

Father Eugene Grytner, SDS
Office hours 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

Thursday 7:00 pm

Religious Education

Evelyn Rivera 863-370-4000

Religious Formation – Every Sunday

Sept thru May

Preschool thru 8th

Sun 9 am + **Mass**

Email: office@stthomasbartow.org

Phone 863-533-8578

Fax 863- 533-5090

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 Baptism of the Lord January 11, 2026

Mass Intentions

Sat Jan 10	5:00 pm	+Leon LaClair By Dcn Mark & Carolyn King
Sun Jan 11	8:00 am	For All Parishioners
Sun Jan 11	10:30 am	Virginia Wiggins 101 st Birthday
Mon Jan 12	8:30 am	+Sara Long By Martha & John Laurent
Tue Jan 13	8:30 am	+Ozelle & +Missouri Johnson By Gerald Johnson
Thu Jan 15	8:30 am	All Souls in Purgatory
Fri Jan 16	8:30 am	+Leon LaClair By Martha & John Laurent
Sat Jan 17	5:00 pm	
Sun Jan 18	8:00 am	For All Parishioners
Sun Jan 18	10:30 am	+Charles Wiggins By Family

LECTORS	EMHC
1/10-5:00 pm	
Ruth Palmer Ann Slocum	Pat Lowery Ruth Palmer
1/11-10:30 am	
Carrie Brown Confirmandi	George Cherry Theresa Cherry
1/17-5:00 pm	
Mike DeNeve Ann Slocum	Ann Slocum Susan DeNeve
1/18-10:30 am	
Carolyn King Evelyn Rivera	Pattie Scott Evelyn Rivera

Saint Thomas Collection

12/28	Regular	\$1719.00
	Maintenance	7472.58
	Christmas	2977.00

Saint Elizabeth Collection

12/28	Regular	379.00
	Maintenance	31.00
	Christmas	471.00

Please Pray For.....

Stuart Andrews, Terry Ayres, Kristin Bing, Pete Byrne, Melvin Casey, Debbie Coffman, Alan English, Rachel Gohman, Dorothy Guptill, Delores Hart, Austin Heath, Zachary Heath, Ivette Hernandez, Jennifer Hoffer, Mark Jansen, Missy Jansen, Stuart Jones, Fr. Gabriel Kamienski, Bill Kjerrumgaard, Aaron Mills, Adam Mills, Zachary Mills, Scott Mize, Kathleen Morris, Lacey Pate, George Pizano, Karlee Severns, Richie Southwell, Chuck Spencer, Murphy Stidham, Rita Taylor, Laura Webb

Please pray for our deceased diocesan priests:

Jan 1, 2021 Rev. Eamon Tobin
 Jan 4, 2021 Rev. Luiz Bastos
 Jan 8, 1975 Rev. Hugh Flynn
 Jan 13, 1982 Rev. William Holmes
 Jan 13, 2015 Rev. Mark Wegg
 Jan 16, 1988 Rev. Michael Flynn
 Jan 23, 1972 Rev. Michael Reynolds
 Jan 27, 2007 Rev. James Francis Edwards
 Jan 28, 2024 Rev. Robert Hoeffner
 Jan 30, 2016 Rev. Peter Quinn

The Women's Club will meet immediately after Mass on Sunday, January 11th.

CHRISTMAS AND THE FORGOTTEN MESSAGE

A special birth with a special message

It is only too common for people to view Christmas as a social experience rather than understand it as a historical event. Thus, Christmas is a time for Christmas music, Christmas parties, Christmas trees and Christmas gifts.

It is a wonderful time enriched by food, friendship, fellowship and festivities. All this is, indeed, very good, but, unfortunately, it misses the mark. Often lost in the merriment of Christmas celebrations is the historical fact that a Baby was born to a poor couple in a manger that they shared not with other human beings, but with animals. It was a special birth conveying a special message.

As Pope Benedict XVI pointed out in *Jesus of Nazareth*, "From the moment of his birth, he [Christ] belongs outside of what is important and powerful in worldly terms. Yet it is this unimportant and powerless child that proves to be the truly powerful one, the one on whom ultimately everything depends."

The Christ Child was both wanted and unwanted. He was most assuredly wanted and loved by his parents. King Herod, on the other hand, set out to ensure that only he, and not the Christ Child, would be king. From the beginning, this Child would be a sign of contradiction.

The Annunciation was an announcement to Mary, contingent upon her consent, that she would be with child. Angel Gabriel did not speak of marriage, success or personal accomplishments. He spoke of the Child. The Annunciation anticipated the Nativity. It was the Child that was always central, a fact that contradicted the concept of the family at that time in history, when the father was the dominant figure. The importance of this Child would raise the importance of every child born thereafter. In fact, it would revolutionize the very structure of the family.

The often-forgotten message of Christmas is that the child is the center of the family and that the family is the center of the world. At Christmastime, Planned Parenthood celebrates “choice on earth.” But the “choice” for all time was made by Mary at the Annunciation, and her choice was to choose life, a life that would ultimately remind us of its sacred value and inviolability.

The new hierarchy — of the child, the mother, and the father — was to replace the old hierarchy — of the father, the mother, and the child. The humblest would reign, the mother would nurse, and the father would serve both his wife and their child. It would foreshadow the Church, in which Pope Gregory the Great would identify himself and each supreme pontiff as the “Servant of Servants.” The family would be closely knit because no one was expendable and each member would have a role that contributed to the family’s integrity. The family was to be an unbreakable unity. In ancient Rome, the notion of *paterfamilias* prevailed. The expression is Latin for “father of the family” or the “owner of the family estate.” Accordingly, the oldest living male in a household, usually the father, could legally exercise autocratic authority over his extended family. The father ruled; the mother and child were ruled.

In today’s world, the woman (married or single) is regarded as a “solo entity” in order to free

herself to abort her child. The father of the family has no legal status to veto his wife’s choice to abort. In this way, in today’s secular world, the woman has replaced the man’s authority, while the child’s continued existence hangs on the thread of her choice.

Concerning the revolution of the family that was inaugurated by the Nativity, G.K. Chesterton expressed the matter simply and succinctly when, in *The Everlasting Man*, he remarked:

“The old Trinity was of father and mother and child and is called the human family. The new is of the child and mother and father and has the name of the Holy Family. It is in no way altered except in being entirely reversed; just as the world which is transformed was not in the least different, except in being turned upside down.”

If the world could choose one thing that it regarded as acceptable, it would probably be Christmas. And yet, if it saw Christmas for what it truly is, it would quickly reject it, for Christmas is about the unbarterable importance of a Child and the willingness to suffer poverty for the kingdom of God. The world would accept the glitter of Christmas, but not its grandeur.

By reversing the order of the family, the whole world is transformed! And here is the forgotten message: By according the child centrality in the family, the whole world is changed for the better because the family’s identity has been transfigured from power to love. Of all the revolutions that man has concocted, only a revolution fueled by love will endure.

As Lucy said in C.S. Lewis’ *The Chronicles of Narnia*, “In our world, too, a stable once had something inside it that was bigger than the whole world.”

Christmas, therefore, is about change.

And the great and fundamental paradox is that this change has its genesis in humility, in a Child wrapped in swaddling clothes and born in a manger.

The secularization of Christmas causes us to lose sight of its essential message.

Prayerful meditation, however, can make its basic message clear and, more importantly, can revolutionize our lives.