



**DECEMBER 28, 2025
THE HOLY FAMILY OF
JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH**

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH
7717 RIVER ROAD - TOWNSEND, TN 37882
865 – 448 – 6070
WEBSITE: STFRANCISTOWNSEND.ORG
E-MAIL: STFRANCISTOWNSEND7717@GMAIL.COM

MASS & CONFESSION SCHEDULE

WEEKDAY MASS: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday at 8:30 AM **(NO MASS ON WEDNESDAYS)**
WEEKEND MASS: Saturday 4:00PM (Vigil Mass) The Rosary is prayed 35 minutes before each Weekend Mass
 Sunday 9:00AM
HOLY DAYS: Vigil Mass 6:00 PM (evening before); Holy Day Mass 9:00 AM (day of)
CONFESSION: Saturday before Mass: 3:00 - 3:40 PM (Church confessional)
 Sunday before Mass: 8:15 - 8:40 AM (Church confessional)
 By Appointment: 865-448-6070

PARISH MINISTRY TEAM

PASTORFr. Antonio Giraldo	GARDENS & GROUNDS Ilene Rainwater
DEACONDc. Jim Schmall	FACILITIES David Girard
OFFICE MANAGERSKatrina Allocco & Lesa Schmall	SOCIAL MEDIA/WEBSITE JoAnne Romer-Aylward
BOOKKEEPERKathleen Halligan	PASTORAL CARE Suzie Fay
LITURGY/MUSIC DIRECTORJoAnne Romer-Aylward	ST. CLARE GIFT SHOP Camilla Sorrell
DIR. OF RELIGIOUS ED.Julie Dew	COLUMBARIUM Bob Eberhardt
OCIADc. Jim Schmall	WELCOMING, EVENTS & All Parishioners
ART & ENVIRONMENTMichele Girard & Norene O'Donnell	SOCIALS TEAM (WEST)
	<u>PARISH ASSOCIATIONS:</u>
	ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY: Debbie Eberhardt
	COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN: Ilene Rainwater

NEW PARISHIONERS: Please contact the pastor or ask an usher for a registration form, and then place the completed form in the offertory basket or mail it to the church office. For more information call the church office at 865-448-6070.

PARISHIONERS: Please report any change of contact information to the parish office via e-mail, mail or phone.

BAPTISM: Parents are required to attend the Baptismal Prep Class. Your family must be registered in the parish.

MARRIAGE: Contact the office a minimum of six months prior to the wedding for planning and preparation.

ANointing OF THE SICK: Anyone entering the hospital or in serious ill health is encouraged to be anointed.

BULLETIN DEADLINE: Please email Microsoft Word articles to sfbulletin7717@gmail.com with the subject of "Bulletin Announcement" by Tuesday 12:00PM. All submissions are subject to further editing.



How can St. Francis of Assisi be of assistance/service to you & your loved ones?
Please contact Suzie Fay with our Pastoral Care Ministry at 423-829-5466 or the Parish office at 865-448-6070.

MASS INTENTIONS

Mon 12/29 8:30 AM Vo Van Thiet+ & Judas Thaddaeus+

Tue 12/30 8:30 AM Elmer Szekely +

Wed 12/31 **NO MORNING MASS**

6:00 PM St. Francis of Assisi Parishioners

Thu 1/1 **9:00 AM** St. Francis of Assisi Parishioners

Fri 1/2 8:30 AM Dang Thi Sinh + & Isave Elizabeth +

Sat 1/3 4:00 PM Elmer Szekely +

Sun 1/4 9:00 AM James Murr +

To schedule a Mass intention, please contact the Parish Office via phone or email or in person during office hours. Mass cards are available at the church office. Please specify whether the Mass Intention is for a living or deceased loved one. The usual requested donation for a Mass intention is \$10.00 in the Diocese of Knoxville.



