

# Fourth Sunday of Advent

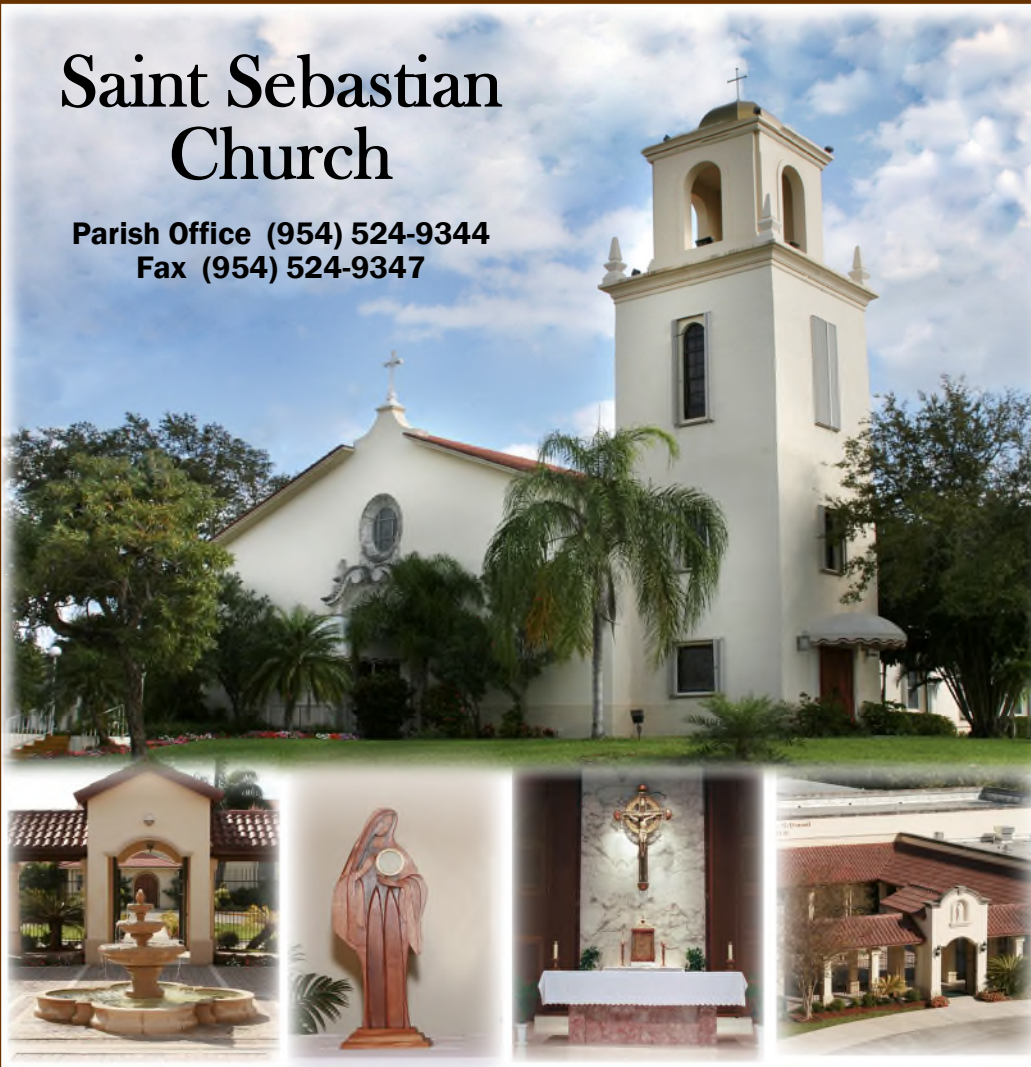
2000 Marietta (S.E. 25th) Avenue

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316

[info@stsebastianfl.org](mailto:info@stsebastianfl.org)

## Saint Sebastian Church

Parish Office (954) 524-9344  
Fax (954) 524-9347



### MASSES

Saturday 5 pm  
(Sunday Vigil)

Sunday 8:30 & 11 am

Weekdays 8:30 am  
(Mon. through Fri.)

Holy Days  
(Schedule varies)

### PARISH STAFF

Rev. Ernest Biriruka  
*Pastor*

Miss Anne M. Gardner  
*Pastoral Assistant*

Ms. Judy Fisher  
*Office Assistant*

Mr. Peter J. Manfredi, Jr.  
*Director of Music*  
(954) 868-6137

Mr. Patricio Diaz-Pizarro  
*Maintenance*

### PASTORAL COUNCIL

Nancy Adams  
Elizabeth Calhoun  
Judy Fisher  
Rosemary Guerin  
Frank Krauser  
Richard Page  
Connie Reed  
Chuck Wobby

### PARISH WEBSITE:

[stsebastianfl.org](http://stsebastianfl.org)

### THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

is arranged by appointment. Please call the office.

### THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

(Confession) 4:00-4:45 pm on Saturday, or by appointment.

**THE SACRAMENT OF THE SICK** Please call the office as soon as anyone is seriously ill.

**THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY** Please call the office at least six months in advance of the proposed wedding date.

