



St. Benedict CATHOLIC CHURCH

PALM SUNDAY
MARCH 28, 2021



Beyond All Thought

WRITTEN BY HEATHER SNYDER

Gary dos Santos carries himself like a good-natured little league coach, comfortably in his forties with a career in biotechnology, house in Ballard, and a family of four (his grey zip-up hoodie with logo that reads “St. Benedict School” is a dead giveaway). He stuffs his hands deep into his pockets to ward off the chill morning air because Dads are known to bravely underdress for the weather. In less than 10 minutes, it’s apparent that the sweatshirt is a red herring for a deeply complex man who carries an event at the center of his life so powerful it reverberates energy, drawing everything before and after to its center like a magnetic pole.

continued on page two

NATURE VS. NURTURE

In 1972, Gary was born the youngest of eleven children raised in Montreal, Canada. Gary's father grew up in the Caribbean paradise of Trinidad, an island off the coast of Venezuela. He met his future Canadian wife at University of Toronto Engineering School, and after graduating he returned to Trinidad with her where they started a family. Years later, his parents and older siblings returned to Quebec in the late 1960's before Gary was born.

In the west end of Montreal, they lived in an English enclave where the kids learned French in school. Gary was proficient by the end of high school, but it's been years since he's used it. Not that it shows—his French is beautiful. Another reminder that his casual demeanor conceals deep pockets of cognitive wealth.

Just at the time when children begin to hold memories, perceive relationships, and discover themselves, Gary's father died suddenly from a heart attack. At age five, he lost one of the two people who influence both nature and nurture. Hesitantly, he admits that because he was so young, he doesn't feel like he his father's death left a hole in his life. For him, the absence presented itself more noticeably in related financial difficulties and overall household tension. Tempers flared in explosive reactions that rarely ended in resolution. Although his mom was in real estate, he doesn't remember her working full time, doesn't remember how she made ends meet. No family came in to help. Maybe a government food allowance? Impossible to know since she herself is now gone.

Despite the intensity, Gary walked away content with his youth. "I didn't feel lost in the shuffle. Most of my brothers and sisters would express a lot of resentment around the way their childhood went, but I don't have those feelings. I have a lot of gratitude, even though we didn't have much money at all," he said. The variance in memories seems to fill the review mirror of his reflections. "My eldest brother is intensely grateful, my eldest sister says 'it doesn't matter what happened back then, just look forward.' I've got one brother who

is really resentful of the family, but at the same time has hugely intense love for the family." On this matter, he weighs in on the side of nature. "Natural human diversity. You want to say everything's a product of their upbringing, but I think a lot of it is just baked in," he said.



From his father's traditional Latin roots, Gary was baptized in the Catholic Church, but for years that would be the only religious influence until his mother moved him from Protestant primary to Catholic school, where he was being bullied, to Catholic school. Back then in Montreal, public education was religiously dominated by a Catholic School Board and a Protestant School Board. He continued in public Catholic schooling until he enrolled, thanks to a scholarship, in a private Jesuit high school. "I would say that the biggest manifestation of Jesus in my life is through providence. Even when I've had very little, there has always been something come along that got me through," he said.

By then it was just his mom, brother, and himself. Throughout the years, when some of Gary's older siblings moved out, he didn't see them again for years which left some abandonment issues that impact him even now. "When I make friends, I tend to pull back," he said. His observations look very much like a scientist trying to remain unbiased so as not to influence the results. He returns to the controlled variables of his upbringing: "Fun. Intense. Unpredictable. Love-filled," said Gary.

PHILOSOPHICALLY SPEAKING

Graduating with a degree in bio-chemistry from McGill University in Montreal, Gary's life progressed unremarkably. He began his career in cell biology research and development, married his wife Andrea (a childhood acquaintance whom he re-met at a party at 19 and wed at 25), then moved to the States. In 2008, they welcomed their daughter Ruby, followed by their son Xavier in 2011.



Although Gary has always been open to Catholicism, it wasn't until his son's birth that he returned to his faith. Up to that point, his view was respectful, if not personal. "There's an intellectual value there, of Catholicism," he said. In philosophical manner, he goes on to describe a longtime reverence for the societal structure that Catholic Church began hundreds of years ago, effects from which we still benefit today. But he sees that influence as waning in modern culture.

