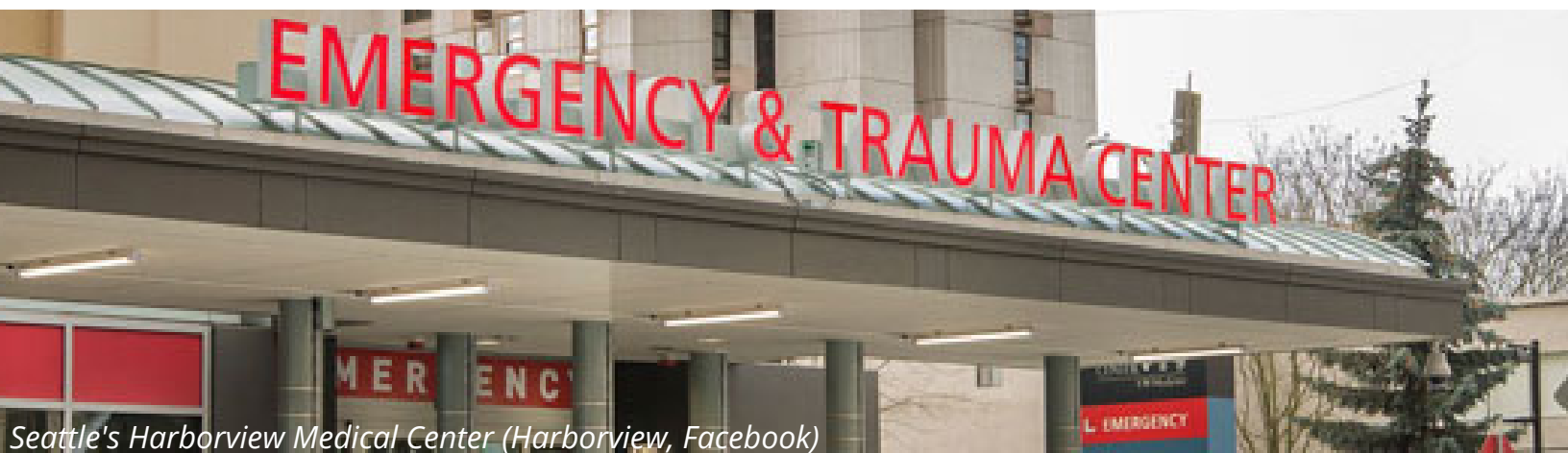




# St. Benedict CATHOLIC CHURCH

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 21, 2021



## Tending Science & Faith: Story of a Careful Conversion

WRITTEN BY HEATHER SNYDER

This past year, nurses, who day-in-day-out tread quietly at patients' bedsides somewhat unnoticed, find themselves suddenly very visible during the pandemic. Typically, because we want them to be unobtrusively present in our illness, they are at their unassuming best when delivering critical care that, in some other years, may have gone unnoticed. Ross Dawson is one of those nurses. His professional approach is scientific, thoughtful; traits that have lent well not only to his work but also a conscientious religious decision.



continued on page two

On a chilly winter morning, Ross is dressed for a lengthy interview outside a coffee shop in Roosevelt, or maybe a hike. With a Bear Grylls type energy—calm, confident, slight athletic build—his name would be great on a backcountry reality show: “Ross Dawson: Explorer Search and Rescue.” He’s not exactly offering himself up, but he’s not shy either. Today Ross has the day off from his 12-hour shifts at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. He’s spent the past year working nights, emerging into the February sunshine like a bat giving a go at diurnal living.

Transitioning at the end of each shift must feel somewhat similar. In the emergency department, people arrive in pain and danger, sometimes at risk of losing their lives, and afterward he exits into a world not on fire. Many professionals in this line of work learn to compartmentalize. After 10 years in nursing, his personality has shifted emotionally, finding himself more respectfully detached. “You can’t stay in that environment and thrive with too much connection. You fall into ‘Here’s a problem, this is what I have to do.’ To give people the best outcome, you can empathize with them only so much. You can sympathize; I can understand the situation, that somebody is in pain, but if I feel their pain, I’m not going to act fast enough,” he said. Admitting that this outlook has seeped into his personal life more than he would like, religion and community have been a way to push against that.