PRAYER REQUESTS: (Homebound, sick or recovering parishioners, friends and relatives):

Pat Sanders, Doreen Mancuso, Naomi Nwadike, Amy Frink, Claire Cheadle, Elise Martin, Paul Fain, Joyce Fain, Emmanuel Nwadike, Julie Schirack, Marcus Bolte, Stephanie Romer, John & Maria Bermudes, Michael Slater, Rocky Brach, Marion McCaughey, Sue Wood, Sue Corsini, Bill Irby, Teresa Williams, Jeffrey Garrison, Ann Day, Ed Welsh, Thomas Fay, Dale DuRussel, Suzie Fay, Robert Schumacher, German Giraldo, Jean Claude Augustin, Christopher Schiel,

Joyce Schiel, Connor Dietrich

SANCTUARY FLOWERS: If you would like to donate to the altar flowers fund in memory of or in honor of someone, contact the Parish Office via phone or email. The cost is \$40.00 for 1 week. Thank You!



SANCTUARY CANDLE: The sanctuary candle is lit in honor of the wedding anniversary of Dr. Ronald and Charlotte Graham. If you would like to donate to the sanctuary candle fund in memory of or in honor of someone, please contact the Parish Office via phone or email. The cost is \$15 for 1 week. Thank You!



ST. CLARE GIFT SHOP

OPEN
after weekend Masses
and by request/appointment
after daily Mass

ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

Mon 12/29

Tue 12/30 6:00 PM NO OCIA - Shea Hall

Wed 12/31 6:00 PM Vigil Mass:
Solemnity of Mary
Parish Office Closed

Thu 1/1 9:00 AM Holy Day Mass:
Solemnity of Mary
Parish Office Closed

Fri 1/2 9:00 AM Adoration (Benediction
and closing at Noon)

Sat 1/3 4:00 PM Vigil Mass

Sun 1/4 9:00 AM Sunday Mass



**12/31/2025
1/1 & 2/2026**

CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE



This Last Sunday of 2025, we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Today's Liturgy seeks to uphold the value of Christian family life. It speaks of three different "holy families." The First Holy Family consists of Joseph, Mary and Jesus. The second family is the family of Israel, which extends beyond the core unit of Jesus and his parents. Third is the holy family of the world, which moves even beyond that of Israel.

Pope Francis used to compare the Holy Family of Nazareth to modern day refugees. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 20 people somewhere in the world are forcibly displaced every minute of every day.

One could say that Pope Francis had in mind all those people on Christmas Eve, in 2017, as he preached a homily extolling the Holy Family as an exemplar for those millions of people who find themselves unwillingly on the move. According to Pope Francis, we see the tracks of entire families forced to set out, driven from their land, leave behind their dear ones. He also said that, in many cases this departure is filled with hope - hope for the future; yet for many others this departure can only have one name: survival. Surviving the "Herods" of today, who seek to improve their power and increase their wealth, see no problem in shedding innocent blood. Some people find these words disturbing. But if we Christians cannot call things by their name, then, we are missing our purpose in this world.

The first reading from Sirach presents a perspective on family that is rooted in wisdom. The foundation upon which this family is built consists of honor, respect and loving care. Sirach offers a commentary on the fourth commandment – to honor one's parents. When one follows this command, a multitude of sins are forgotten. While it reflects the social and cultural milieu from which it originated, the core value here expressed transcends the place of origin and extends even to today.

The second reading from Colossians begins with setting forth the values that should govern all aspects of God's chosen ones. The list is impressive: heartfelt, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, and forgiven one another. All of these values are rooted in love, which is the bond of perfection. This implies a sense of family that would include Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, as well as the family of the church for whom Colossians was written. Again there is an emphasis on the necessity of mutuality in every aspect of family living. This applies to husbands, wives and children. This fosters peaceful living stemming from the heart. This is what family life is all about in whatever form it is found.

The gospel for today's feast is taken from Mathew. It is most fitting because it takes in all aspects of the Holy Family. Here we see Joseph, Mary, and Jesus fulfilling the law with regard to purification as well as the consecration of the firstborn. Then come the prophecies of Simeon and Ana, which extends beyond Joseph, Mary, and Jesus by identifying Jesus as the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory for Israel. This emphasis is the most important part of the entire passage. It shows how Jesus will be the fulfillment of God's promises, which extends back as far as Abraham. At the heart of this emphasis is Luke's strong theme of universalism. Jesus has come for the salvation of all people. Ultimately it is the world that is the family of Jesus. All three forms of holy family are interrelated. They urge us to be inclusive rather than exclusive. It begins as a tiny group but soon expands to encompass a universe.



