

Father Eugene Grytner, SDS  
Office hrs Mon-Fri 9 am to 12 pm  
1305 E. Mann Road Bartow, FL 33830

**MASSES**

**Daily at 8:30 am - No Mass on  
Wednesday and Saturday morning.**

**Saturday: Vigil Bartow: 5:00 pm**

**Sunday: Ft. Meade 8:00 am**

**Sunday: Bartow 10:30 am**

**Sacraments**

**Confessions:** Half hour prior to masses.

**Marriage preparation:** Arrangements must be  
made four months in advance.

**Baptism:** Last Sunday of the month.  
Call Evelyn Rivera 863-370-4000  
evcoultter@aol.com

**Sick calls** – Anytime  
**Communion for Sick and Home Bound**  
Call the Church Office

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** - Every  
Sunday 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm  
Monday 8:30 am to 10:30 am

Religious Education Administrator  
Jessica Whitmer 863-602-3837

Religious Formation – Every Sunday  
Sept thru May

Preschool thru 8th - Sun 9 am to 10:15 am

High School Sunday 9:00 to 10:15 am  
(1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month.)

Email: gloria121@verizon.net  
Phone 863-533-8578  
Fax 863- 533-5090  
[www.stthomasbartow.org](http://www.stthomasbartow.org)

**NEW PARISHIONERS WELCOME!**  
**Registration forms in church or office**

Remember St. Thomas Church in your will

*Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church*  
2180 S. Kissingen Ave. Bartow FL, 33830  
Diocese of Orlando



*The Lord  
is compassionate,  
merciful, patient,  
and always ready*

*to Forgive*

*Psalm 103:8*

# 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time September 17, 2023



## Mass Intentions

Sat Sep 16	5:00 pm	All Souls in Purgatory
Sun Sep 17	8:00 am	For All Parishioners
Sun Sep 17	10:30 am	+Jose Claudio Galindo By Family
Tue Sep 19	8:30 am	Christina Kjerrumgaard By Yvonne & Bill Kjerrumgaard
Thu Sep 21	8:30 am	All Souls in Purgatory
Fri Sep 22	8:30 am	
Sat Sep 23	5:00 pm	
Sun Sep 24	8:00 am	For All Parishioners
Sun Sep 24	10:30 am	

No Daily Mass September 11<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>.

### Please Pray For.....

Stuart Andrews, Terry Ayres, Kristin Bing, Pete Byrne, Melvin Casey, Alan English, Rachel Gohlman, Delores Hart, Austin Heath, Zachary Heath, Ivette Hernandez, Jennifer Hoffer, Mark Jansen, Missy Jansen, Mark Jones, Gail Kautz, Bill Kjerrumgaard, Sara Long, Aaron Mills, Adam Mills, Zachary Mills, Scott Mize, Lacey Pate, George Pizano, Karlee Severns, Richie Southwell, Gloria Stenger, Murphy Stidham, Debi Tuck, Laura Webb

### **Please pray for our deceased diocesan priests**

Sep 14, 2017 Msgr. Patrick Caverly  
Sep 19, 2016 Very Rev. John M. McCormick  
Sep 23, 1986 Rev. Louis Bamundo  
Sep 27, 1995 Rev. Charles Schneider

**Jesus desires to heal, renew, and unify the Church and the world. How will he do it? By uniting us once again around the source and summit of our faith in the celebration of the Eucharist.**

LECTORS	SME
9/16-5:00 pm	
Toni Hoffer Jessica Witmer	Mary Stratton Toni Hoffer
9/17-10:30 am	
Rick Davila Sara Long	Sharon Mason Bill Leckie
9/23-5:00 pm	
Evelyn Rivera Barbara Van Orsdale	Evelyn Rivera Doug Van Orsdale
9/24-10:30 am	
Maureen Leckie Pat Lowery	Pat Lowery George Cherry

### Saint Thomas Collection

9/3	Regular	\$1681.00
	Maintenance	130.00
	Disaster Relief	713.00

### Saint Elizabeth Collection

9/3	Regular	2141.00
	Disaster Relief	1373.00

### Diocesan Collection-September 17<sup>th</sup> Priest Retirement and Priest Care



Rummage Sale items are being accepted at this time. The sale is scheduled for **October 6** and **October 7**.

