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
evecoulter@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

Religious Education

Jessica Witmer 863-602-3837

Religious Formation – Every Sunday
Sept thru May

Preschool thru 8th
Sun 9 am + **Mass**

Email: office@stthomasbartow.org
Phone 863-533-8578
Fax 863- 533-5090
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



Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe
November 22, 2026



Mass Intentions

Sat Nov 21	5:00 pm	
Sun Nov 22	8:00 am	For All Parishioners
Sun Nov 22	10:30 am	
Mon Nov 23	8:30 am	All Souls in Purgatory
Tue Nov 24	8:30 am	Joshua Tessier Intentions
Thu Nov 26	8:30 am	+Devassykutty Paily
Fri Nov 27	8:30 am	
Sat Nov 28	5:00 pm	+Varghese Paily
Sun Nov 29	8:00 am	For All Parishioners
Sun Nov 29	10:30 am	

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, Reagan H., 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, Sr. Zofia, Richie Southwell, Murphy Stidham, Rita Taylor, Laura Webb

Please pray for our deceased diocesan priests

Nov 3, 2013	Msgr. John Caulfield
Nov 9, 1994	Rev. Charles Anderson
Nov 15, 1995	Rev. James Fahey
Nov 17, 2004	Rev. Thomas Bergin
Nov 20, 2000	Rev. George Moreau
Nov 29, 2021	Rev. Hugo Londono
Nov 30, 1994	Rev. William Killion



There will be a Penance Service on Friday, **December 18th** at 7:00 pm.

LECTORS	EMHC
11/21-5:00 pm	
Victor Aguirre Ann Slocum	Ann Slocum Pat Lowery
11/22-10:30 am	
Unique Gonzalez Alina Gutierrez	Maria Davila Maureen Leckie
11/26-8:30 am	
Pat Lowery	
11/28-5:00 pm	
Mike DeNeve Ryan Curtis	Susan DeNeve Doug Van Orsdale
11/29-10:30 am	
Barbara Woodard Oziemar Woodard	Luke Almanzan Angelika Almanzan

Saint Thomas Collection

11/8	Regular	$2093.00
	Maintenance	494.00
	All Souls	105.00
	CCD	90.00

Saint Elizabeth Collection

11/8	Regular	375.00
	Maintenance	26.00

Collection on Thanksgiving at 8:30 am Mass will be for the Food Pantry.



At Christmas, the light we share with the needy shines brighter than any candle, for it reflects the very heart of Christ."

$25 gift cards will be collected again this year to help needy children for Christmas. Please call the office to request assistance or if you know a family who might need assistance.



As we gather to give thanks, may we remember the countless blessings God has bestowed on us. May your hearts be filled with gratitude and joy.

PURGATORY IS THE MASTERPIECE OF GOD'S MERCY

Before I came into communion with the Church, there were a handful of Catholic doctrines I found confusing and, frankly, odd. Purgatory was one of them. I couldn't understand why anyone would believe that people who had entrusted themselves to salvation in Jesus Christ and did their best to live as faithful disciples didn't go directly to heaven when they died. To me, it seemed like yet another instance of Catholics failing to grasp the reality that salvation is the freely given gift of God's grace.

I had no idea how wrong I was.

What the Church teaches

During RCIA, I grappled with Mary, the Eucharist, priesthood and the papacy, but it wasn't clear if purgatory was something I really needed to embrace as truth. One day I summoned up enough courage to ask the pastor, "Does purgatory really exist?" He responded without any hesitation, whatsoever: "I hope so."

That may have been the only answer I wasn't prepared for.

"Remember the 'Wizard of Oz'?" he continued. "Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion follow the yellow brick road to the Emerald City and face numerous temptations and threats along the way. Once they arrive, they discover that they must overcome even more obstacles. Finally, they are granted an audience with the wizard, but before that they are taken to a beauty shop, where everything is made clean and new: tin is polished, hair is styled, and old straw is replaced. That's like purgatory."

Suddenly, the Church's teaching made sense. Purgatory was not a place of fiery punishment, or the torture required by an exacting God who wanted to squeeze the last drop of penance out of his imperfect children. Instead, it was the final and most beautiful gift of God's saving grace — the fulfillment of his promise to make us holy. As author Susan Tassone, aka "The Purgatory Lady," likes to say, "Purgatory is the masterpiece of God's mercy." And even though the "Wizard of Oz" can't convey the depth of the Church's teaching, it was an effective lesson for me at the time.

Would-be converts, however, aren't the only ones with questions about the afterlife. Many cradle Catholics are confused about what happens to us when we pass from this life into the next. Some even assume that purgatory disappeared after Vatican II.

Thank God, it hasn't.

What the Church teaches

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, when we pass from this life, our opportunity to decide whether we will accept or reject God's grace in Christ Jesus ends (cf. No. 1021). Those who reject God will spend eternity without him. Those who seek God, will eventually be brought to heaven. But because God is holy, all our remaining faults, hurts and imperfections — anything and everything that stands between us and God in all glory — must be purified (cf. No. 1030) in the crucible fire of his love (cf. 1 Cor 3:12-15). In eternity, we will know all our sins and see the damage we have caused ourselves and others. The truth will be painful, but also transformative.

The souls in purgatory suffer because they long for union with God in heaven. The good news is that we can help them. "The souls of the departed can, however, receive 'solace and refreshment' through the Eucharist, prayer and almsgiving. The belief that love can reach into the afterlife, that reciprocal giving and receiving is possible, in which our affection for one another continues beyond the limits of death — this has been a fundamental conviction of Christianity throughout the ages and it remains a source of comfort today," wrote Pope Benedict XVI. "It is ever too late to touch the heart of another, nor is it ever in vain" (*Spe Salvi*, No. 48).

Our prayers, almsgiving and concern for those we have lost actually reaches across time.

For most of us, the road to perfection isn't straight or easy. That's why it's comforting to know that purgatory does exist, that God will, in fact, bring to completion the work of sanctification he has begun in us (cf. Phil 1:6). In purgatory, we will finally become all we were created to be, what God deems what we'd call the "best version of ourselves."

As we move through All Hallows Eve, All Saints and All Souls, our Church encourages us to take the longer view of life. That's why the month of November is dedicated to remembering those who have gone before us. Because of purgatory, we can do so with hope.