



# St Sebastian Catholic Church



A Pennsylvania Charitable Trust  
A Parish of the Diocese of Greensburg

801 Broad Avenue · Belle Vernon, PA 15012

February 26 2023—1st Sunday of Lent

Mass Schedule

BE  
MERCIFUL,  
LORD,  
FOR  
WE HAVE  
SINNED.  
PSALM 51



Saturday 4:30 PM	Tuesday, 8:00 AM
Sunday 9:00 AM 11:00 AM	Friday, 8:00 AM

## Parish Staff

**Rev. Michael J. Crookston Pastor**  
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## Saint Sebastian Regional Catholic School

**Mrs. Carole Aiello: Principal**  
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**Mrs. Tiffany Miller: School Business Manager**  
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School Telephone ~ 724-929-5143

School Website ~ [sssbv.org](http://sssbv.org)



### Baptism Preparation

Third Wednesday of every month. Please call the Faith Formation Office, 724-929-9300.

### Religious Education/Formation

Please call the Faith Formation Office, 724-929-9300.

### (RCIA) Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Anyone interested in becoming a Catholic, please call the Faith Formation Office.

### Reconciliation

*Confessions are on Saturday:* Epiphany—11:30 a.m. and St. Sebastian—3:30 p.m.. You may also call at any time for an appointment for confession.



## From the Pastor

### A Lenten Journey of God's Grace

Traditionally when we begin Lent we focus on what we plan to do for the next six weeks to prepare for Easter. Usually that means recognizing some aspect of our lives that we want to work on. We might choose to do some sort of sacrifice or give something up. Well, today we are reminded about what the real meaning of this season is all about, Baptism. The liturgy for this first Sunday of Lent reminds us of how abundant God's grace is. We see this in the goodness of God in creation found in the reading from Genesis, the promise of righteousness through Christ's gift from St. Paul and Jesus' own words from the gospel: "The Lord your God shall you worship, and God alone shall you serve."

Even though our first reading tells us of Adam and Eve's fall from grace, it is not speaking about sin as much as it refers to God's grace. When we focus so much on sin we are basically turning in on ourselves and away from Christ's goodness and mercy. If we use this time of Lent to focus only on our sinfulness, it will not help us to embrace the new life that Easter brings.

When we think about the "original sin" of Adam and Eve our thoughts drift back to that idea of a "stain" that needed taken away. This of course was done through the gift of Baptism. It was through this sacrament that we were once again made clean and filled once again with God's grace. That is how we most often look back and define what Adam and Eve did for all of humanity. However, when we focus so much on sin and what sin can do, we tend to overlook the grace that God has showered upon us. Sometimes we can become so blinded by the effects of "original sin" that we totally overlook the fact that God's creation is a great gift and a great calling.

St. Paul is telling us that sin is neither the first nor the last word of human history; rather we are reminded that human history is blessed with God's overabundant grace that was gained through the obedience of Christ. Through Christ, we have been blessed with overabundant life, and creation as well as human existence, are to be enjoyed as God's original and constant blessing.

Sin and grace always present us with choices in life. Temptation forces us into making a choice that can either help us or hurt us. Lent is a good time to think about all of this and try to focus on the blessings and grace that God puts before us in life. Good choices help us to conform more perfectly to Christ and help us to be faithful to our baptismal identity as the Body of Christ. Sinful choices sidetrack us on our journey and weaken our identity as the Body of Christ.

Penitential practices in Lent are not about suffering for the sake of suffering, instead they are meant to expand us beyond self-preoccupation to new self-knowledge, which leads us to concern for the good of others. Lent is a time of conversion, a time when we become more perfectly who we are, the Body of Christ. This is Lent's challenge and invitation!



