



ST. THOMAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 22, 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

The Three Pillars of Lent

Prayer grows our connection with the Lord. The first of the Pillars of Lent is prayer. We should pray all year long, but during Lent, prayer oftentimes seems different. This is because we see it through the framework of Jesus's passion and sacrifice. The Devil has a habit of tempting us more during this "time in the desert." If we pray, which is simply "communication with God," He'll give us the strength to withstand these attacks. Prayer gives us courage, it gives us hope, and it gives us a connection to heaven. Prayer plays a crucial role in understanding and appreciating the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. Use Lent as an opportunity to focus and grow your prayer life. Daily Rosaries, coming to Adoration, and praying the Stations of the Cross are all great ideas.

Fasting helps us put our spiritual desire for Him over worldly things. The second of the Pillars of Lent is Fasting. A common question around this time of the year is: "What are you giving up for Lent?" Many Catholics treat this pillar of Lent like a "second chance" at a New Year's resolution. When choosing a Lenten penance, we should concentrate on removing something that's keeping us from fully embracing Jesus. This sacrifice should have a positive impact on your relationship with God. It has to have a purpose. Remember, you are making room for God, not a new bad habit or distractor or temptation. When you reach Easter Sunday, you should have increased gratitude for the abundance that God has provided in your life. Your Lenten sacrifice should yield a permanent, positive change.

Almsgiving answers Jesus' call to care for the poor and the poor of spirit. The third and final of the Pillars of Lent is Almsgiving. The act of giving receives extra emphasis during Lent. When we give our time or money, it takes our focus off of ourselves: it helps us grow our hearts and eyes for others. We suddenly see our neighbor, the one we are supposed to love as we love ourselves. When we generously give, we aren't doing it for recognition but to serve the Lord. Charity helps us learn humility and gratitude. It can reveal our selfishness...even though we might not have everything we desire, we may have the means to give to those who have less. Finally, we don't want to give out of our excess alone; we want our almsgiving to be a form of sacrifice to the Lord.

Devotion Ideas

Now you know the three Pillars of Lent. It is important to note that Lent isn't only about giving something up. It's also about adding. Giving time to God, creating space for prayer, and allowing real growth to happen, day by day. This too, can be a meaningful sacrifice! The best Lenten commitment is usually the one that's clear, structured, and manageable—something you can carry all the way to Easter.