"Society's institutions are a lesser version of the Catholic institutions," he said, attributing his ideas to a book he read called *The Mismeasure of Man* by evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould. "This book shows how much social damage science can do when it's performed in the absence of a well-thought-out and clearly articulated moral framework, something that is becoming more common, unfortunately." He takes it even further, this tenet that organizations without a moral compass are leading us nowhere. Gary said, "When things lack a connection to the transcendental spirit, they fail."

FROM ONE CONSCIOUS TO ANOTHER

His objective computation of the value of religious institutions had not yet quite made its way into his own center of being. Then his son was born with a teratoma, a tumor on his colon, that began a series of difficulties that deconstructed life from the outside in. When Xavier started solid foods at six months old, the problem became apparent, but doctors could not find the cause. After three months and many painstaking efforts, he was finally diagnosed and underwent surgery to remove the tumor, leaving the baby with a colostomy bag laying in hospital attached to tubes. With a toddler, not much money, and an ailing infant, the past few months had nearly broken him. Gary said, "It's the only time in my life I only felt sorry for myself. I should have sorry for him, but I actually felt sorry for myself at the moment."

Xavier had the colostomy bag for a few months until doctors were able to perform several surgeries and eventually remove it. Shortly thereafter, Gary and Andrea bought a dilapidated duplex in Ballard, renting out the basement to a hoarder. Gary would lie in bed at night with anxiety over the piles of clothing that might catch fire from the floor beneath his bedroom. His fears were somewhat prescient when a sewer pipe broke in the basement, emitting suffocating and dangerous gas.

Without a dollar to throw at the situation, Gary took on the repairs himself. "I had a raging headache because I was inhaling sewer gases, and I was down there in the middle of the day in this enclosed room, and I just keeled over. I was pretty sure I'd killed myself. I was passed out, but I had some sort of consciousness . . . and I felt a presence like a light shining on the back of my head. I started praying, 'God, don't make my kids go through what I had to go through.'"



"Even as I was praying that, in my mind I thought 'That doesn't sound right.'" He lay there, insensate, with an awareness that he wasn't saying what he really meant; Gary didn't feel that he had a terrible upbringing. At that moment, he felt a patience, like somebody waiting. To himself he said, "'That's not actually right.' Nothing happened. Then, 'God give me the privilege of seeing my kids grow up,' and I felt this intense love and pride, like, 'Yeah, you got it.'" He woke up and felt completely fine. After days of battling the sewer with terrible headaches, he was completely fine.



He began wondering if he was on the right path, religiously. "It's not like I became evangelical or super intense, I was actually highly skeptical of the experience. I kept trying to explain it scientifically." If it weren't for the bruises on his face, he might have disregarded that the whole thing happened at all.

For a scientist who describes himself as a philosopher at heart, this new unfamiliar dimension began to tug at him over time. Formulating ideas, discarding them, unable to categorize it, he came to accept it as a conscious experience. Not a dream. Not a delusion. "To this day, I can still feel the sensation," Gary said. In short, it was transcendent.

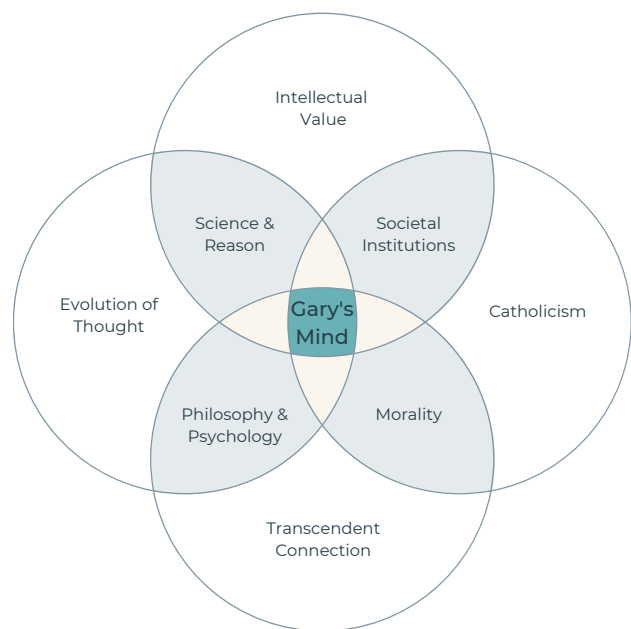
A VENN DIAGRAM MIGHT SORT IT OUT

Baptized Catholic, reared in Catholic Schools, he spent years away from the church, but clearly Catholicism was not done with him yet. There had been efforts over time—a visit to Mass, a return to praying the Our Father, baptizing the children—but he struggled to find his role within the faith.