## IF IT INVOLVES A JUMPSUIT

Born in the 1980’s in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Ross was raised alongside his two brothers by ambiguously Protestant parents. Ross’s mother is British, raised in the Anglican doctrine. His father grew up in Texas and Oklahoma in a devout Baptist family (his grandmother had a Master’s of Music in Organ and played for the church for years). Neither parents’ religious background carried over into the Dawson boys’ upbringing, the only exposure to church involving funerals and weddings. As for Catholicism, Ross says his understanding was limited to pop culture.

In junior high, he met his Dad’s friend who was a life-flight nurse in Colorado. Impressed by the jumpsuit, helicopter, and saving people off the side of mountains, his interest was piqued. He fast-tracked his way through high school in three years, straight on through three years of college, graduating with a Bachelor’s of Science in Nursing at twenty-one. One of his first experiences on rotation left him in a hospital room with a patient whose breathing apparatus suddenly fell apart as he stood there. With no one around, he acted quickly to figure out how it fit back together. Ross threw himself into nursing and never looked back.



## ADAPTATION

After 8 years in the field, in 2017, Ross started as a travel nurse which took him to Bellingham. His partner Megan, who is Catholic, opened his eyes to something. “The biggest thing that has inspired me with Megan, and kept me coming back, in a way, is community. Her life is so service based, in very simple ways. It’s a good reminder to think of other people, to do the extra thing to help somebody,” he said.

The two happened upon a Mass in Bellingham where Father Bryan was a guest priest. Later, on a weekend trip to Seattle, Megan made it a mission to find out where Father Bryan preached. For the first time, Ross heard a positive, less judgmental doctrine that made Catholicism more relatable to him. Several months later, Ross and Megan moved down to Seattle and started attending Mass regularly at St. Benedict. Over the course of a year, Ross seriously contemplated becoming a member of the Catholic Church. He began RCIA classes at St. Benedict where he felt safe to logically approach his questions of faith. Talking with Fr. Bryan, Ross said, “I remember specifically saying to him, I’m just skeptical of this, I don’t know if I can believe this part. He said, ‘Not everybody believes everything, some people have to work it out or it’s not shown to you right now.’ And I thought, okay, I’ll keep listening.”

True-to-form, Ross's conversion was a knowledge-based decision. "I'm somebody who is quick to question and slow to just have faith," he said. He wasn't falling back on something that comforted him in his youth or yielding to a sudden awakening, rather, he recognized an imbalance and sought to correct it. Like an ecosystem in nature, he studied the equilibrium of his heart and found the organism affected by its environment. He wanted to adapt.



## WANDERING, BUT NOT LOST

So what does it look like for someone like him to become Catholic? How does he apply his scientific brain to a spiritual equation? Ross said, "One of the hardest things I've found in coming forward to the Catholic Church is how to approach it respectfully but honestly. "I am skeptical of things! But then, there's plenty that I accept from other people; you don't see everything, you have to trust somebody at some point," he said. Ross was baptized and confirmed at St. Benedict last Easter, just as the pandemic shut down nearly everything but hospitals and grocery stores.

The upheaval of the past year hasn't made it easy to get into the rhythm of a participating Catholic. He's been grateful for the opportunity to livestream Mass on demand, especially considering his work schedule. In one of the defining images of his newfound faith, he landed

on Jesus as a North Star. "You don't know where you are, but you're going to head in that direction, and as you go, your gonna realize 'I drifted to the right' and adjust, so overtime, you wander this way and wander that way, and as you get closer to it, you get more accurate," he said. A metaphor we might find relatable as we stop-start normal life, looking to the North Star for direction.

## VOCATION

Catholics are called to be servants, using Jesus' example to light the way. Sometimes the daily grind shadows the reality of what we are doing, through Christ, every day. As Ross describes his medical profession, his words echo life in the ministry. "It can be hard to see when it doesn't go well. It sometimes feels like failure. It can also be challenging to shift from rapidly doing everything possible to slowing down to comforting someone during their dying process. The rapid pace can lead to personal difficulties. The world doesn't stop, and the next patient will arrive needing your attention. It takes putting that box to the side to process later," he said.