CATECHISM

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BY: Julie Dew

THE INCARNATION OF THE SON OF GOD

I hope you enjoyed the Advent Corners involving the different symbols of Christmas. The last one with St. Francis and the Nativity brought up some questions like: Did the Incarnation happen? Well, um, YES! First, what is the Incarnation? It is the profound mystery and dogma that the eternal Word of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, became truly man while remaining truly God. As John 1:14 states, "And the Word was made flesh." This means Jesus

Christ assumed a full human nature - body and soul - without sin, united hypostatically (In theology, hypostatic union refers to the union of Christ's human and divine natures within one individual existence. It signifies that Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man, possessing two distinct natures that are united in one person. This concept is rooted in the belief that the two natures operate in harmony without confusion, change, division, or separation, as affirmed in the Chalcedonian Definition of 451 AD. The term "hypostasis" comes from the Greek word meaning "substance" or "person," emphasizing the indivisible nature of Christ's being.) to His divine Person (CCC 461, 464). The Catechism teaches that the Incarnation involves three facts: (1) the Divine Person of Jesus Christ; (2) His true human nature; and (3) the Hypostatic Union, the inseparable union of divine and human natures in one Person (CCC 464-469). This mystery reveals God's immense love, as He "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:7). Christmas celebrates this wondrous event, not merely the birth of a founder, but God becoming man to redeem humanity (CCC 525). **The Incarnation is central to salvation history and the Christian faith.**

The Catholic statement of the Nativity is based on a fact, not on a theory – on a premise, not on a poem. The Son of God became man. God is. Christ is, first as the eternal Son of the Father, Himself God in all His glory, and then as Jesus in a manger, true man born of the Virgin. We affirm all these truths in the Creed. *To take these propositions literally is to undo everything that previously was in the order of nature! The world is turned upside down because of the Incarnation, transfigured, altogether itself yet so much more.* Read that again and reflect on those two previous sentences... just incredible!

The Holy Eucharist we receive at Mass is quite literally our Lord, body and soul, humanity and divinity, eternal Word of God and the Child of the Nativity. Our entire Faith is woven into a tapestry of affirmations, all bearing on being. A youthful carpenter's apprentice, as Chesterton called Him, declared that "Before Abraham was, I Am," thus taking to Himself the solemn name of God, and those who heard Him knew what He meant and would have stoned Him to death had it then been possible. Later they murdered Him on a cross, and it is in the theology of the Crucifixion that the full import of what I am suggesting comes home to us in its most awesome dimensions. Theologians tell us that when He hung there those three hours, in which mankind was redeemed, He summed up all existence – both human and cosmic – in which all time came together in a supreme moment of salvation and the tears of history, from its first beginning to its final end in judgment were wiped away by the incarnate Author of all that is. – *Frederick D. Wilhelmsen*

Sooooo, if we examine that vast "panorama" of the many religions that have covered the earth and changed man in their image, we note that only Christianity claims to be based on a single event, a single fact: the Incarnation of the Son of God. The Incarnation is affirmed within an accepted view or belief in which one truth leads to another, and all of them are understood within a complexity of doctrine: the Father sent His Son to save the world. **Faith** proclaims the Good News that Christ the Savior is born! Celebrate Christmas all 365 days this coming year.



WE HAVE FORMED!

OVER 6,000 PARISHES AND 1.6 MILLION INDIVIDUALS ARE USING FORMED TODAY! INCLUDING ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI, TOWNSEND!

Formed.org is a digital library with over 1000 resources, all teed up and ready for you and your family to stream. I'd like to thank Father Antonio and Julie Dew for helping us get this wonderful resource for our parish.

Formed offers inspirational Catholic videos, courses, audio talks, books, and movies that give you great Catholic teaching in your life and for the best of all - it's right here for your use, already paid for, downloadable, and easy to access.

