

Seek The City To Come Parish Profile

St. Benedict Church, Baltimore

Fr. Paschal Morlino, O.S.B. Pastor

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Worship

Weekends

- 4:00 pm Sat vigil mass with around 50 attendees
- 10:30 am Sun mass with 150 to 200 attendees
- 6:00 pm Sun mass with 50 to 100 attendees, notably diverse
 - *6p is latest in ArchBalt, begun at request of Sunday workers*
- Rosary prayed before most Masses
- Mass attendance now approx $\frac{2}{3}$ of pre-pandemic level overall
- Confessions on Saturday 3p & by request (very frequent via gift shop)

Weekdays

- Divine Office weekday 6a, 12n & 6p in chapel, 0 to 10 at each
- Morn Mass daily 8a except Wed, 5 to 20 attendees
- Wednesday night 6:30 p.m. Mass, 10 to 30 attendees
- Miraculous Medal novena follows Wed night Mass
- ~2 min homily delivered at all weekday Masses
- Eucharistic Adoration all Wednesdays 9a-6p
- Adoration for homeschoolers every Thursday
- First Saturday devotions w/ Adoration & Divine Mercy Chaplet

Holy Days

- Special emphasis on beautiful Easter Triduum liturgies
 - *3 full size statues of Christ displayed in Triduum*

- *Agony in the Garden, Tomb, & Resurrection*
- *30 to 50 candles lit on altar & main aisle at Easter vigil*
- Holy Thursday, all night Adoration
- Good Friday, Tenebrae
- Easter baskets prepared for all children at Mass
- Special confession night each Advent & Lent with 3 to 5 priests
- Stations of the Cross prayed Friday night during Lent
- Soup & Sandwiches with video & discussion Fridays in Lent
- Grounds highly decorated for Christmas, Easter, & 4th of July

Parish Life

Diversity & Inclusion

- Mix of both inner city & suburban parishioners
 - *30-45 min drives from suburban homes not uncommon*
- Mix of very poor on welfare, middle class, and wealthy
- Multi-racial, multi-ethnic, & multi-generational parish
- Attendees from Mexico, Hondouras, Peru, Vietnam, Nigeria, etc.

Church Atmosphere

- Emphasis on beauty & decorum is widely appreciated
- Small, personal scale of parish draws many
- Fr. Paschal addresses very many by name at the parish
- Incense, procession, relics, statues, candles, etc.
- Optional kneeling for Eucharist (new)
- Cantors present at all Masses
- Adult Choir at 10:30a Sun mass, ~15 now active with paid Director
- Altar servers at all masses, ~15 now serving
- Bell Tower peals at consecrations & every ¼ hour & hymns on Sun
 - *Locals have said bells are a great reassurance to hear*
- Background worship music played when church is open for prayer
- Volunteer phone operators live answering calls 7 days/week
- Letters to ~2k friends of parish on Christmas, Easter, & All Souls

Faith Development

- Children's Sunday School, ~20 children
- Adult Sunday School, ~15 adults
- Benedictine Oblates (meets monthly, about 8 oblates active)
- Sacramental prep led by lay leaders as needed
 - *RCIA, baptism, 1st communion, Pre-Cana*
- Weekly bulletin with much spiritual & personally prepared content
- FORMED streaming (Catholic Netflix) parish-wide license

Social Activities

- Choptank River Crab Feast (boat ride)
- End of Summer concert (on parking lot)
- Summer Movie Nights
- Oyster Bull Roast (major fundraiser w/ much local biz support)
- Spaghetti dinner & bingo (choir fundraiser)

Fundraiser Events

- Lottery ticket drives in April, August, & December
- Parish Hall Rentals (family reunions, weddings, etc.)
- Kitchen rented to a family-run bakery 2 days per week
- Baltimore's Best Coddies (baked & sold much of year)
- Solar panels for major tax credits & power bill cuts (now underway)

Pilgrimages

- Parish trips to Italy, Israel, France, & Germany (Oberammergau)
- Same-day bus outings
 - *Museum of the Bible*
 - *Sight & Sound Theater*

Processions

- Good Fri Stations of the Cross 2 hours thru SW Balto streets
 - *Believed to be the only such out of doors procession in the City.*
- Corpus Christi w/ Eucharist on perimeter streets
- Palm Sunday on perimeter streets
- Divine Mercy on church steps
- May crowning in Our Lady of the Streets grotto
- Christmas Carolling in neighborhood with ChristLife

Knights of Columbus

- Council #10648. Meets at church monthly. ~ 20 members active.
- Named top *Faith Development* Council by MD State Knights (2023).
- Christmas & Easter breakfasts for kids & families
- Fall & Spring Flea Markets along Wilkens Ave.
- Annual parish picnic & Wed night dinners (*new*)
- Bus pilgrimage to *Padre Pio Shrine* (2022, Barto, PA)
- Prayed Rosary outside Howard St. Planned Parenthood (*new*)
- Exemplification ceremonies held for new members.

