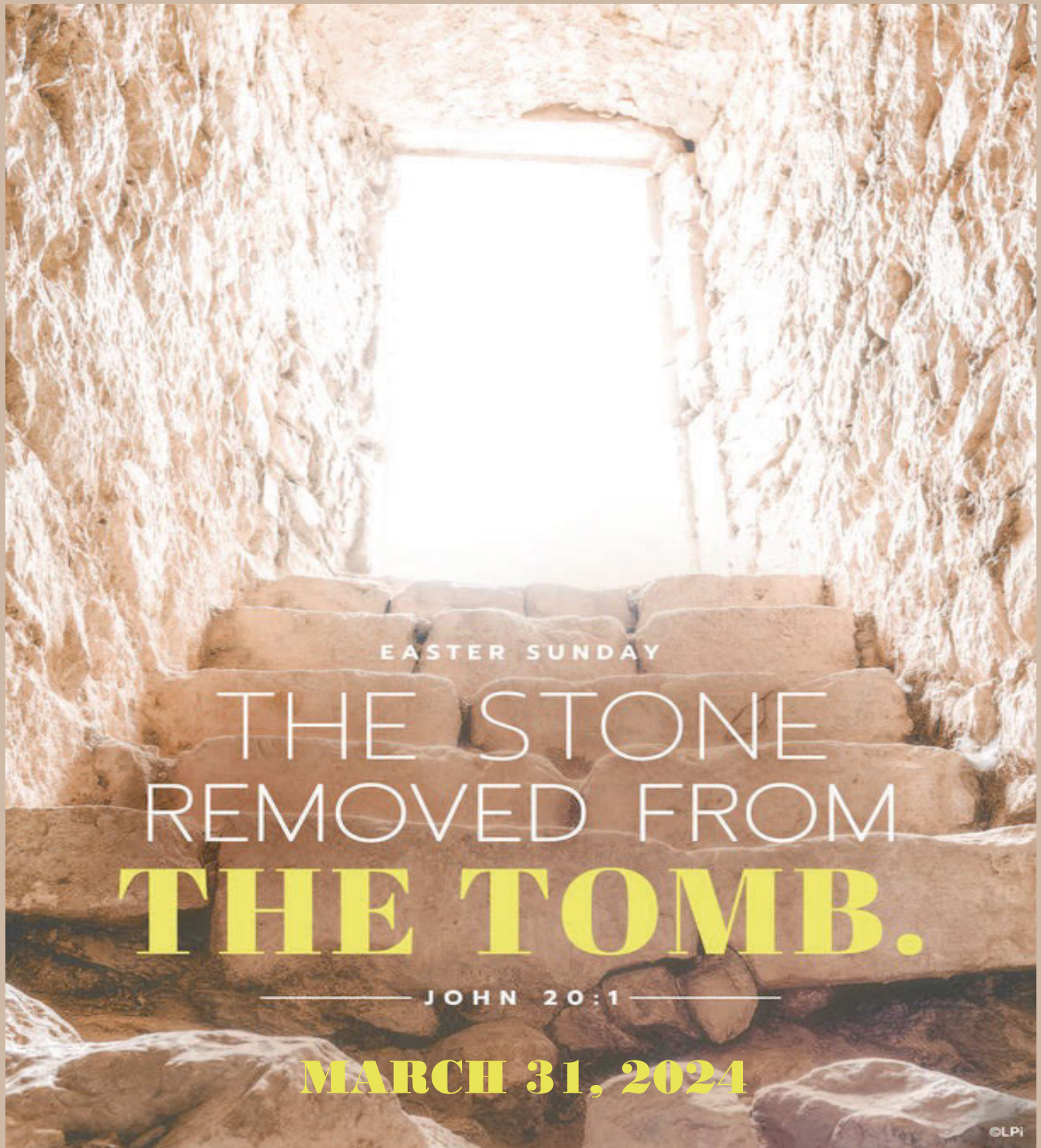


# St Sebastian Catholic Church



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801 Broad Avenue · Belle Vernon, PA 15012



EASTER SUNDAY

THE STONE  
REMOVED FROM  
**THE TOMB.**

— JOHN 20:1 —

**MARCH 31, 2024**

## *From the Pastor* We Celebrate Easter!



The resurrection of Jesus is a paradox; we believe but we do not understand. The resurrection is a mystery which we can never understand but only believe. This mystery takes us beyond all which is familiar to us – to a realm where God’s glory and power lift us up to a new dignity of risen life. It is a freely given gift by the Divine One who has loved us from the beginning of creation, who breathed life into us, and who continues to beckon us to grow in the truth of who we are.