### The Gift of Life!

The most urgent question facing our world is whether we can act quickly enough to save the Earth and its inhabitants. Noah faced a similar question thousands of years ago. In biblical times, the actions of people brought on God's flood. Today, we are the ones who threaten to destroy God's creation. Today's flood takes the form of war, environmental destruction and massive poverty and hunger – all problems created by greed and injustice. God told Noah to build an ark and to take every kind of animal into it. To save the Earth for our children and future generations, we too must build an Ark of refuge. As Noah drew upon faith and hope to secure a future for his people, so we must draw on faith and hope to build a future with no hunger and a healthy environment.

We can all do our part by helping our parish purchase an ARK through Heifer International. Each week of Lent, I will let you know just which animals have boarded the ark!

#### Stewardship of Treasure—February 19, 2023

Regular Offertory:	\$	7,763.75
Utilities & Maintenance:	\$	858.00
Votives:	\$	163.89
Cap. Project/Roof Fund:	\$	120.00
Catholic Accent:	\$	100.00
Heifer International:	\$	135.00
Eastern Europe:	\$	5.00
Ash Wednesday:	\$	37.00
Lenten Season Offering:	\$	1,050.00
Home Mission:	\$	10.00

**Total February 18/19 \$ 10,242.64**

### REALITY TOUR-Getting "Real" About Drugs

Reality Tour is a national parent and child drug education and prevention program held at the Belle Vernon High School. The next scheduled program is on **March 13, 2023** from 6-8:30 pm, arrive at 5:30 pm, at Belle Vernon Area High School, For more information, go to [realitytour.org](http://realitytour.org) or call 724-797-0955.

### Epiphany of Our Lord Fish Fry

Epiphany of Our Lord will hold their annual Fish Fry on Fridays during Lent between 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Dine in or take-out. For free local delivery call 724-684-5512. Menu features: Homemade pierogis, baked haddock, fried fish sandwiches, fries, gluten-free fish and fish sandwiches, and homemade baked goods. There will be **take out only on Good Friday**, 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.



**St. John the Baptist Parish** will hold their Fish Fry during Lent on **March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31** from 11:00 am-6:00 pm. *Eat-In or Take-Out* -

*Order ahead for Drive Thru pick up (724-736-0158).* Menu includes: Baked Fish, Fried Fish, homemade pierogi, haluski, cheese ravioli, soup and more!

### Bethlehem Olive Wood Sale

This weekend the Bethlehem Christian Families will be selling Crucifixes, religious artwork, and rosaries- all made of olive wood. Please browse and buy something made in the Holy Land. The Bethlehem Olive Wood vendor will be in the main vestibule, after all Masses.

Consider online giving, click the "my Eoffering" button on our parish website.

### RITE OF SENDING and RITE OF ELECTION/CALL TO CONTINUING CONVERSION

At the 11:00 a.m. Mass today we will celebrate the **Rite of Sending** for our candidate, **Brandon Ricker**. At 3:00 p.m. he will gather with others from across the Diocese to celebrate the **Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion** at the Blessed Sacrament Cathedral in Greensburg. The Candidates (persons already baptized) will be presented to Bishop Kulick to celebrate the remaining Sacraments of Initiation (Confirmation and Eucharist) this Easter Vigil. Let us pray for Brandon and other Candidates/Catechumens of the Diocese this Lent.

### FIRST EUCHARIST PARENT/CHILD WORKSHOP

March 4 from 9—11 a.m.

St. John the Baptist Parish Hall  
OR

March 11 from 9—11 a.m.

St. Sebastian Church



Parents/Guardians and children, who are to make their First Holy Communion this Spring, are required to attend one of the two meetings listed above.