Evangelization

Catholic Books & Gifts

- Retail store with books, medals, rosaries, cards etc.
- Carries many specially imported items not widely available
- Open 5 days/week with an onsite manager

92.7 FM Catholic Radio

- Full studio onsite in parish center
- Low power FM broadcasts from St. Agnes Hospital roof
- Signal covers most of Baltimore City below North Avenue
- Streams globally on Alexa, iPhone, Android, & more outlets
- Carries WAOB programs by Benedictines of Latrobe, PA
- Listeners reported in MD Penitentiary by chaplains

Local Outreach

- Free Catholic literature distribution on Wilkens Ave.
 - Rosaries, Miraculous Medals, Prayer booklets, magazines, etc.
- Flowers, garden & greenery as a conspicuous urban welcoming place
- Funerals; many requested by inner city non-parishioners
- Communion weekly to Caton Manor nursing home & other shut-ins

Overseas Outreach

- Uganda - Funding construction of a new church
- India - Funding 1 priest studying in Rome from a poor Indian diocese

Community Services

Benedict's Pantry

- Food, clothing, housewares in a shopping like atmosphere
- Avg 100 families & 340 persons served per month
- Emergency food bags given out 4-5 times per week, nobody refused
- Thanksgiving & Christmas turkeys with many extra food items
- Christmas gifts custom purchased for about 175 families
- School backpacks & supplies given each fall
- Recipients only in parish boundaries else overrun by demand
- Volunteers assist from suburban parishes & schools

Low Income Housing

- Low rent rowhouses – currently 2, formerly 10 – owned by parish
- Bennet House (Millington Ave) low income senior housing
 - Repurpose of an abandoned city school initiated by parish
 - Now independently operated by Bon Secours Hospital
- The Village at Norcia (St Benedict St) low income apartments
 - 90 units planned on properties acquired by parish
 - Conceived 2006, contracts signed 2022, groundbreaking 2024
- Homeless Transitional Housing
 - Starting late 2022 in a parish-owned rowhouse
 - To be managed by Balto Basilica's urban missionaries
 - Housing for 5 men with an onsite manager

Education

- St. Philomena Homeschool Academy
 - ~65 students on campus 2 days per week
 - Students attend weekly Mass & Adoration
 - Renovated 2nd floor of unused school building
- Lumina Theater
 - Faith-based productions by middle & high school students
 - Led by St. Philomena's homeschoolers

- Fall & spring productions now rehearse in parish hall
- Theater group will lease & renovate convent
- Former convent will become a 100 seat theater
- Support includes national level philanthropists
- Premier Basketball League
 - Leases parish gym
 - 200+ weekly attendees
 - Very popular, fills all available nearby parking
- Head Start
 - Leases classrooms from former school
 - Operates 3 sections of students

Groups Hosted

- Narcotics Anonymous meets on Fridays, about 50 attendees
- Alcoholics Anonymous meets on Mondays, about 25 attendees
- Senior Bingo meets on Tuesdays, about 20 attendees
- SW District Police/Community Relations meets monthly, about 50
- Mill Hill Neighborhood Association (meets infrequently)

Miscellaneous

Community Presence

- Regular trash cleanup done along church perimeter
- Flag pole on Wilkens Ave. (restored 2022)
- Upgrade of billboard sign on Wilkens Ave. (now seeking sponsors)

Online Presence

- <http://www.saintbenedict.org/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/stbenedictbalto>
- <https://www.wvtoradio.com/>

Inactive Projects

- Street evangelization door to door throughout SW Balto
- Van to pick up shut ins for Mass
- *Discovering, Following, & Sharing Christ* multi-week programs
- Special guest speakers on Fatima & Shroud of Turin
- Convent leased for crisis pregnancy & drug recovery programs
- China - Hosting seminarians from Beijing
- Russian choir concert (during tour years)
- Fall organ concert (St. Vincent's)
- Press coverage (*Fox45, New Oxford Review*)