**PARISH REGISTRATION** We invite anyone wishing to register in our Parish to visit or call the Parish Office, or stop by the Welcome table when you come for Sunday Mass to complete a census card and learn more about our Parish



## Mission Statement

We, the family of St. Sebastian Parish, are a stewardship parish, sharing God's Gifts. We are the hands and feet of Christ on Earth. In union with the Universal Roman Catholic Church, we endeavor to become a prayerful and unified community deeply committed to Jesus Christ, and loving service in His name. We hope to be a welcoming, caring and friendly Parish Family, wherein the gifts and talents of all - young and old - are recognized, nurtured and used to build the Kingdom of God in the world.

# ***From the desk of our Pastor, Father Ernest***

*Merry Christmas!*

Extracts from Pope Benedict's Homily on December 24, 2005

But there is more: in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God himself, God from God, became man. To him the Father says: "You are my son". God's everlasting "today" has come down into the fleeting today of the world and lifted our momentary today into God's eternal today. God is so great that he can become small. God is so powerful that he can make himself vulnerable and come to us as a defenceless child, so that we can love him. God is so good that he can give up his divine splendour and come down to a stable, so that we might find him, so that his goodness might touch us, give itself to us and continue to work through us. This is Christmas: "You are my son, this day I have begotten you". God has become one of us, so that we can be with him and become like him. As a sign, he chose the Child lying in the manger: this is how God is. This is how we come to know him. And on every child shines something of the splendour of that "today", of that closeness of God which we ought to love and to which we must yield – it shines on every child, even on those still unborn.

Let us listen to a second phrase from the liturgy of this holy Night, one taken from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah: "Upon the people who walked in darkness a great light has shone" (*Is* 9:1). The word "light" pervades the entire liturgy of tonight's Mass. It is found again in the passage drawn from Saint Paul's letter to Titus: "The grace of God has appeared" (2:11). The expression "has appeared", in the original Greek says the same thing that was expressed in Hebrew by the words "a light has shone": this "apparition" – this "epiphany" – is the breaking of God's light upon a world full of darkness and unsolved problems. The Gospel then relates that the glory of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and "shone around them" (*Lk* 2:9). Wherever God's glory appears, light spreads throughout the world. Saint John tells us that "God is light and in him is no darkness" (*1 Jn* 1:5). The light is a source of life.

But first, light means knowledge; it means truth, as contrasted with the darkness of falsehood and ignorance. Light gives us life, it shows us the way. But light, as a source of heat, also means love. Where there is love, light shines forth in the world; where there is hatred, the world remains in darkness. In the stable of Bethlehem there appeared the great light which the world awaits. In that Child lying in the stable, God has shown his glory – the glory of love, which gives itself away, stripping itself of all grandeur in order to guide us along the way of love. The light of Bethlehem has never been extinguished. In every age it has touched men and women, "it has shone around them". Wherever people put their faith in that Child, charity also sprang up – charity towards others, loving concern for the weak and the suffering, the grace of forgiveness. From Bethlehem a stream of light, love and truth spreads through the centuries. If we look to the Saints – from Paul and Augustine to Francis and Dominic, from Francis Xavier and Teresa of Avila to Mother Teresa of Calcutta – we see this flood of goodness, this path of light kindled ever anew by the mystery of Bethlehem, by that God who became a Child. In that Child, God countered the violence of this world with his own goodness. He calls us to follow that Child.

When we look towards Bethlehem, let us pray in a special way for the birthplace of our Redeemer and for the men and women who live and suffer there. We wish to pray for peace in the Holy Land: Look, O Lord, upon this corner of the earth, your Homeland, which is so very dear to you! Let your light shine upon it! Let it know peace!

Among Christians, the word "peace" has taken on a very particular meaning: it has become a word to designate communion in the Eucharist. There Christ's peace is present. In all the places where the Eucharist is celebrated, a great network of peace spreads through the world. The communities gathered around the Eucharist make up a kingdom of peace as wide as the world itself. When we celebrate the Eucharist we find ourselves in Bethlehem, in the "house of bread". Christ gives himself to us and, in doing so, gives us his peace. He gives it to us so that we can carry the light of peace within and give it to others. He gives it to us so that we can become peacemakers and builders of peace in the world. And so we pray: Lord, fulfil your promise! Where there is conflict, give birth to peace! Where there is hatred, make love spring up! Where darkness prevails, let light shine! Make us heralds of your peace! Amen.

