



**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS**  
CATHOLIC CHURCH • BARTOW, FL  
DIOCESE OF ORLANDO

**ST. THOMAS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

May 24, 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 four years ago 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](http://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/](http://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

**How does the Church decide if Mary really appeared?** Approval often happens at the local bishop level, sometimes later affirmed more broadly by the Church. It's something many Catholics have wondered at some point. How many times has Our Lady actually appeared? And how does the Church decide what is real and what is not? It is striking to consider that the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, has appeared to people throughout history. Not to the powerful or the famous, but often to the ordinary. Farmers. Children. Religious. The pattern itself says something.

But the Church does not accept these claims lightly. In fact, she approaches them with great caution. When an apparition is reported, the Church investigates carefully. She looks at the content of the message, the character of the visionary, and any spiritual fruits that follow. Most importantly, she asks a simple question: Does this align with what has already been revealed through Scripture and Tradition?

Because no private revelation can add to the Faith. It can only point us back to it. That is why not every claimed apparition is approved. Many are left unconfirmed. Some are rejected. The Church moves slowly here, because she is responsible for protecting the faithful from error or deception. So how many have been approved? While there is no single official "list" issued by the Vatican in a simple numbered form, there are a relatively small number of apparitions that have received formal approval.

Our Lady of Guadalupe (Mexico, 1531)	Our Lady of Gietrzwałd (Poland, 1877)
Our Lady of Leżajsk (Poland, 1578)	Our Lady of Knock (Ireland, 1879)
Our Lady of Šiluva (Lithuania, 1608–1612)	Our Lady Help of Christians (Czech Republic, 1885)
Our Lady of Laus (France, 1664–1718)	Our Lady of Fatima (Portugal, 1917)
Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal (Paris, 1830)	Our Lady of Beauraing (Belgium, 1932)
Our Lady of La Salette (France, 1846)	Our Lady of Banneux (Belgium, 1933)
Our Lady of Lourdes (France, 1858)	Our Lady of Kibeho (Rwanda, 1981–1989)
Our Lady of Pontmain (France, 1871)	

Some lists include around fifteen to sixteen widely recognized apparitions like these, but it is important to understand that the Church does not present them as a fixed or exhaustive number. Approval often happens at the local bishop level, sometimes later affirmed more broadly by the Church. It also reminds us that Marian apparitions are not required for belief. A Catholic is not obligated to believe in any private apparition, even approved ones. They are gifts, not foundations. They are meant to help us live the Gospel more fully, not replace it. Across centuries, cultures, and circumstances, the message is remarkably consistent. Prayer. Conversion. Trust in God. A return to the sacraments. A reminder that heaven is not distant.