Asked if Catholicism has changed his work in any way, Ross said, "There is something that I do. A lot of our homeless patients have trouble keeping their feet dry and clean. I'm definitely taking care of those people on purpose, cleaning their feet. And I always think of that story, of Jesus washing the disciples' feet, and now I'm more conscious of it." Medically and spiritually, Ross has become a transfiguration in the emergency ward. ■



# STAY CONNECTED

1805 North 49th Street, Seattle WA 98103

## WEBSITE

[parish.stbens.net](http://parish.stbens.net)

## FACEBOOK

[facebook.com/stbensseattle](https://facebook.com/stbensseattle)

## HOMILIES

[parish.stbens.net/homily-recordings](http://parish.stbens.net/homily-recordings)

## CONTACT US

 206.632.0843  [parish@stbens.net](mailto:parish@stbens.net)

**After-Hour Emergency 425.954.3434**

## STAFF

### Marti Lundberg

*Pastoral Coordinator*

[m.lundberg@stbens.net](mailto:m.lundberg@stbens.net)

### Becky Ortiz

*Administrative Assistant*

[b.ortiz@stbens.net](mailto:b.ortiz@stbens.net)

### Anita Hardwick

*Facilities*

[a.hardwick@stbens.net](mailto:a.hardwick@stbens.net)

### Erin Smith

*Pastoral Assistant for Admin.*

[e.smith@stbens.net](mailto:e.smith@stbens.net)

### Fr. Bryan Dolejsi

*Parish Priest*

[bryan.dolejsi@seattlearch.org](mailto:bryan.dolejsi@seattlearch.org)

### Mitchell Price

*Music*

[m.price@stbens.net](mailto:m.price@stbens.net)

### Brian Anderson

*School Principal*

[b.anderson@stbens.net](mailto:b.anderson@stbens.net)

### Heather Snyder

*Communications & Stewardship*

[h.snyder@stbens.net](mailto:h.snyder@stbens.net)

## SACRAMENTS

Do you have a baby that you'd like to baptize? Are you interested in joining the Church, getting confirmed, or taking steps towards baptism? Are you looking to prepare for marriage? Please contact Marti Lundberg or visit [parish.stbens.net](http://parish.stbens.net) > **sacraments** > **baptism** for more info.

## PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

Cathleen Hokoda, Maybelle Merritt, Angel Salangad, Shirlee Haugen, Shawpei Loh, Ken Kerner, Ann Carey, Carmen Gonzalez, Nora Taylor, Willie Kleffner, Easton Brown, Eli Mahnken, Janice Mosey, Eugene Haydu, Xavier Schmitt, Ann Person, June Gill, Tom Weber, Aidan Schellings, Rev. Steve Roman *\*Contact the Parish Office to have a name added to this list. For privacy reasons, the individual must expressly give consent.*

# STEWARDSHIP

	OFFERINGS	BUDGET
FEB	\$33,027	\$34,038
YTD	\$276,912	\$303,830

**Fiscal Year Budget: \$451,000**

*Thank you so much  
for your generosity!*



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AND GROW OUR  
PARISH**

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**FOR  
LENT  
FOR  
LIFE**



**DONATE  
NOW**

# E V E N T S   &   S A C R A M E N T S



## Virtual Coffee Hour

Sundays, 8:30AM  
ZOOM 899 6249 8541  
PW: stbens  
Sundays, 6PM  
ZOOM 846 8873 9595  
PW: 761020

## Gospel Study

March 22, 7PM  
ZOOM 894 8425 7473  
PW: 2rzt1Y

## Stations of the Cross

March 26, 12PM  
Onsite & Livestream

## St. Benedict Book Club

April 1, 7PM  
ZOOM  
April meeting will be on *The Delight of Being Ordinary* by Roland Merullo.

## Women's Ministry

April 6, 7 - 9PM  
ZOOM  
Signup for Flocknotes' Women's Ministry to receive updates and meeting link.

