



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

ST. THOMAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

July 12, 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. 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

How Benjamin Franklin Picked America's First Catholic Bishop So how did a lapsed Congregationalist and one of the least religious of the Founding Fathers end up picking the first Catholic bishop of America? Benjamin Franklin stopped going to church as a young man and about five weeks before he died expressed "some Doubts" as to whether Jesus is God.

The unlikely event has roots in failed diplomacy — the fourth of the United States' many attempts to convince Canada to join the country.

Franklin had probably never heard of Father John Carroll of Maryland when the Second Continental Congress picked both for a four-man delegation in February 1776 to try to persuade Canada to join the Thirteen Colonies' revolt against Great Britain. (This was 10 months after the Revolutionary War began, four and a half months before the Declaration of Independence.)

As America's most experienced politician, and the most famous American of the time, Franklin was the obvious choice. He had spent years in London representing four American colonies as their agent, and his scientific and literary achievements made him a household name. Samuel Chase of Maryland, known for what two historians call his "violent and fearless opposition to British rule," was chosen for his speaking ability and forcefulness. The third member was considered a masterstroke: Charles Carroll of Maryland. He wasn't yet a member of the Continental Congress — that happened later in the year, in time for him to become the only Catholic to sign the Declaration of Independence (as "Charles Carroll of Carrolton").

Carroll, whose grandfather had come to America from Ireland via London in 1688, held vast lands in western Maryland. He was the richest man in the colony and one of the richest in America. He also supported the American cause and spoke French, so Continental Congress delegates expected him to help present the American case to French Catholics in Quebec, who made up the vast majority of the population there.

Delegates also expected Charles Carroll to get his friend and first cousin, Father John Carroll, to join the mission, in hopes he would make connections with Catholic clergy and laypeople and reassure them that the Americans respected religious liberty, even if Catholics were not allowed to vote or hold public office in some of the colonies, including Maryland.

Father Carroll was in a tough spot. Although he supported the American cause, he had no wish to get involved in politics or diplomacy. "I have observed that when the ministers of Religion leave their duties of their profession to take a busy part in political matters, they generally fall into contempt; & sometimes even bring discredit to the cause," Father Carroll wrote in a letter to a friend in April 1776.

The American mission to Canada failed. It was too late, underfunded, undermined by the behavior of American soldiers toward Canadian civilians, and eventually driven out by the arrival of a British fleet. Canada never joined the United States.

Father Carroll made almost no headway because Quebec Bishop Jean-Olivier Briand ordered priests to have nothing to do with the Americans. All evidence indicates that Father Carroll accomplished extremely little in Canada.” Yet Father Carroll made one lasting connection in Canada: Benjamin Franklin.

Franklin, at 70, suffered many health problems during the monthlong trip from Philadelphia to Montreal. When negotiations stalled, Franklin decided to go home. Father Carroll, realizing he wasn’t accomplishing much, decided a day later to catch up with him.

Neither wrote extensively about the journey, but Father Carroll, 41, seems to have helped the elderly Franklin as much as he could.

A New Bishop The approximately 25,000 Catholics in the new United States of America had about 25 priests to serve them, but no bishop who could ordain priests and celebrate the sacrament of confirmation. Most priests in America wanted a leader in the country. Rome agreed. But who? A likely American candidate was Father John Lewis (1717-1788), who had been the leader of the Jesuit mission in America when the pope suppressed the Jesuits in 1773. (The order was restored in 1814.) But Vatican officials weren’t sure.

The papal nuncio to France, Archbishop Giuseppe Doria Pamphili, asked Franklin by letter in July 1783 for his opinion. The two later met, on July 1, 1784, and the archbishop “acquainted me that the Pope had, on my recommendation, appointed Mr. John Carroll superior of the Catholic clergy in America,” as Franklin wrote in his private journal. Church officials in Rome didn’t immediately elevate Carroll to the episcopal ranks. “They were very frightened of naming a bishop, because of the anti-episcopal feeling in the country. Crowns and miters were both seen as enemies of the new republic. And so staying in union with Rome without a bishop was the first go-to position, interestingly enough,” Father James Garneau, a historian of U.S. Catholicism, told the Register.

Five years later, with the coast seeming clear, Carroll was appointed America’s first Catholic bishop, with his episcopal see at Baltimore. He was ordained in August 1790, with the whole country as his diocese. He later became America’s first archbishop in 1808. Most historians see Carroll as a success as bishop, guiding it through uncertainty and irrelevance to stability and growth. He imposed discipline on clergy and made sure the Church’s teachings were clear while respecting America’s religious freedom and pluralism.

Franklin’s Choice Why did Franklin recommend Carroll? Carroll’s charity toward Franklin in 1776 was a factor, of course, but Franklin probably also saw Carroll as the sort of Catholic leader whom Americans would accept — a patriot whose cousin had signed the Declaration of Independence. “He was not an unknown figure. The Carrolls had proved their loyalty and worth,” Father Garneau said.

-The National Catholic Register