After his profoundly conscious exchange with God, ironically his return to religion was motivated in the end by the same issues that introduced him to the church in primary school, bullying. In 2016, his children were not thriving in

public school when his wife suggested they move them to private. Gary kept to himself that he knew it had to be Catholic school. It seemed so obvious to him suddenly. He wanted them to have the opportunity for Faith Formation. "That's what sent me down the path of exploring my Catholic faith again," he said.

Surprisingly, when they stumbled across St. Benedict School, his wife was completely open to it. (Surprising because Andrea is a culturally Jewish atheist.) The kids enrolled in 2018, and the family couldn't be happier with the education at St. Benedict. Even Andrea, unconverted, is now the driving force behind making sure the family goes to Sunday Mass. Belonging to a Catholic school and church lend some integrity to Gary's opinion that Catholic Institutions are a bedrock of ideal societal infrastructure.



Even though his words are weighted in ethos-logos—very heady, very cerebral—his pathos undeniably emotes itself. One needs a Venn diagram to understand Gary—his mind is a place where opinions evolve from evidential logic, not, however, independent from a deep sense of good. Inexplicable good. Basement encounters with presence kind of GOOD. And it says something that he keeps reasoning at bay from the center of something that clearly goes beyond all thought. After all, there are parts of man that can only comprehend God without reason. ■

STAY CONNECTED

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HOMILIES

parish.stbens.net/homily-recordings

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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 > **sacraments** > **baptism** for more info.

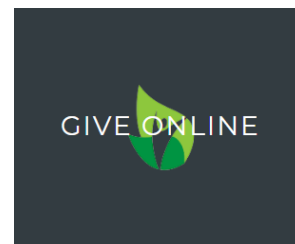
PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

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



This Pontifical collection is for the support of the Holy Places, but above all for those pastoral, charitable, educational and social works which the Church supports in the Holy Land for the welfare of their Christian brethren and of the local communities.



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HOLY WEEK

MARCH 28 - APRIL 4



PALM SUNDAY 10AM, OUTDOOR Capacity 200. Bring your own chair.
PALM SUNDAY 5PM, INDOOR Capacity 90. Livestream available.

Stay connected to Holy Week during the year by placing your palm in a special place in your home. Palms available throughout Holy Week at the parish office.



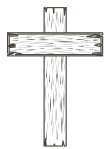
MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER 7PM, INDOOR Capacity 90. Repose of the Blessed Sacrament, 7:30PM - Midnight.



STATIONS OF THE CROSS 12PM, OUTDOOR Unique outdoor Stations as we walk through the last day with Christ.



BACH'S GOOD FRIDAY FUGUE 3PM, INDOOR Capacity 90. Charles Hiestand plays the organ as a meditation on Stations.



VENERATION OF THE CROSS 7PM, INDOOR Capacity 90. Individual crosses handed out.



EASTER VIGIL 8:30PM, INDOOR Capacity 90.



EASTER SUNDAY 10AM, OUTDOOR Capacity 200. Bring your own chair.
EASTER SUNDAY 5PM, INDOOR Capacity 90. Livestream available.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Discussing ch. 7 *Liturgy of the Ordinary* by Tish Harrison Warren. Bring a spring poem to share! Contact: Deb Reilly 206.755.1751. Signup for Flocknotes Women's Ministry to receive Zoom link.

A P R I L 6 | 7 P M
ZOOM : EMAILED OUT



A D O R A T I O N Wednesday 5PM-7PM



R O S A R I E S
Monday 8:30AM
Wednesday 5PM

HCSJ DIALOGUE ON R A C I A L J U S T I C E

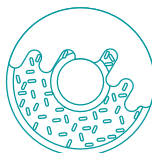
Join a discussion that helps us understand our role in racial peace and how to move forward.