It's Free! All you have to do is go to Formed.org and enter our parish name or zip code, and you are signed up. The zip code for Townsend is 37882. Anytime, anywhere, any platform - personal computer, tablet, smartphone, smart tv - all kinds of advice on difficult subjects of the faith and living a moral life in a damaged world. If you are already signed up at another parish you can reach out to the support group at custom-er.service@augustineinstitute.org. They will help you switch from your old parish to ours.

Again, Formed offers resources for adults, teens, children, parents, widows, those who are suffering from addiction, those who are searching, and for those who feel their faith life has grown stagnant. Truly, there is something for everyone.

Moving forward we will use it at the parish level for OCIA, Sacramental Prep, Bible Study, etc. The app is available on the new smart tv in the PRC and available on line in Shea Hall!

One last thing...we live in a busy world, and it can feel hard to find time to do something to take a step forward in your faith. Formed is an easy way to listen on the go while you are driving, exercising, or watching TV as a family. We encourage you to JUST PRESS PLAY. Try it out today. And then come back next week and tell Father/Deacon what you think about it. Peace, Deacon Jim.



OCIA AT ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

If you or anyone you know are interested in exploring the Catholic Church as your church home or you have been sitting in the pew next to your Catholic spouse for years wondering what you have to do to become Catholic, or you are a practicing Catholic just wanting to learn more about your faith, please join us! Classes are held every Tuesday in Shea Hall at 6:00 PM. For more information please contact Deacon Jim: 901-493-2123 or sfadeacon7717@gmail.com

**NOTE: NO OCIA Classes on December 23rd or 30th.
Tuesday classes will resume on January 6th.**

DIOCESAN JOB OPENING



The Diocese of Knoxville Chancery Office is seeking a Coordinator of Youth Ministry and an Administrative Assistant to the Office of Youth and Young Adults. Please see the diocesan website for detailed job descriptions at <https://dioknox.org/employment> Send cover letter and resume to Maura Lentz at mlentz@dioknox.org.



THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Today is the feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. We hear the words: "The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him." During this New Year may we also grow in wisdom and have the favor of God upon us by remembering to take care of our suffering brothers and sisters. In the month of December, through your gifts, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul brought the spirit of Christmas to those who are suffering, by assisting local families, providing them with food, and financial assistance with utility and rent bills.

Have you considered answering the call to serve the poor by joining the Society of St. Vincent de Paul? Contact Debbie Eberhardt at 865-312-0141 for more information.

SVDP meets the 1st and 3rd
Wednesdays of the month at 5:00 PM
in the PRC. All are welcome!

Thank You
for your continued support of SVDP!

SVDP DECEMBER "PRODUCT OF THE MONTH" LAUNDRY SOAP & DRYER SHEETS



Some general reminders and guidelines about donating to SVdP:

- For those who use preprinted church contribution envelopes, the SVdP envelope (which is marked for the beginning of the month) can be placed in the collection basket **ANY** time of the month. If you are not using preprinted church contribution envelopes and want to place your donation in a weekend Mass collection basket, please put your donation in an envelope (of any kind) marked SVdP to make sure it gets into the SVdP account.
- Please make any checks out to: **St. Vincent de Paul** (not St. Francis of Assisi).
- Donations can also be placed in the St. Vincent de Paul Poor Box, located in the Narthex, to the right of the exit doors (just above the holy water station). Ushers can show you the location.
- Feel free to reach out to us with any questions.



Daily CATHOLIC WISDOM



You cannot visit the child without visiting the mother;
you cannot in common human life approach the child except through the mother.

If we are to think of Christ in this aspect at all,
the other idea follows as it is followed in history.

We must either leave Christ out of Christmas,
or Christmas out of Christ,

or we must admit, if only as we admit it in an old picture,
that those holy heads are too near together
for the haloes not to mingle and cross.



- G. K. Chesterton
from his book, *The Everlasting Man*

FIRST FRIDAY ADORATION - 1/2/26




“Always remain close to the Catholic Church, because it alone can give you true peace, since it alone possesses Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the true Prince of Peace.”