### Reconciliation

Lent is a time when we turn inward and recognize the many ways we are in need of God's forgiveness. The Church provides us with the most amazing sacrament of forgiveness which brings comfort and peace to us all. Our region will offer the opportunity to receive

Reconciliation at the following places:

Seven Dolors, Yukon, **March 20—11:00 am**

Holy Family, West Newton, **March 21—6:00 pm**

St. Edward, Herminie, **March 23—6:00 pm**

St. John the Baptist, Perryopolis, **March 27—6:00 pm**

Epiphany of Our Lord, Monessen, **March 28—6:00 pm**

Church of St. Anne, Rostraver, **March 30—6:00 pm**

St. Sebastian, Belle Vernon, **April 1—12:00 pm**



### Growing in this Season of Lent

Each of us in our own way tries to become more aware of God's goodness during this season of Lent. The greatest gift Our Lord left us is His very presence in the Eucharist. It would be nice if we all try to make a little effort to attend liturgy more often. As the fullness of Christ becomes more real for us, the better we are as people and certainly we will all make better choices in life. Also during Lent, at Epiphany of Our Lord Church, we will offer Taeze prayer on Monday evening at 6:00 p.m., as well as Stations on Friday at 6:00 p.m.

### St. Sebastian's Lenten Reflection

All women are invited to attend an Afternoon of Lenten Reflection, sponsored by the Ladies of Faith of St. Sebastian, on **March 11**, from 1:00-3:00 PM in St. Sebastian Church. Our guest speaker will be Seminarian Mario Porreca, followed by the Stations of the Cross, Through the Eyes of Mary. We look forward to seeing you there.

**Ladies of Faith Group** will meet this Thursday, **March 2**, at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. All women of the parish are invited to attend.

### Liturgies of the Week

#### February 25—Vigil

4:30 pm Felix J. Lisovich—Lou & Pat Toth

#### February 26—First Sunday of Lent

9:00 am Isabella Rhea Herron—Dennis & Jeanne Faieta

11:00 am For All the People of Saint Sebastian Parish

#### Monday, February 27—St. Gregory of Narek

No Mass Today

#### Tuesday, February 28

8:00 am (MM) Stu Studnicki—The Cooper Family

#### Wednesday, March 1

No Mass Today

#### Thursday, March 2

No Mass Today

#### Friday, March 3—St. Katharine Drexel

8:00 am (MM) Elizabeth "Betty" Eversburg—Donna Bitonti

6:00 pm Stations of the Cross

#### Saturday, March 4—Vigil

3:30 pm Sacrament of Reconciliation

4:30 pm Bill Monroe—Pat & Lou Toth

#### March 5—Second Sunday of Lent

9:00 am David Yencsik—Sister, Mary & Family

11:00 am (Death Anniv) Minnie Hauth—Daughters Kathy & Donna

**THE ROSARY IS PRAYED SUNDAYS AT 8:30 AM, PRIOR TO THE 9:00 AM MASS. PLEASE JOIN US!**

#### MINISTRY SCHEDULE—March 4/5

	Lector	Lit. Coord	EM	Server
4:30 pm	S. Wawro	C. Farrier	C. Farrier	A. Peden
9:00 am	M. Shaughnessy	B. Moskovitz	B. Moskovitz	A. Frank
11:00 am	A. Hoffman	R. Hoffman	R. Hoffman	C. Hoffman

### Sympathy and Prayers

Please remember in your prayers those who have died: SARA SCALISE. We extend our sympathy to her family. May she rest in peace.

### Baptism Congratulations

To **Ezio Nicolas Antonio**, son of Nico and Elizabeth (Durigon) Antonio, and to **Ivy Leia Newman**, daughter of Craig and Sarah (Beresh) Newman, who were baptized in Christ. We welcome Ezio and Ivy into the Church and into our parish family. God bless them and their families.



### Baptism Preparation

Lent is the time of preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil and during the Easter Season. **The Sacrament of Baptism is not solemnly celebrated in our Parish during Lent.** If you would like to have your child baptized please call the Faith Formation Office at 724-929-9300. The next Baptism Preparation session is scheduled for March 15 at 6:30 pm in the Church.

**Prayer Shawl Ministry** will meet this Wednesday, **March 1**, in the Parish Center at 11:00 a.m. For information call Joannie Brown at 412-657-7880.



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