



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

ST. THOMAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 30, 2025

1. **Penance Service – Tuesday April 1, 2025 - 7:00 pm.**
2. **Abstinence (no meat) on Fridays during Lent.**
3. **PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR PEACE IN THE UKRAINE AND ISRAEL.**
4. **Greece in Footsteps of St. Paul with Greek Isle Cruise & Medjugorje.** Fr. Eugene has accepted an offer of Spiritual Director, 206 Tour 161-A, September 26 – October 10, 2025. You can find the details on the trip by clicking on the link <https://www.206tours.com/cms/tour161a/>. To see the prices, click on Dates & Prices, select September 26 – October 10. Father is leaving from Tampa. You can also click on the button "Fr. Eugene's Pilgrimages on the website homepage to see the details of the trip. If you are only interested in **Greece in Footsteps of St. Paul with Greek Isle Cruise** without Medjugorje, you would choose Tour 161, September 26 – October 6. He will be Spiritual Director on both tours.
5. **The obligation to participate in the Eucharist in person on Sundays and other holy days of obligation was restored three years ago on Palm Sunday 2022.** Regular attendance at Mass is what fulfills God's commandment to "Keep holy the Sabbath Day". Our world is hurting. We all need healing yet many of us are separated from the source of our strength. Jesus Christ invites us to return to the source and summit of our faith: his Real Presence in the Eucharist.
6. Our Parish bulletin can be viewed weekly online by clicking on the Bulletin button on our website at www.stthomasbartow.org. A new button has been added that you can also see the previous week's bulletin. If you do not have access to the internet, please

let the office know, and copies can be printed. If you look at the bulletin on your phone, you can add an icon to your homepage by doing the following steps for an iPhone. **1. Do a search for stthomasbartow.org.** **2. When the page opens, Click** (touch) the small square with an arrow pointing up on the bottom of the screen. **3. Scroll** down and (touch “Add to Home Screen”. **4. Click** (touch) “Add” in the upper right-hand corner. The next time you want to view the website, you only have to touch the new icon on your home page screen. If you need help finding the website or creating the icon on your phone, call the office or stop in the narthex after Mass for help. If you have an Android phone, please call the office for directions.

7. To subscribe to Bishop John Noonan’s E-Scroll, news from the Diocese of Orlando go to www.orlandodiocese.org/e-scroll/. Just provide your name and email address.
8. Fr. Blake Britton, a priest in our Diocese, who is now at the Pontifical Institute of St. John Paul II in Washington DC for further studies, has written a book, *Reclaiming Vatican II, What It (Really) Said, What It Means, and How It Calls Us to Renew the Church*. If you would like to purchase the book, click on the following link: <https://books.wordonfire.org/reclaimingvaticanii>
9. Bishop Robert Barron, author, speaker, theologian and founder of Word on Fire, a global media ministry, is producing a Bible series. Volume I focuses on the Gospels, Volume II on Acts, Letters, and Revelation, and Volume III, The Pentateuch. All can be ordered at <https://wordonfire.org/bible>. 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.
10. In honor of Mother Angelica, foundress of EWTN catholic television network, please consider a gift of \$10, \$20, or \$25 per month or any amount you choose.
11. The annual Women’s Club Rummage Sale is planned for Friday and Saturday, October 17 & 18. If you have items for the sale, you can bring them to the Social Hall at any time. Just call the office, and someone will open the door for you.

Catholic Trivia

So, what is almsgiving really? The saints show us the way.

Let's be honest—when we hear the word almsgiving, we might think, “Okay, donate something and check the Lent box.” But there's more to it than that. For Catholics today, especially during Lent, almsgiving isn't just about tossing a few extra bucks into the collection basket or donating to a charity. It's about asking: What do I have that someone else truly needs? And am I willing to part with it—not just conveniently, but sacrificially?

Almsgiving is one of the three pillars of Lent—alongside prayer and fasting—but it's often the least understood. In today's world, where giving often feels transactional or tied to tax receipts, the Church invites us to rediscover almsgiving as a spiritual discipline, not just a charitable act.

St. John Chrysostom once said, “Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life.” In other words, almsgiving is not optional. It's justice. The goods we have—time, money, talents—are entrusted to us for the sake of others. For modern Catholics, this might look like consistent, quiet generosity: giving to someone without expecting recognition; offering material support to a family in need; even donating time to someone who cannot repay it.

St. Basil the Great warned, “The bread you store belongs to the hungry; the cloak you keep hidden belongs to the naked.” That's not poetic exaggeration—it's a sober reminder that almsgiving is about detachment from wealth and attachment to Christ in the poor. And it's not about how much we give, but how we give. As St. Teresa of Calcutta put it, “It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving.” During Lent, we are called to a deeper simplicity—a willingness to be interrupted, to give even when it costs us.

Practically, that could mean creating space in your weekly budget for intentional giving. It might mean refusing to ignore the homeless person you pass every day. Or checking in on someone you know is struggling—not with advice, but with presence. The saints remind us: almsgiving is not merely for the benefit of others. It is for our own salvation. Lent can seem difficult, However, at its core, it is very simple: it is a time to time to grow closer to Christ.



PRAYER



FASTING



ALMSGIVING