- St. Padre Pio


Mass: 8:30 AM
Adoration: 9:00 - Noon
Healing Service: 9:00 AM
(in Shea Hall)
Benediction: Noon

If you are interested in committing to a Holy Hour, please contact Jackie Wagner at 330-807-8663.



“Whenever you are filled with worry, desperate for hope, looking for clarity, or just need a moment of peace, go to a quiet place and visit Jesus in the Eucharist. Just talk to Him like He’s sitting on the altar. He’ll give you exactly what you need.”

JENNA GREIWE
Beautiful Eucharist

 DynamicCatholic.com

**INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES
TO PROMOTE DEVOTION TO JESUS
IN THE EUCHARIST**

*St. Peter Julian Eymard
1811 - 1868*

*“ The Eucharist
is the link
that binds
the Christian family together.
Take away the Eucharist
And you have no
brotherliness left. ”*



BISHOP’S APPEAL

for **MINISTRIES**

Building up the Church in East Tennessee

NOVEMBER 2025

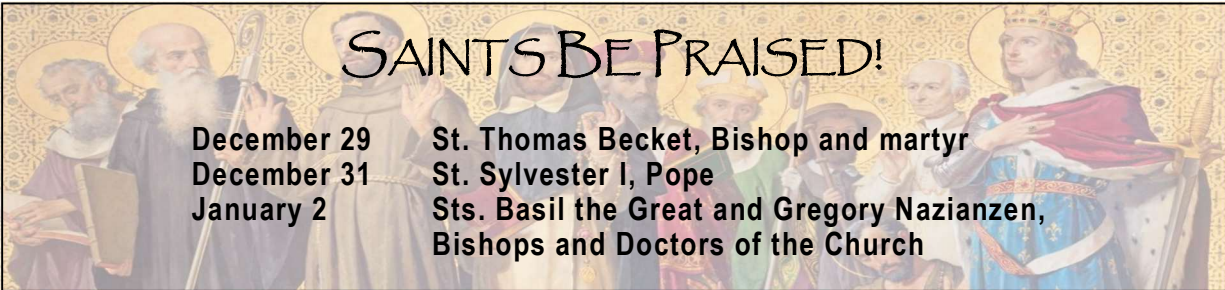
Pledged: \$17,680
Collections to Date: \$17,353

Collections Needed to Reach Goal: **\$327.00**

Due to your tremendous support, the Bishop’s Appeal for Ministries continues to support and strengthen the programs, services, and ministries of our Church. Thank you St. Francis of Assisi, Townsend—you are making ministries possible!


UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS
4/18/2026	CCW Spring Event - 9AM-3PM St. Mary's Church, Athens, TN	Online: N/A E-Mail: ajschaef21@gmail.com Phone: 901-485-1965; OR 423-715-2579 (Brenda Ratcliff)
April, 2026	Catholic Men's Emmaus Retreat St. Augustine Catholic Church Signal Mountain, TN	Online: N/A E-Mail: N/A Phone: 423-414-4532 (Michael Hart)



SAINTS BE PRAISED!

December 29 **St. Thomas Becket, Bishop and martyr**
December 31 **St. Sylvester I, Pope**
January 2 **Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen,**
 Bishops and Doctors of the Church



END OF THE YEAR DONATIONS

Per IRS RULES: If you are considering a 2025 donation to St. Francis of Assisi Church for tax purposes, checks must be dated 2025 AND received at the parish office no later than December 31st.

If you are mailing in a donation, the envelope MUST BE POSTMARKED no later than December 31st.

Checks or cash received or postmarked after December 31st will be recorded as 2026 gifts. Thank you for considering our beautiful little church on the river as a recipient of your financial gift!




Thank you St. Francis of Assisi Parishioners!

We now have 28 households participating in the Kroger Community Rewards Program, and during the months of September, October, and November those households have earned the church

\$60.55

If you are not yet participating in this wonderful program, please visit Kroger's website and get started! Direct your browser to <https://www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards> (Our NPO number is XP941).

You shop. Our church gets "free" money!