



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS
CATHOLIC CHURCH • BARTOW, FL
DIOCESE OF ORLANDO

ST. THOMAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

September 19, 2021

1. As Catholics we should come to Mass every weekend (The Lord's Day). Without the Eucharist we are not true followers of Christ. Jesus should be in our hearts and our homes. Without Him we are too weak to follow Him rightly. Baptism, first communion and confirmation never make you a Catholic, a true follower of Jesus. But regular attendance of Mass is what fulfills God's command to "Make Sabbath day holy".
2. The Social Hall is in need of a roof replacement at a cost of about \$23,000. Donations can be put in the upgrade envelopes located in the pews and placed into the collection baskets.
3. There is a twelve-month series, *Splendor of our Faith*, led by Fr. Blake Britton that is being held in Lakeland at St. Joseph Church, Resurrection Church and St. Anthony Church on a rotating basis. All sessions will be on the second Tuesday of the month from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Livestream will be available. The first session, Apostolic Age (Historical Context) which was held on August 10, can still be viewed by clicking on the following link.
<https://www.facebook.com/StJoesLakeland/videos/584266979409394?sfns=mo>
4. If you wish to contribute to the 2021 Catholic Appeal, envelopes are available in the Narthex and can be sent directly to the address printed on the envelope. St. Thomas is about \$350 short of their goal, and if the goal is not met, the money will come from the parish. St. Elizabeth has exceeded their goal by about \$1,600.
5. Because Pope Francis has declared this as the year of St. Joseph, entrusting all of us to his protection, there is a devotion to St. Joseph every Wednesday at 6:00 pm. It begins outside at the statue and ends in the church. See page 5 for more details.

6. To subscribe to Bishop John Noonan's E-Scroll with news from the Diocese of Orlando <https://www.orlandodiocese.org/e-scroll/>. You only have to provide your name and email address.

7. Bishop Robert Barron, an author, speaker, theologian and founder of Word on Fire, a global media ministry, is producing a new Bible series. Volume I focuses on the Gospels and can be ordered at <https://wordonfire.org/bible>. Volume II, Acts, Letters, and Revelation is to be released in 2022. There will be a total of seven volumes. If you would like to subscribe to Bishop Barron's newsletter, go to <https://wordonfire.org/#newsletter> and just provide your email address.

Catholic Trivia

Servant of God Sister Thea Bowman was born Bertha Elizabeth Bowman in Yazoo City, Mississippi on December 29, 1937. Her grandfather had been born a slave but her father was a physician and her mother a teacher. She was raised in a Methodist home but, with her parents' permission, converted to the Roman Catholic faith at the age of nine. She joined the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration at La Crosse, Wisconsin at age 15, overcoming her parents' objections. She earned a B.A. in English in 1965 from Viterbo University in Lacrosse, run by her congregation, and went on to attend The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where she earned an M.A. in English in 1969 and a Ph.D. in English in 1972, writing her doctoral thesis on Thomas More.

Bowman taught at an elementary school in La Crosse and at a high school in Canton, Mississippi. She later taught at her alma maters, Viterbo College and the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., as well as at Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Bowman had an impact on Catholic liturgical music for black Catholics in developing and legitimizing a distinct worship form for Black Catholics. She assisted in the production of an African American Catholic hymnal. Bowman explained: "When we understand our history and culture, then we can develop the ritual, the music and the devotional expression that satisfy us in the Church." In her essay titled "The Gift of African American Sacred Song" she wrote, "Black sacred song is soulful song".

After she had spent 16 years in education, the Bishop of Jackson, Mississippi, invited Bowman to become a consultant for intercultural awareness for his diocese. She then became more directly involved with ministry to her fellow African Americans. She gave inspirational talks to Black congregations and found a tremendous response by the people to whom she spoke. She brought her "ministry of joy" to far-ranging audiences, from Nigeria and Kenya to Canada, the Virgin Islands and the United States. She called on Catholics to celebrate their differences and to retain their cultures, but to reflect their joy at being one in Christ, a joy which her audiences, including those of other faiths, found her exhibiting to a remarkable degree.

Arguably no person in recent memory did more to resist and transform the sad legacy of segregation and racism in the Catholic Church than Thea Bowman who inspired millions with her singing and message of God's love for all races and faiths. Sister Thea awakened a sense of fellowship in people both within and well beyond the Catholic world, first and foremost through her charismatic presence. She was a popular speaker on faith and spirituality in her final years and also helped found the National Black Sisters Conference to provide support for African American women in Catholic religious institutes.

She told Mike Wallace during an appearance on the show *60 Minutes* "I think the difference between me and some people is that I'm content to do my little bit. Sometimes people think they have to do big things in order to make change. But if each one would light a candle, we'd have a tremendous light."

In 1989, in recognition of her contributions to the service of the Church, she was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Religion by Boston College in Massachusetts. Just months before

her death, Bowman spoke to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1989 from her wheelchair, and the bishops "powerfully and visibly moved, applauded her. Less than a week before her death, the University of Notre Dame announced that it would award Bowman the 1990 Laetare Medal. It was presented posthumously at the 1990 commencement exercises. She died from cancer on March 30, 1990 at the age of 52, in Canton, Mississippi and was buried with her parents in Memphis, Tennessee.

