



ST. THOMAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 15, 2026

1. **PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR PEACE IN THE UKRAINE AND ISRAEL.**
2. **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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

5. 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>
6. 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.
7. 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

Lent starts Wednesday February 18. It rarely sneaks up on us by accident. The Church gives us signs well in advance. Readings shift. Alleluias begin to feel numbered. There is a subtle invitation to slow down and take stock. Are you ready to begin the journey well?

Lent is not meant to be improvised. It is a season of intentional conversion, and like any meaningful pilgrimage, preparation matters. When we wait until Ash Wednesday to think about fasting, prayer, or sacrifice, we often start hurried and distracted. But when we prepare our hearts ahead of time, Lent becomes less about doing more and more about becoming different.

This preparatory month is an opportunity to notice what already weighs on the soul. What habits need refining? What relationships need healing? What distractions quietly pull us from God? Lent does not create these realities. It reveals them.

The Church has always understood Lent as a journey, not a challenge. It is forty days of walking with Christ toward the Cross, trusting that resurrection follows. That kind of trust does not appear overnight. It is learned.

This is why many saints speak of beginning Lent before Lent begins, through prayerful intention rather than sudden austerity. A prepared heart enters Lent with clarity and peace instead of pressure.

Mary shows us how to do this. She did not rush God's plan or resist the unknown. She pondered. She listened. She carried the mystery quietly until it unfolded in God's time. Lent lived with Mary becomes less about self-mastery and more about surrender.

Consider letting prayer shape your expectations for Lent rather than waiting for discipline to do the work alone.

