

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 8<sup>th</sup>  
Sun 9 am + **Mass**

Email: [office@stthomasbartow.org](mailto:office@stthomasbartow.org)

Phone 863-533-8578

Fax 863- 533-5090

[www.stthomasbartow.org](http://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 Ascension of the Lord May 17, 2026



Ascension

## Mass Intentions

Sat May 16	5:00 pm	
Sun May 17	8:00 am	For All Parishioners
Sun May 17	10:30 am	+Charles Wiggins By Family
Sat May 23	5:00 pm	All Souls in Purgatory
Sun May 24	8:00 am	For All Parishioners
Sun May 24	10:30 am	

There will be no daily Mass May 18-22.

### Please Pray For.....

Stuart Andrews, Terry Ayres, Kristin Bing, Pete Byrne, Melvin Casey, Debbie Coffman, Alan English, Rachel Gohlman, Dorothy Guptill, Delores Hart, Austin Heath, Zachary Heath, Ivette Hernandez, Jennifer Hoffer, Mark Jansen, Missy Jansen, Stuart Jones, Fr. Gabriel Kamienski, Bill Kjerrumgaard, David LaCalair, 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***

May 1, 2005 Rev. John Garvy  
May 6, 2013 Rev. Patrick O'Carroll  
May 20, 2010 Rev. James John MacLoughlin  
May 30, 2020 Msgr. Fachtna Joseph Harte

*"You know what Our Lady said about the Rosary? That the whole world would change if everybody said it. ... If my Mother says, 'Say it,' I'm gonna say it," Mother Angelica once shared.*



## May the Month of Mary

LECTORS	EMHC
5/16-5:00 pm	
Angelika Almanzan Luke Almanzan	Angelika Almanzan Luke Almanzan
5/17-10:30 am	
Caroline Picart Carolyn King	Theresa Cherry Maureen Leckie
5/23-5:00 pm	
Ann Slocum Ann Spencer	Ann Slocum Ann Spencer
5/24-10:30 am	
Ryan Curtis Maureen Leckie	Pattie Scott Goerge Cherry

### Saint Thomas Collection

5/3	Regular	\$3913.99
	Maintenance	448.00
	Mother's Day	359.00

### Saint Elizabeth Collection

5/3	Regular	769.00
	Maintenance	30.00

### SECOND COLLECTION

This week's second collection is a Diocesan Collection for Catholic Communications.

### FAMILY BALLROOM DANCE

On **May 17** following the 10:30 am Mass, there will be a Family Ballroom Dance session with Caroline Picart in the Social Hall. She will be teaching ballroom dances to the children and everyone who wants to learn. Come and learn or just come to watch. Plan to stay 1 ½ hours. A light lunch will be provided.

***If you know any students who are graduating this year, please let the office know so that we can honor them.***

### JOHN PAUL II EMBODIED THE HEROISM OF CHRISTIAN HOLINESS

*Let us heed the great pope's oft-repeated words, "Be not afraid!" and with courage respond to his witness and intercession to make fully practical this call to holiness he spent his pontificate echoing and enflashing throughout the world.*

As we mark the 20th anniversary of Pope St. John Paul II's death and birth into eternal life on

April 2, it's key to focus on the most important lessons of his life.

His legacy is monumental, inside and outside the Catholic Church — one of the reasons why many think he should be officially named John Paul “the Great,” alongside Leo the Great (440-461), Gregory the Great (590-604) and Nicholas the Great (850-867).

He was great, even outside the Church, because of his role in international affairs — helping catalyze the collapse of Soviet communism, resisting efforts by worldly superpowers to impose international human rights abuses, and giving hope and courage to suffering peoples everywhere. He visited 129 countries, traveling more than 700,000 miles — more than all of his predecessors combined and nearly three times the distance of a round trip to the moon.

He was hugely influential inside the Church, implementing the documents of the Second Vatican Council and giving us one of the two most monumental magisterial legacies in papal history (alongside Leo XIII).

He promoted an anthropology adequate to counter the harmful philosophical “isms” of the modern and post-modern age, teaching us that the Church’s teachings on love, marriage, sex and family are part of the “good news,” not the “bad,” and equipping the Church with the tools needed later to respond to gender ideology.

He promoted hundreds of thousands of priestly vocations across the globe through his personal witness and love of his own priestly vocation, as he reformed many aspects of priestly and religious life, seminary formation and especially moral theology.

He gave clear answers to the questions of Catholic identity, vocation and mission, and in his document on the Gospel of Life made it clear that those who support abortion and euthanasia are supporting intrinsic evils never compatible with Catholic faith and love.

He stirred up a deeper, more scripturally- and doctrinally-based devotional life, especially toward the Blessed Mother, and gave us five new mysteries of the Rosary to ponder.

He founded World Youth Days and changed forever the Church’s approach to young people.

He was a pope of suffering, not only surviving a 1981 assassination attempt, infected blood transfusions, bone breaks and several years on public display with Parkinson’s disease, but becoming one of the modern world’s most well-known images of Christian perseverance in a euthanizing age.

His greatest legacy, however, is about sanctity, a message he personified and proclaimed.

Saints are gifts of God to the people of each age. They show us how to live. They teach us how to love. They help us learn to die. They reveal to us our exalted origin, dignity and destiny. They make the life of faith attractive and Christian hope realistic.

John Paul II was the pope of the universal call to sanctity — a fundamental teaching of the Second Vatican Council, which affirmed that “all in the Church ... are called to holiness.” He re-proposed to all, through words and witness, the high standard of ordinary Christian living.

During his 26 years and 7 months as successor of St. Peter, he canonized from all walks of life 482 saints and beatified 1,344, more than all his predecessors from the previous five centuries combined. He raised to the altars not merely martyrs, founders of religious orders, bishops, priests, nuns and other religious, but married couples, people from various professions and even young children.

He did not just celebrate them but sought to imitate them. He told his authoritative biographer, George Weigel, that people erred when they tried to understand him only “from the outside,” from all that he did publicly on the biggest stages. “But I can only be understood from inside,” he confessed.

To get to know him from the inside meant to understand him as a devoted disciple and ardent apostle of Jesus Christ — someone who as a layman, priest, bishop and pope sought to relate to God with heroic faith, hope and love. As his successor would preach at his funeral Mass two decades ago, “Follow me ... can be taken as the key to understanding the message that comes to us from the life of our late beloved Pope John Paul II.”

(To be continued next week)