A P R I L 13 | 7 P M
ZOOM ID: 818 1819 4476
PASSWORD: 2TV10v



VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR

SUNDAYS | 8:30AM
ZOOM ID: 899 6249 8541
PASSWORD: stbens



SUNDAYS | 6:00PM
ZOOM ID: 871 7506 2832
PASSWORD: 803362



ST. BEN'S BOOK CLUB

Join us to discuss *An American Marriage* by Tayari Jones. Contact: Brenda Stratton bjandmes@msn.com

A P R I L 8 | 7 P M
ZOOM ID: 817 2907 1833
PASSWORD: delight



ST. BEN'S GOSPEL STUDY

Prepare for Mass each week with a study of the upcoming Gospel reading. Zoom meeting lead by Marti.

M O N D A Y S | 7 P M
ZOOM ID: 894 8425 7473
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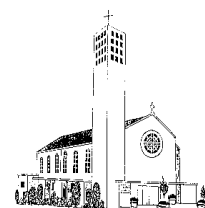
P R A Y E R G R O U P

Join this purpose-filled group who invites you to unite in prayer for healing and peace throughout the world. Email parish.stbens.net for online meeting details.

SATURDAYS | 10AM-12
DAILY ROSARY: 6PM - 7



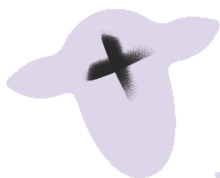
PARISHIONERS HELPING PARISHIONERS



Could you or someone you know benefit from the financial assistance program available at St. Benedict? Parishioners Helping Parishioners provides funds for members who need help. Learn more on our website under [Resources > PHP](#).

we ♥ love

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CHILDREN'S CORNER



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

P U Z Z L E

FIND AND CIRCLE TEN THINGS
THAT ARE DIFFERENT



COLOR THE GOSPEL



The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem.

They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the king of Israel!" —John 12: 12-13

AT HOME WITH F A I T H

Find this button on our homepage:



SCHOOL NEWS

St. Benedict Catholic School Auction News

When: Thursday, April 22 – Saturday, April 24
Thursday, April 22, 10AM Silent Auction + Dessert Dash
Saturday, April 24, 7PM Online Event Begins

Who: Everyone is invited!

Where: In the comfort of your own home!



The St. Benedict School auction has always been made possible by the generous donations of local businesses, school and parish families, and the greater community. It is with YOUR donation that the Auction is our biggest fundraiser of the year and we are excited to continue that tradition this year.

Would you like to support the St. Benedict Annual Auction?

- Visit the online auction and bid on a variety of great items.
- Make a monetary donation
- Make a purchase from our Amazon Wish List
- Donate an item, gift cards, a weekend getaway to your cabin or lakeside home, the possibilities are endless!
- Become an auction sponsor

Visit the St. Benedict Catholic School [Auction Website](#) for more information.

Questions? Contact Penny Zimmer
p.zierner@stbensnet
auction@stbens.net





ST. BENEDICT CURRENT OFFERINGS

MASS ONSITE

Sunday
10AM & 5PM

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

LIVESTREAM MASS

Sunday, 5PM
Wednesday, 7PM

OUTDOOR MASS

Sunday, 10AM

ADORATION

Wednesday, 5PM–7PM

CONFESSION

Sunday, 4:15PM–4:45PM



In this phase of Safe Start Mass, we have two Sunday Masses: 10AM Outdoor for up to 200 people and 5PM Indoor 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, Holy week

Is 42:1-7/Jn 12:1-11

Tuesday, Holy Week

Is 49:1-6/Jn 13:21-33, 36-38

Wednesday, Holy Week

Is 50:4-9a/Mt 26:14-25

Thursday, Holy Thursday

Ex 12:1-8, 11-14/1 Cor 11:23-26/
Jn 13:1-15

Friday, Good Friday

Is 52:13—53:12/Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9/
Jn 18:1—19:42

Saturday, Easter Vigil

Gn 1:1—2:2/Ex 14:15—15:1/Is 54:5-14/ Is
55:1-11/Bar 3:9-15, 32—4:4/Ez 36:16-
17a, 18-28/ Rom 6:3-11/Mk 16:1-7

Sunday, Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34a, 37-43/Col 3:1-4