A cause for canonization has been opened for Bowman. In mid-2018, she was officially designated a Servant of God, the first step toward possible sainthood. At the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' 2018 Fall General Assembly, the Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance indicated unanimous support for the advancement of Sister Thea Bowman's canonization cause on the diocesan level.



If you would like to read more about the six black Catholics that have been included in the Catholic Trivia information, there is a book available, "Black Catholics on the Road to Sainthood, Michael R. Heinlein, Editor

Declaration of Year of St. Joseph 2020-2021

On December 8, 2020, the Church commemorated the 150th anniversary of the decree by Pope Pius IX in 1870 declaring St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church. To observe this anniversary and to highlight the importance of devotion to the intercession of St. Joseph, I would like to begin with the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary (March 19th) to dedicate a special day and time for devotion to St. Joseph in our parish. The blessing of the new statue of St. Joseph will be after Mass on Friday the 19th.

In the Liturgy of the Church, Wednesday was always a day dedicated to St. Joseph. Votive Masses were composed in honor of him. His name is mentioned in all Eucharistic Prayers. But somehow, he still is a forgotten Saint. In our church beginning March 24th we will have every Wednesday at 6PM devotion to St. Joseph at the statue.

With the encouragement of many, I wish to invite all our parishioners to open their minds and hearts to increased devotion to St. Joseph and to implore his intercession during this challenging and uncertain time. I offer you this invitation for the following reasons.

1. We need the example and witness of St. Joseph now more than ever, for St. Joseph, the just man, was chosen by God to be the foster father of Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God. The Church everywhere is in need of the protection of our heavenly patron.
2. Joseph espoused himself to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Joseph the faithful and chaste husband is a marvelous example for all husbands and fathers and as such can help the men of our parish embrace this vocation with renewed fervor and dedication.
3. Joseph stands out as an exemplary example and model for priests. As in all times, priests of the Church today need a powerful intercessor, like St. Joseph, to remain steadfast in their pastoral duties as shepherds and teachers.

4. Joseph was a true family man, who worked hard to safeguard the Holy Family from danger and to provide for Jesus and Mary's needs, in spite of the poverty they experienced. Family life is under such attack. We can unite ourselves more closely under the mantle of Mary and her most chaste spouse, St. Joseph to strengthen family life through the sacrament of marriage.
5. The sabbath was important to the Holy Family. Joseph would have been instrumental in imparting the traditions of the Jewish faith to the child, Jesus. We can look to St. Joseph and the example he gave in this regard to help us reclaim the Christian sabbath, Sunday, as the Day of the Lord.
6. Joseph was a just man. He can be a great example to inspire all of us to live lives of reclaimed purity and innocence.
7. In this time of uncertainty, we all need more father figures, especially in the spiritual realm. Joseph did not shrink away from his responsibilities as foster father and husband but accepted them with trust and courage. We all need such father like men in our lives, both naturally and spiritually to lead us through these dark and anxious times.

These are among the most important of my reasons for inviting us to reflect, pray for the intercession of and call upon St. Joseph in this Parish during this special Year dedicated to him.

St. Joseph, pray for us

Year of St. Joseph

Pope Francis announced a Year of St. Joseph in honor of the 150th anniversary of the saint's proclamation as patron of the Universal Church by Pope Pius IX on Dec. 8, 1870. The year of St Joseph begins Dec. 8, 2020, and concludes on Dec.8, 2021.

Pope Francis had established a Year of St. Joseph so that "every member of the faithful, following his example, may strengthen their life of faith daily in the complete fulfillment of God's will."

The pope explained in the letter, entitled *Patris corde* ("With a father's heart") that he wanted to share some "personal reflections" on the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

"My desire to do so increased during these months of pandemic, noting that many people had made hidden sacrifices during the crisis in order to protect others. Each of us can discover in Joseph - the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence - an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. St. Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. In his relationship to Jesus, Joseph was the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father: he watched over him and protected him, never leaving him to go his own way. Our world today needs fathers. Contemporary world required examples of true fatherhood."

The Apostolic Penitentiary said that, "to reaffirm the universality of St. Joseph's patronage in the Church," it would grant a plenary indulgence to Catholics in honor of St. Joseph, especially on

- March 19, the saint's solemnity,
- May 1, the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker
- Feast of the Holy Family on Dec. 29
- 19th of each month and
- every Wednesday, a day dedicated to the Saint in the Latin tradition.

The decree said: "In the current context of health emergency, the gift of the plenary indulgence is particularly extended to the elderly, the sick, the dying and all those who for legitimate reasons are unable to leave the house, who, with a soul detached from any sin and with the intention of fulfilling, as soon as possible, the three usual conditions, in their own home or where the impediment keeps them, recite an act of piety in honor of St. Joseph, comfort of the sick and patron of a happy death, offering with trust in God the pains and discomforts of their life."

The three conditions for receiving a plenary indulgence are sacramental confession, the reception of Holy Communion and prayer for the pope's intentions.