

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
evecoulter@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*



3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time January 25, 2026



Mass Intentions

Sat Jan 24	5:00 pm	For All Parishioners
Sun Jan 25	8:00 am	+Tony Ledesma By Miriam Olazabal
Sun Jan 25	10:30 am	+Sara Long By Theresa & George Cherry
Mon Jan 26	8:30 am	
Tue Jan 27	8:30 am	
Thu Jan 29	8:30 am	All Souls in Purgatory
Fri Jan 30	8:30 am	+Charles Wiggins
Sat Jan 31	5:00 pm	
Sun Feb 1	8:00 am	For All Parishioners
Sun Feb 1	10:30 am	+Leon LaClair By Theresa & George Cherry

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

LECTORS	EMHC
1/24-5:00 pm	
Luke Almanzan Angelika Almanzan	Angelika Almanzan Luke Almanzan
1/25-10:30 am	
Martha Laurent Maureen Leckie	Martha Laurent Maureen Leckie
1/31-5:00 pm	
Victor Aguirre Pat Lowery	Susan DeNeve Doug Van Orsdale
2/1-10:30 am	
Ryan Curtis Evelyn Rivera	Pattie Scott George Cherry

Saint Thomas Collection

1/11	Regular	\$1707.00
	Maintenance	343.00
	Diocesan	10.00

Saint Elizabeth Collection

1/11	Regular	913.00
	Maintenance	29.00



Our 68th annual BBQ will take place on Sunday, **February 1st**. Cost will be \$12 for a half chicken dinner with beans, coleslaw, dinner roll and dessert.

THE DIVINE PURPOSE IN HUMAN WORK: A SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION

There is a moment in the Mass when the priest quietly acknowledges one of the stranger aspects of the miracle that is about to take place. During the preparation of the gifts, the priest prays, "Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the bread of life." He then makes a similar blessing with the wine: "... fruit of the vine and work of human hands, it will become our spiritual drink." For many of us, these prayers are very familiar, but that shouldn't distract us from how peculiar they are. Although we rarely give it much thought, there is something deeply counterintuitive — startling, even — in Our Lord's decision to use the human artifacts of bread and wine rather than the divine

inventions of grain and grapes to give us his body and blood. In a profound way, it is the work of human hands which the God of the universe uses to make himself sacramentally present in the world.

Image and likeness

We find in this decision an echo of the immense dignity God bestowed on human beings at the dawn of creation. Like the words of the Mass, the words of Genesis are familiar, yet we must learn to be re-surprised by what they contain:

Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

This is a radical claim. Whereas the pagan gods of old were made in man's image — finite, capricious, often cruel — the [God of the Bible](#) is proclaimed as the transcendent creator of time and space, of light and life, who makes us in his image and likeness. But what do we mean by this, exactly?

Theologians have traditionally interpreted the language of image and likeness as referring to the reality of personhood. Unlike an animal or a plant, each human being is a unique, unrepeatable, eternal person endowed with the gifts of rationality, self-possession and the ability to love. In addition to all this, we have also been given a share in God's creative power. [Psalm 8](#) expresses this truth magnificently (3-6):

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet.

He has given us dominion over the works of his hands! And this dominion involves more than simply looking after the natural world. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains, "Human work proceeds directly from persons created in the image of God and called to prolong the work of creation by subduing the earth, both with and for one another" (No. 2427). As persons

made in his image and likeness, ours is the task of cooperation in God's ongoing work of creation.

Procreation and 'sub-creation'

We see this task of cooperation play out in the opening chapters of Genesis. When God creates Adam, he doesn't instruct him to sit back and enjoy the show. No, he invites Adam to participate in the cultivation of the world. Adam is given the task of naming the animals, and he is commanded, together with his wife, Eve, to "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (Gn 1:28). These words are also intended for us. Like Adam and Eve, we are created in God's image and likeness; and like them, we were made to share in God's creative work.

One obvious way many of us are called to do this is through the sacrament of marriage. The very word "procreation" offers us a clue as to the momentous role that parents play in fulfilling the directives given to our first parents. The Catechism puts it this way: "By transmitting human life to their descendants, man and woman as spouses and parents cooperate in a unique way in the Creator's work" (No. 372). Notice that it is the spouses and parents cooperating in the Creator's work, not the other way around. It is God who creates every human soul. At the same time, his respect for human agency is nothing short of breathtaking, since he permits his creation of new human souls to remain in some sense dependent upon the free cooperation of the parents.

When the [Book of Genesis](#) describes Adam's fathering of Seth following Cain's murder of Abel, it does so in conspicuous terms: "(Adam) became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth" (Gn 5:3). This language is significant for a couple of reasons. First, it reminds us that when a man and woman conceive a child, they don't simply produce a new biological organism that shares their DNA. Much more than this, the fruit of their union is a new "someone" formed in their image and likeness. He is a person just like them, because he is made in the image and likeness of God just as they are. A second reason that the description of Adam's fathering of Seth is significant is because it clarifies our earlier interpretation of Genesis 1:26. We see now that bearing God's image and likeness is not only about personhood or creativity; it is also about sonship.

(To be continued next week)