Easter is a celebration where we acknowledge who Christ really is, the one who shared in our humanity even to the point of accepting death, but who conquered death to raise us up to a share in his life. What exactly is it that we celebrate every year on Easter. We recognize the fact that Jesus rose from the dead; but, don’t we do that every time we celebrate the Eucharist? So, what makes Easter such a special celebration in our Church year? It might have something to do with the springtime of the year when everything in nature seems to resurrect. It might also have something to do with the fact that for forty days we have been anticipating this glorious day. Whatever the reason that makes this day so special, we like to celebrate it each and every year. We tell the wonderful story of the resurrection over and over again. Jesus squeezed life out of death and goodness and love triumphed.

The story of Easter is hard for us to accept because we have never seen or experienced anyone rise from the dead. So, we search for symbols to help us comprehend this great mystery. Just as at Christmas, Christians have come up with symbols to say something about resurrection. From ancient times the egg has been a symbol of fertility and immortality, and the church borrowed it and applied it as a visual lesson to the resurrection of Jesus. There is even a tradition that Simon of Cyrene, who helped Jesus carry his cross to Calvary, was an egg merchant. The legend has Simon returning to his shop after the crucifixion only to find that all of the eggs had turned miraculously into a variety of colors adorned with drawings. The butterfly is the most ancient symbol of the resurrection because they are born out of a caterpillar’s sleep in a cocoon, symbolizing the grave. They are transformed, as if with a glorified body, unconstrained by the limitations of matter, flying into the air.

These symbols are strong statements about life, and what happened on that first Easter morning is “life” itself. I pray that as you celebrate this day with your family and friends, the peace and the joy that resurrection brings to our lives may be yours in abundance. Have a wonderful celebration and rejoice in the fact that Jesus truly has risen and that same reward awaits each of us. Alleluia!!

**Rev. Michael J. Crookston, Pastor**

*Due to the early transmission of this bulletin, the financial report for March 24, will be in a future bulletin.*

### DLA

I did not have a report in last week’s bulletin because it had to be sent out early and I didn’t have anything new to report. This is the latest on how our parish is doing. Remember that our goal for the Diocese is set at \$65,057 and our parish goal is set at \$90,057. With our portion of the DLA we were hoping to clean and restore the marble in the Church.

Thus far we have heard from only about 23% of our parishioners or 151 people. From these individuals we have collected \$35,008 which is 58% of our diocesan goal, and 38% of our parish goal. As you can see we do have a long way to go! We still have over 75% of our parish who have not yet responded. I certainly do hope that we can achieve our goals. If you have not responded yet, won’t you please consider doing so? If you have any questions about this year’s DLA, please feel free to contact me.

### Heifer International



Congratulations!...we have filled the ARK! It is gratifying to know that so many lives will be touched by your generosity. You have given a lot of people an opportunity for a better life, what better time than at Easter when we all celebrate New Life! I am so very grateful for your generous hearts.

### Mother’s Day Fundraiser

The Ladies of Faith will be offering Hanging Flower Baskets from McShane Florist. You can purchase a Basket Voucher next weekend **April 6/7**. The cost is \$20 per basket voucher. Take your voucher to McShane’s (date to be announced) and pick up a basket from their selections offered.



**Prayer Shawl Ministry** will meet this Wednesday, **April 3**, in the Parish Center at 11:00 a.m. and again at 6:30 pm.. For information call Joannie Brown at 412-657-7880.

**Ladies of Faith** will meet this Thursday, **April 4** in the Parish Hall at 6:30 p.m. All women of the Parish are invited to attend.

### Prayer Requests

Our Ladies of Faith have started a prayer chain and they invite you to join them. If you would like to be a prayer warrior, or have a prayer request, please call the office and notify our parish secretary, Linda, who can initiate your prayer chain request.

### Purse Bash



The purse bash will be held on Sunday, **April 28** from 2 p.m.—5 p.m. in the Epiphany Church Hall. Join us for a fun afternoon, but tickets are limited. Tickets are \$35 and are available at the Parish Office.

