



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

ST. THOMAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

July 5, 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

Fireworks on the 4th of July. The tradition goes back to the earliest days of our nation. John Adams' July 3rd, 1776, letter to his wife Abigail is preserved by the Massachusetts Historical Society. In it, Adams didn't simply hope Americans would celebrate independence with fireworks. He first said the day should be commemorated by "solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty," and then continued: *"It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance, by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other..."*

It is remarkable to think that John Adams first imagined those "bonfires and illuminations" on July 3, 1776. Today, nearly 250 years later, fireworks illuminate the skies from coast to coast. There is something uniquely American about looking up with family and friends as the night sky erupts in light, especially during this 250th anniversary of our nation. And as Catholics, our appreciation for light runs even deeper. Throughout the history of the Church, light has been a sign of God's presence, hope, and victory over darkness.

At the Easter Vigil, the Paschal Candle is carried into a darkened church as the light of Christ spreads from candle to candle until the entire church is illuminated. On Candlemas, candles are blessed as a reminder that Christ is "a light for revelation to the Gentiles." Again and again, light reminds us that Christ has conquered darkness.

Perhaps that is one reason fireworks continue to resonate with us. They are more than loud explosions and colorful displays. They are joyful signs of celebration, inviting us to pause, look upward, and give thanks.

As we celebrate our nation's independence, we also recognize that the freedoms we enjoy are gifts that come with responsibilities. Religious liberty has allowed the Catholic faith to flourish in America in ways unimaginable in many parts of the world throughout history. That freedom is worth celebrating, protecting, and handing on to future generations.

So enjoy those American fireworks this Fourth of July! As they light up the night sky, may they also remind us to thank God for the blessings of our country and for Christ, the true Light of the World, who alone can lead every nation—and every heart—to Him.