## Mass Intentions

<b>Saturday</b> 5:00 pm	<b>December 23</b> Living & Deceased of our Parish
<b>Sunday</b> 8:30 am	<b>December 24</b> † Dolores Hesse Fink, req. by husband, Jack In Thanksgiving, req. by Maher Family
11:00 am	Priests & Religious of our Archdiocese
<b>Christmas Eve:</b> 5:00 pm	<b>December 24</b> Parishioners & Benefactors
<b>Christmas Day</b> 8:30 am	<b>December 25</b> † Charles & Marie Maher, req. by Maher Family
11:00 am	Living & Deceased of our Parish
<b>Tuesday</b> 8:30 am	<b>December 26</b> Wellbeing of Barry Hogan, req. by Judy Fisher
<b>Wednesday</b> 8:30 am	<b>December 27</b> Peace in the world
<b>Thursday</b> 8:30 am	<b>December 28</b> Wellbeing of Margaret Mary Dwyer, req. by Friends
<b>Friday</b> 8:30 am	<b>December 29</b> † Father Dan Madden, O.P.
<b>Saturday</b> 5:00 pm	<b>December 30</b> † Gregory Schreiber, req. by Abernethy Family
<b>Sunday</b> 8:30 am	<b>December 31</b> Living & Deceased of our Parish
11:00 am	Priests & Religious of our Archdiocese

## REMEMBER THE SICK

Mary Lou Mann, Suzanne Plum, Don Loughran, Jr., Sandy Rodrigues, John

Harris, Stephen Black, Alvaro Arevalo, Paul Ristow, Matt Keyzers, Judy Flood, Sister Frances Voss, O.S.C., Tom Casey, Charles Benoit, Rob Messerschmidt, Mary Pat Connolly, Anne McCormick, Patricia Moss, Patty Marma, Diane Johnson, Jim Guerin, Susan Lochrie, Agnes McCauley, Teri Beth Gooch, Ray Wicklander, Kathy Mahoney, Lila Ferzacca, Cash Dugan, Harriette Sessa, Barry Hogan, Ann Maher

## BIBLE SHARING

Come for coffee and Scripture Sharing each Thursday in the Parish Hall at 9:15 am. Everyone is invited. You may also join us online by dialing 848-777-1212. When prompted put in 1431434#. For more info, call Mary Kennedy at 954-290-1194. We will be sharing from the Book of Daniel with Miriam Rivas facilitating.

## MASS ON JANUARY 1

Mass on January 1, 2024 - the Solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God - will be celebrated at **10:00 am**. Please note that this will be the only Mass celebrated at St. Sebastian on January first.

## R.C.I.A.

Classes for those wishing to become Catholic as well as those wishing to learn to more about our Faith meet on the first and third Wednesday of the month at 6:00 pm. For more information and to register, please call the Parish Office.

## SAVE THE DATE

**Monday, January 1 - 10:00 am** - Mass of the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Merry Christmas to all the parishioners who have so faithfully contributed weekly food and hygiene items to the needy in our city. We hope they know by the necessary items they receive that there are people who truly care for them. May we continue our generous contributions through the coming year.

To care is to share. **PLEASE REMEMBER:** The Pantry needs **plastic grocery bags** for food distribution and empty, clean (6 or 12) **egg cartons**. You can place these items in the shopping carts. Thank you! If you know of anyone in need, please tell them that a drive thru grocery distribution takes place every Friday from 1:30-4 PM at Blessed Sacrament Church, 1701 E Oakland Park Blvd (entrance to parking lot on NE 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and closes at 3:15). First timers must provide proof of residency in Broward County.



## THANK YOU!

Thank you to those who helped to decorate the church for Christmas: Susie O'Leary, Rich Stockinger, Caroline Kervin, Ann Murry, Sue & Scott Martinez, and Patricio Diaz-Pizarro. A very special thank you to the anonymous donor for their gift of the beautiful Christmas tree. Each of you bless us with your generosity of time, talent and treasure in enhancing our Christmas celebrations.

## MASS STIPENDS

As of January 1, 2024, we ask that a donation of \$10. be given when a Mass is requested at St. Sebastian. This should be done at the time the Mass is requested through the Parish Office.

## CAN YOU HELP?

Please consider making an end-of-year gift to our Parish. My dear Parishioners, our facilities need repairs urgently:

- The A/C for the Chapel needs to be replaced.
- Leaks in the walkway by the Chapel and the entrance to the office;
- Multiple leaks in the roof of the rectory; there are so many that they advise replacing the whole roof;
- The hand rails at the Parish Center, etc.

Your help is greatly appreciated.

*Father Ernest*

## BEWARE OF SCAMMERS!

Several of our parishioners have received emails - supposedly from Father Ernest - asking for gift cards. **THIS IS A SCAM!** No one associated with St. Sebastian will make this kind of request, so please do not be fooled. If you have doubt as to whether or not an email or text message, etc., has legitimately been sent through the Parish Office you should phone the office and speak with a "real live person" to check it out.

*Christmas Blessings  
to you and yours!*

Follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/StsebastianFL](http://www.facebook.com/StsebastianFL)

A silhouette of a nativity scene is centered in the background. It shows a manger with a baby, a woman, a man with a staff, and a dog. The scene is set against a dark blue night sky with a starburst above the manger and a small light source behind the figures. The overall image has a soft, ethereal glow.

*For a child is born to us,*

*A son is given us;*

*Upon His shoulder  
dominion rests.*

*They name him*

*Wonder-Counselor,*

*God-Hero,*

*Father-Forever,*

*Prince of Peace.*

*Isaiah 9:5*