*What will convert America and save the world? My answer is prayer. What we need is for every parish to come before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in Holy Hours of prayer.*

**ST TERESA OF CALCUTTA**

### **A LASTING TRAIL OF LIGHT: THE WITNESS OF PEDRO BALLESTER**

(Continued from last week)

Given how recent Pedro's illness and death are, one wonders if the film's director had any misgivings about this being portrayed on screen. "I felt a great responsibility when I met with his parents and brothers," said Ezratty. "They let me see Pedro's mobile phone, told me about his difficulties. ... My hair stood on end

when I saw footage he had filmed of himself when he found out his illness was incurable and he only had months live.”

Through the film, Ezratty wants audiences not just to appreciate Pedro’s witness but also somehow to feel as if they have come to know him.

“I was struck by his radical love, service and connectedness to others, his authenticity.” Pedro’s story, added Ezratty, challenged him in such a way that making the documentary became a priority for him in an already busy film schedule.

Attending the Dec. 3 London premiere of *I’ve Never Been Happier* was Marian Green. Her reaction to the film was immediate: “Wow, what a wonderful gift it was. Not at all sentimental or saccharine, Pedro is shown as very real, very human, even ordinary, with his feet firmly placed on the earth.”

She said she was struck by how the film portrayed the young man’s generosity, his capacity for friendship and his joy in suffering, all of which, she says was “an inspiration to me and touched me in a deep and emotional way.” She was particularly moved by the strength of his faith as depicted in his to camera monologues when close to death

“‘I’ve never been happier’: How many young men on their death bed could say such a thing?” wondered Green, who added that the film has made a personal call to her “to grow in my own faith, to love God more, and to bring many souls to God. I will certainly give Pedro lots of work to do in heaven.”

Valero said he is delighted with the film and its initial reception.

“At the two launch events in London and Manchester, we had a total of over 250 people, and the response was equally positive: Everyone was very moved by the film,” he said. The film has now been released on YouTube, with subtitles in several languages; to date, it has had more than 32,000 views.

“We are receiving messages from bishops and priests, as well as many ordinary laypeople, telling us that they have been very moved by the documentary and that it will do a lot of good, inspiring many people to come closer to God.

We would like Pedro’s life and witness to be more widely known in Britain and abroad,” observed Valero.

Valero’s hopes around the film’s release are more specific still. “January 2023 marked five years since Pedro died,” he explained. “We are considering the possibility of asking to start the process of canonization. We have been encouraged to do so by a number of clerics, including bishops, and many laypeople.”

It was a Saturday morning when Pedro died at Greygarth Hall, an Opus Dei residence in Manchester. On a day of the week traditionally dedicated to Our Lady, he died wearing her scapular and with an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe in front of him; those gathered around his death bed, his parents and brothers, as well as some of his friends, prayed the *Salve Regina* as he passed from this world to the next.

Pedro’s funeral took place in Manchester on Jan. 23, 2018. The chief celebrant was Archbishop Arthur Roche, secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. While bishop of Leeds, he had gotten to know the Ballester family.

Archbishop Roche said the following during the funeral Mass: “As we remember you with great affection within this Mass, so loved by you, there is much in what we now do at this altar that gives us a great insight into what made you such a fine man and a holy man, a brave man and a gentleman, a son and a brother and a good friend. We loved you much; we shall miss you dearly.”

Less than a month before he died, a group of friends came to visit Pedro in the hospital. He asked one friend, “Are you happy?” — to which his friend replied, “Yes, I am, and you?” After so many years of suffering and now aware he was about to die, Pedro replied simply, “I have never been happier.”

K.V. Turley

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