## Dialogue on Racial Justice

April 13, 7PM  
ZOOM

## HCSJ Meeting

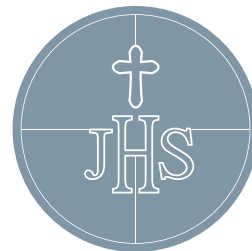
April 20, 7PM  
ZOOM

## All-Campus Cleanup

April 24

## Eucharistic Retreat

May 1, 9:30AM



## RCIA / Adult Confirmation Class

March 21, 11:30AM  
ZOOM

## Youth Confirmation Program

March 21, 4PM  
ZOOM

## Baptism Class

April 11, 3PM  
ZOOM



 **St. Benedict**  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
PARISH.STBENS.NET

JOIN US ON  
**PALM**  
**SUNDAY**  
MARCH 28

10:00 AM	OUTDOOR MASS FOR 200	BRING YOUR OWN CHAIR
5:00 PM	INDOOR MASS FOR 90	ALSO AVAILABLE LIVESTREAM

**PURPLE BAG  
PROGRAM**



Donate to FamilyWorks foodbank by dropping off food at Mass or in the Parish Office. Pick up your purple bag at the Lenten table in the Narthex. Thank you for being the hands of Christ in our community!



 **St. Benedict**  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
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JOIN US ON  
**EASTER**  
APRIL 4

10:00 AM	OUTDOOR MASS FOR 200	BRING YOUR OWN CHAIR
5:00 PM	INDOOR MASS FOR 90	ALSO AVAILABLE LIVESTREAM

# CHILDREN'S CORNER



Kids' Liturgy with Heidi Witte  
[YouTube Channel](#)

## P U Z Z L E

UNSCRAMBLE THE WORDS  
 FROM TODAY'S GOSPEL

grain	wheat	dies
suffer	glory	voice
give	life	serve
raing	<u>g r a i n</u>	
wehat	_____	
desi	_____	
iveg	_____	
lefi	_____	
serev	_____	
fusfer	_____	
glyro	_____	
oicev	_____	



## COLOR THE GOSPEL



Be strong in your faith. Do all that God asks you to do, even when it is not easy. Be honest. Be kind. Share what you have been given. Be helpful. Forgive. Show everyone what God is like. When people around you see that your faith is real, they will come to you for help. Point them to Jesus.

## AT HOME WITH F A I T H

Find this button on our homepage:





# ST. BENEDICT CURRENT OFFERINGS

## MASS ONSITE

**Sunday**  
10AM & 5PM

**Monday, 8AM**  
**Wednesday, 7PM**  
**Thursday, 9AM**

## LIVESTREAM MASS

**Sunday, 10AM & 5PM**  
**Wednesday, 7PM**

## OUTDOOR MASS

**Returns on Palm**  
**Sunday! Cap. 200**

## ADORATION

**Wednesday, 5PM-7PM**

## CONFESSION

**Sunday, 4:15PM-4:45PM**



In this phase of Safe Start Mass, we have two indoor Sunday Masses for up to 90 people, no registration required.

## Dispensation from Mass

At St. Benedict, we have a variety of opportunities for you to attend Mass or have time for prayer in the church in a safe manner. At the same time, please remember the general dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is still in place. You should not feel pressured to attend Mass. Further, our livestream option will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

### DAILY SCRIPTURE

#### **Monday, Lenten Weekday**

Dn 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62 or  
13:41c-62/Jn 8:1-11

#### **Tuesday, Lenten Weekday**

Nm 21:4-9/Jn 8:21-30

#### **Wednesday, Lenten Weekday**

Dn 3:14-20, 91-92, 95/Jn 8:31-42

#### **Thursday, Annunciation of the Lord**

Is 7:10-14; 8:10/Heb 10:4-10/  
Lk 1:26-38

#### **Friday, Lenten Weekday**

Jer 20:10-13/Jn 10:31-42

#### **Saturday, Lenten Weekday**

Ez 37:21-28/Jn 11:45-56

#### **Sunday, Palm Sunday**

Mk 11:1-10 or Jn 12:12-16 (37)/  
Is 50:4-7/Phil 2:6-11/  
Mk 14:1—15:47 or 15:1-39