



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

ST. THOMAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 9, 2025

1. **Abstinence (no meat) on Fridays during Lent.**
2. **Women's Club Spaghetti Dinner – March 22, 2025 - \$10.00. Children 5 years old and younger eat Free.**
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.

Catholic Trivia

The Weight of the Ashes

Lent begins not with a shout of victory but with a whisper of mortality: "Remember, you are dust, and to dust you shall return. " These words prompt us to reflect on the passing nature of life and the temporary state of our existence. In the Old Testament, figures like Job and the people of Nineveh sat in ashes as a sign of contrition (Job 42:6, Jonah 3:6). Today, when we receive ashes, we acknowledge our human frailty and our dependence on God's mercy. It's a time to examine our lives, confront how we've turned away from God, and seek reconciliation.

In today's world, which is injured by war, injustice, and suffering, the significance of these ashes grows heavier, reminding us of our personal need for repentance as well as our collective responsibility toward justice and peace. Ongoing conflicts across the globe leave behind suffering, scattering families, shattering homes, and displaced souls, while the cries of the innocent echo in lands destroyed by violence.

In this context, the teachings of Lent become more than a seasonal ritual and provoke us to ask: What does it mean to repent in a world where children sleep to the sound of bombs? What does fasting signify in a society where the poor beg for bread while the rich and powerful feast in excess? What is the essence of Almsgiving in a world where truth is twisted to serve ambition? Hence, as we journey through Lent, we are asked to be advocates for peace, stand in solidarity with the oppressed, and challenge the systems that perpetuate suffering.

Moreover, Lent is not only a season of ashes but a journey toward resurrection. Even as we bear the weight of our sins and the world's suffering, we hold onto the promise that renewal is possible. Every small act of love, every stand against injustice, and every effort to bring peace is a step toward Easter's light.

Peace,

Fr. John Tigatiga, SDS



Ordained in Tanzania Fr. John Tigatiga took on the role of Mission Office Director in 2019. He represents the Salvatorian USA Province community, doing appeals for international missions.

His vision is to be a mediator, a bridge that connects, and thereby brings human beings to God.