tells the man, "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." The man now becomes a missionary disciple, a restored and reintegrated victim, whom Jesus rescued from the mob in himself and the mob in the city. His torment has ended, and his true salvation has begun. 🙏



BACK TO MASS



Susan LeRue
Bene Dictus Team

Excited, curious, nervous, wary... These are some of the emotions I felt entering our beloved church for Mass in person. It's been a long time since our church closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March. I am thankful that Mass is livestreamed, but I was so happy to be there physically that Sunday. Pulling open those big beautiful wooden doors, I walked in. Everything looked and felt so familiar, yet so different and strange at the same time, like visiting a childhood hometown, only now as an adult.

All the tension and anxiety I was feeling eased somewhat as I made my way over to the registration desk and gave my name. This is a precautionary measure taken just in case contact tracing becomes necessary in the event that a parishioner is diagnosed with COVID-19 (please God, let this never happen). The next order of business is hand sanitizer! Lots and lots of

hand sanitizer. One can't be too careful! I recognized familiar faces from the nose up, as everyone was donning their face masks. I began to feel more and more at ease... Yes, I was home again, home at Saint Benedict.

I was pleasantly surprised to be escorted to a pew by a volunteer. That was really comforting to me, as I could see that others were seated a good distance from me and each other. Great job, volunteers, and God bless you for this work! It is so important at this time.

The beautiful organ music sounded heavenly, but no singing was allowed (another precautionary measure taken to protect us all). So many details haven't been forgotten, and I feel very reassured by that.

Holy Mass began. Fr. Simon, Fr. Alex, and Deacon David and the servers processed to the Altar from behind the sanctuary. The prayers began and we settled down to immerse ourselves in this Holy Banquet.



Everything seemed normal, that is, until Communion. Father gave us instructions on how we will all receive Communion now. We are to stay in our pews. He and the Eucharistic Ministers will come to us. Each of them has someone following them with more hand sanitizer for us to use after consuming the Eucharist. This is all, yet again, more precautionary measures meant to keep us in our pews and socially distanced.

A Eucharistic Minister arrived, slid into the pew in front of me, and as I held out my hands, the Body of Jesus was placed in my palm. I consume Jesus, and I am so thankful to be here. Like so many of us, I've missed receiving Eucharist so very much.

A squirt of hand sanitizer, and then it's time for quiet prayer after Communion. Before I know it, we hear the final words: "Go in the peace of Christ."

Once again, volunteers are in place

dismissing parishioners pew-by-pew, one at a time, so as not to cause a bottleneck and help the flow of everyone leaving in an orderly, safe manner. At the back of the Church, I notice some parishioners are dropping their offerings and envelopes into the collection baskets. No collection is taken during Mass these days, and yes, you've guessed it, it's one more precautionary measure to protect everyone.

As we leave, I'm aware that there will be a whole team of volunteers that will sanitize everything once the church is empty. This is the one last precautionary measure to protect those coming in to the next Mass.

I leave feeling spiritually fed and uplifted and very, very safe physically.



I can't thank the staff and volunteers enough! God bless you all for yet again stepping up to help in these never-before-seen circumstances in order that we may all continue to worship and praise God together as we safely return to Mass. 🙏

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NEIGHBOUR CARE



Matt Kerrigan
Bene Dictus Team

One of the first differences we felt during our isolation due to this pandemic was a sense of being disconnected. We were cut off from mixing and mingling with our fellow parishioners at Mass and other activities at the parish. It challenged Fr. Simon and the parish staff to explore new ways we could still feel together. One of their brainstorming sessions produced Neighbour Care.

Sound familiar? You should have received a phone call over the past three months asking how you are getting through the pandemic while being offered assistance and prayer. That 'out of the blue' phone call was Neighbour Care.

I first became aware of it when Dinah Simmons emailed me in the middle of April and asked if I would make a few phone calls to other parishioners to see if they were doing okay. I agreed

and embarked on a delightful series of conversations that affirmed over and over what a beautiful community of faith we are.