Consider online giving, click the “my Offering” button on our parish website.

### *We Celebrate Easter!*

What exactly is it that we celebrate every year on Easter. We recognize the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, but we do that every time we celebrate the Eucharist. So, what is it that makes Easter such a special celebration in our Church year? It probably has something to do with the springtime of the year when everything in nature seems to resurrect. It also has something to do with the fact that for forty days we have been anticipating this glorious day. Whatever the reason that makes this day so special, we like to celebrate it each and every year. We tell the wonderful story of the resurrection over and over again. Jesus squeezed life out of death and goodness and love triumphed. I pray that as you celebrate this day with your family and friends, the peace and the joy that resurrection brings to our lives may be yours in abundance. Have a wonderful celebration and rejoice in the fact that Jesus truly has risen and that same reward awaits each of us.

### **Easter Gratefulness**

As we bask in the glory that the Risen Lord brings I can't help but think over the past few weeks with much gratitude. As a parish family I think we celebrated this great feast with much style and grace. God's Spirit could certainly be felt in the hearts of all. Sometimes we do not realize how many people are involved in a single liturgy let alone an entire season. I certainly would like to thank everyone for their willingness to give so generously of their time and talents. In a special way I would like to recognize:

~ All of our Liturgical ministers; the Lectors, Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, Altar Servers, Greeters and Ushers.

~ Dean Dellamalva and all of our Choir members and cantors who gave so much of their time with rehearsals.

All in all, we as a Parish Family enjoyed a Blessed Easter celebration!

### **First Holy Communion**

Over the next two weeks our second graders will be making their First Holy Communion. This is always a life giving time for our parish family. I ask that you keep these children in your thoughts and prayers as they share in the gift of the Eucharist.



### **Celebration of Confirmation**

On **April 20**, St. Sebastian will host our neighboring parishes for the celebration of Confirmation. Along with the Bishop and the priests from surrounding parishes, it should be a wonderful celebration during the Season of Easter.

Along with the conferring of Confirmation, there will be a reception immediately following in the Hall. We will need cookies, veggie and cheese trays for this. Won't you consider baking some cookies or making some other donation for this event? I will have more information on this in the coming weeks.



## *Liturgies of the Week*

### **March 30—Vigil**

8:00 pm Intention of the Celebrant

### **March 31—Resurrection of the Lord**

9:00 am Intention of the Celebrant

11:00 am Intention of the Celebrant

### **Monday of Easter Week, April 1**

8:00 am Mass at Epiphany Of Our Lord

### **Tuesday of Easter Week, April 2**

8:00 am Janet Baron—Tim Witeneske & Sarah Swartz

### **Wednesday of Easter Week, April 3**

No Mass Today

### **Thursday of Easter Week, April 4**

8:00 am Mass at Epiphany Of Our Lord

### **Friday of Easter Week, April 5**

8:00 am Lilian Laird—Lidia Salvino

### **April 6—Vigil**

3:30 pm *Sacrament of Reconciliation*

4:30 pm (Date of Birth) Joseph Uhlman—Wife, Terri

### **April 7—Second Sunday of Easter**

9:00 am (Death Anniv) Robert Yencsik—Donna & Ron Santori

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

*Sacrament of First Eucharist*

**In observance of the celebration of Easter, the Parish Office will be closed Monday, April 1.**

**The Paschal Candle**—This year the Paschal Candle is given in loving memory of the Deceased members of the Turcheck Family by son, Lou.

**Altar Candle Ring Flowers**—This week's Altar Candle Flowers are given in memory of the Roberts & Spazok Families, by Fran & Diane Roberts.



### **Paschal Candle & Altar/Candle Ring Flowers**

If you would like to have flowers in memory of a deceased loved one or for a special intention, please contact the Parish Office. Flowers for the Paschal Candle are \$100, and flowers for the Altar Candle Rings are \$100 for the pair.



### *Our Return to Easter*



Even though we are baptized, what we constantly lose and betray is precisely that which we received at baptism.

Therefore Easter is our return every year to our own baptism, whereas Lent is our preparation for that return the slow and sustained effort to perform, at the end, our own "passage or pascha" into the new life in Christ... Each year Lent and Easter are, once again, the rediscovery and the recovery by us of what we were made through our own baptismal death and resurrection.



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