



ST. THOMAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

December 21, 2025

1. **PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR PEACE IN THE UKRAINE AND ISRAEL.**
2. **Las Posadas** – Nightly until December 23 at 6:00 pm. Las Posadas is a 9-day novena that reenacts Mary and Joseph's search for a place to stay in Bethlehem.
3. **The obligation to participate in the Eucharist in person on Sundays and other holy days of obligation was restored 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.
4. Our Parish bulletin can be viewed weekly online by clicking on the Bulletin button on our website at www.stthomasbartow.org. There is also a button to view the previous week's bulletin if you missed it. 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.

5. 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.
6. 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>
7. Bishop Robert Barron, author, speaker, theologian and founder of Word on Fire, a global media ministry, is producing a seven volume Bible series. Volume I focuses on the Gospels, Volume II on Acts, Letters, and Revelation, Volume III, on The Pentateuch, Volume IV on The Promised Land and Volume V on Exile and Return. All are all available now at <https://wordonfire.org/bible>. Volume VI The Wisdom Literature and will be released at a later date. If you would like to subscribe to Bishop Barron's newsletter, go to <https://wordonfire.org/#newsletter> and just provide your email address.
8. 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

Why are green, red, and white the colors of Christmas, and what is the Catholic meaning behind them? Seen together, these three colors tell the whole message of Christmas:

Every December, homes, churches, and city squares are wrapped in red, green, and white — colors so deeply tied to Christmas that we barely question why. But long before marketers and decorators adopted them, these colors carried rich Catholic symbolism rooted in Scripture, tradition, and the mystery of the Incarnation.

Green: The Sign of Eternal Life Green has been associated with Christmas for centuries, especially through evergreens - the few plants that remain alive and vibrant through winter. For Christians, this became a natural sign of Christ's eternal life, the One who enters a world of spiritual winter to bring never-ending life.

Evergreens reminded early believers of these truths:

- Christ's life *cannot* wither
- Hope endures even in the darkest season
- The newborn Savior comes to give us life that "will never die"

Red: The Color of Love — and of the Cross Red is unmistakably the color of Christmas, but its meaning goes far deeper than holly berries or ribbons. In Christian tradition, red symbolizes:

- the blood of Christ, shed out of love for humanity
- martyrdom, the witness of those who gave their lives for Him
- sacrificial love, the heart of the Gospel

Even in the cave at Bethlehem, the Church has always kept the Cross in view. The wood of the manger foreshadows the wood of Calvary. The Child wrapped in swaddling clothes is the same Christ who will be wrapped again in burial cloths.

Red reminds us that Christ came not only to be born, but to die and rise for us. While the nativity is the focus, Christmas joy is inseparable from the redeeming love of the Cross.

White: The Light That Shines in Darkness White is the color of Christmastide itself — the liturgical color worn at every Christmas Mass. It symbolizes:

- Christ's purity
- His divinity hidden in human flesh
- the radiant glory of the Incarnation
- the light the darkness cannot overcome

White proclaims that in the birth of Jesus, something utterly new has entered the world: God Himself has stepped into time. This is why Christmas is celebrated with white vestments — the same color used for Easter.

The joy of Christ's birth and the triumph of His resurrection are woven from the same thread, a Story Written in Color.

Seen together, these three colors tell the whole message of Christmas:

- **Green:** Christ brings eternal life
- **Red:** Christ pours out His love to save us
- **White:** Christ is the divine Light entering our world

No wonder the earliest Christians embraced them. Every wreath, ribbon, and candle silently proclaims the Gospel. Christmas is a feast of color — because Christmas is a feast of divine meaning.



Wishing everyone a Blessed Christmas!