



ST. THOMAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

September 20, 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

Ember Days and St. Hildegard's secret to a simpler life. St. Hildegard's feast was celebrated on September 17 and falls right in the middle of this year's September Ember Days. September Ember Days traditionally arrive near the beginning of fall. In 2026, they fall on September 16, 18, and 19, making St. Hildegard's September 17 feast a particularly fitting bridge between them.

Hildegard was a Benedictine abbess, theologian, composer, writer, and Doctor of the Church. She also paid extraordinary attention to creation. One of her favorite ideas was *viriditas*, often translated as the “greening power” of God. For Hildegard, this was not nature worship but a sign of God's life-giving presence: in a sprouting seed, a healing herb, and even a soul flourishing in grace. Many people today are drawn toward simpler living, gardening, natural foods, homesteading, and a life less dominated by technology. And yet St. Hildegard reminds us that simplicity is not about moving to the country or making our own bread. Those things might help us live more simply, but ultimately it is about ordering our lives toward God. Hildegard looked at the natural world and saw something that should lead us back to its Creator. The Church doesn't simply tell us to appreciate creation; she teaches us to sanctify our relationship with it.

That may be part of the simpler life many are longing for, a life in which we notice God's gifts, receive them gratefully, and allow even the changing seasons to turn our attention back to Him. There was a time when Catholics didn't simply notice the changing seasons; they prayed their way through them. The Ember Days are an ancient Church tradition dating back at least to the early centuries of Christianity. Four times each year, Catholics observed a Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday with prayer, fasting, and abstinence. The purpose was beautifully simple: thank God for the gifts of creation, ask His help in using them well, and remember those in need.

Ember Days were also closely connected with priesthood. Beginning in the early Church, ordinations were traditionally celebrated on Ember Saturdays. That makes these days a particularly good time to pray for priests and vocations.

For people whose lives revolved around planting and harvest, these days made perfect sense. But they make just as much sense for us. We may no longer depend personally upon the harvest outside our window, but we still depend entirely upon God.

The old obligation to observe Ember Days is no longer binding, but we could still fast from something, eat more simply, give to someone in need, pray for our priest and thank God for the food on our table.