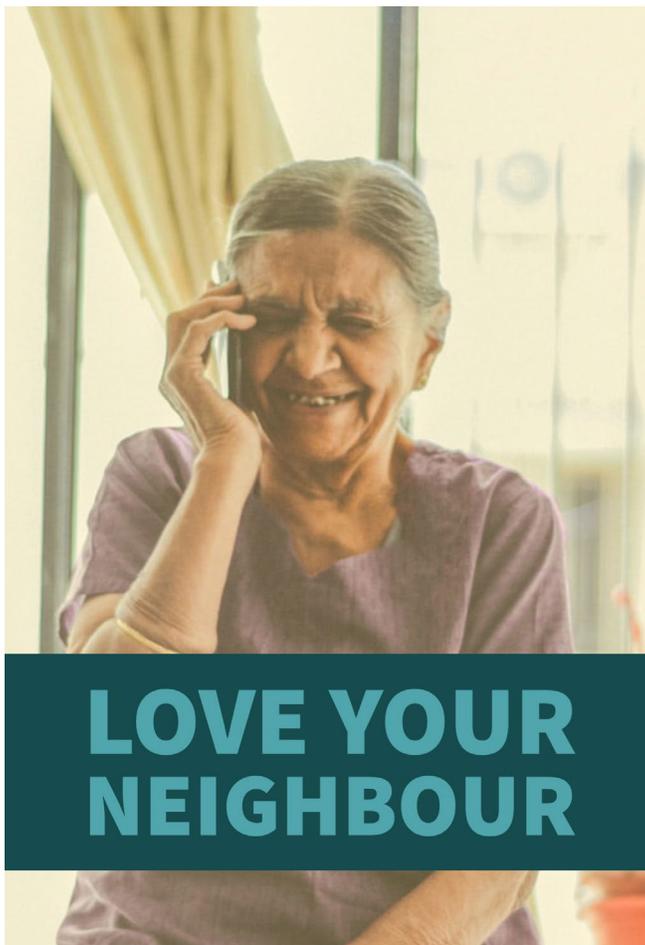
There were a lot of names on the parish lists. Initially, names and phone numbers from two parish databases were blended

to create a call sheet. The master list of 2,247 names was distributed in call lists of 30-40 names to 40 volunteer callers. Over three months, all the calls were made.

The call sheet allowed callers to note if the person called had contracted the virus, if they had outside support through family or friends, or if they needed help with something. Finally, the calls ended with a prayer. That may sound formal, but once a

call went through, it quickly became a conversation mirroring the hospitality that has become a hallmark of our parish.

I was delighted to find the folks I talked to were in reasonably good health and creatively coping with the enforced





isolation. An unhurried connectedness emerged over the phone lines, punctuated by laughter and culminating in impromptu prayer. Then there were follow up calls and scheduled errands. While phone calls may seem very low tech, I have rediscovered their special charm. They certainly proved a very effective way to demonstrate that we genuinely care about each other.

Once the results of the calls began filling this new database, new opportunities and challenges emerged. To coordinate and further develop this ministry, a staff team consisting of Noreen Smith, Dinah Simmons, Catherine Gould, and Deacon David Viscount was formed. They have already begun organizing next steps. There are 72 people who needed help during the

initial calls. They are organized into seven groups, according to the nature of help being given. Moving forward, this ministry will also coordinate with the other helping ministries in the parish, such as Care and Companionship, Grief Support, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, Food for Families, and the Refugee initiative of the Knights of Columbus.

In harmony with our parish mission, we will be reaching out with compassion to the community surrounding us. There is work to be done, but it is not oppressive or burdensome. It is work that lightens the hearts of both the giver and receiver. It bonds us in the Body of Christ and echoes Jesus' call to love your neighbour as yourself.

If you are interested in participating in Neighbour Care, please email Noreen Smith at noreens@saintbenedict.ca.



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CELEBRATING SACRAMENTS

Now that we're able to celebrating in-person Masses again, we've recently been able to celebrate some sacraments that were put off because of COVID-19. The pictures on these pages are from the July 31st Mass for our RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation) Candidates, as well as from our First Reconciliation celebration.







Patrick Salah's Ordination to the Diaconate

Saturday, August 15th, 10am

Watch online:

livestream.com/halifaxyarmouth

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UPCOMING EVENTS

at Saint Benedict Parish

AUGUST 9 - Endurance preaching series begins

AUGUST 15 - Archdiocesan Feast Day

AUGUST 15 - Patrick Salah Diaconal Ordination

SEPTEMBER 7 - Labour Day

SEPTEMBER 13 - New preaching series begins

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

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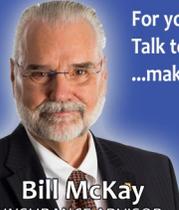
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If you are interested in the sacraments of baptism or marriage at Saint Benedict Parish, please note that in addition to preparation, we require that you get in touch with us a minimum of three months in advance of your hoped-for date for baptism and 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
FACT@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 2020

SUNDAY COLLECTIONS	RECEIVED	TOTAL	AVERAGE
ENVELOPES	-	\$9,877	-
AUTOMATIC GIVING	428	\$61,617	\$143.96*
LOOSE	-	-	-
ONLINE	-	\$15,690	-
TOTAL	-	\$87,184	-
PARISH DEBT REDUCTION	RECEIVED	TOTAL	AVERAGE
ENVELOPES	-	\$3,210	-
AUTOMATIC GIVING	55	\$2,727	\$49.58*
MORTGAGE BALANCE (AS OF MONTH END)			\$349,609
PRINCIPAL PAID (ON MORTGAGE)		Payments deferred due to COVID-19	
INTEREST PAID (ON MORTGAGE)			\$873.11
TOTAL PAID (ON MORTGAGE)			\$873.11

*NOTE: Automatic Giving average includes weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly withdrawals, which are totalled and divided by the number of givers.

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