

DECEMBER 7, 2025 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



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

<p>PASTORFr. Antonio Giraldo DEACON.....Dc. Jim Schmall OFFICE MANAGERSKatrina Allocco & Lesa Schmall BOOKKEEPERKathleen Halligan LITURGY/MUSIC DIRECTOR.....JoAnne Romer-Aylward DIR. OF RELIGIOUS ED.Julie Dew OCIA.....Dc. Jim Schmall ART & ENVIRONMENTMichele Girard & Norene O'Donnell</p>	<p>GARDENS & GROUNDS..... Ilene Rainwater FACILITIES David Girard SOCIAL MEDIA/WEBSITE JoAnne Romer-Aylward PASTORAL CARE..... Suzie Fay ST. CLARE GIFT SHOP Camilla Sorrell COLUMBARIUM Bob Eberhardt WELCOMING, EVENTS & All Parishioners SOCIALS TEAM (WEST) PARISH ASSOCIATIONS: ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY: Debbie Eberhardt COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN: Ilene Rainwater</p>
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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 sfabulletin7717@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 12/8 8:30 AM SFA Parishioners
Tue 12/9 8:30 AM Charlie Graham †
Wed 12/10 **NO MORNING MASS**
Thu 12/11 **NO MASS - COMMUNION SERVICE**
Fri 12/12 **NO MASS - COMMUNION SERVICE**
Sat 12/13 4:00 PM Camille Sattler
Sun 12/14 9:00 AM St. Carlos Acutis †

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, David Holmes, Amy Frink, Claire Cheadle, Elise Martin, Paul Fain, Joyce Fain, Charles Tippitt, 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



UPDATES:

Bruce Dunn: Bruce's surgery went very well and he is well on his way to a full recovery! Bruce is very grateful for all of our prayers!

Sofia Graziano: Sofia is responding to treatments very nicely. Sofia's treatments will be lifelong and she and her family are extremely grateful for all the prayers!

Dennis Richards: Dennis has improved, but the stroke has left some permanent deficiencies. Dennis and his family are very thankful for all of our prayers!

Laken DuRussel: Laken continues to have lingering symptoms which have caused some memory difficulties. The family is maintaining a positive outlook and knows that God is in control. They truly appreciate ALL our prayers!

Jeff Herzog: Jeff and his family are SO very grateful for our prayers! Jeff knows that it is only through the grace of God and prayers of family and friends that he has been able to even stand up to these challenges.

Lord, thank you for our answered prayers!

SANCTUARY CANDLE:

The sanctuary candle is lit in memory of Charlotte (Charlie) Graham's Birthday and is given by Dr. Ron 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!



ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

Mon 12/8	9:00 AM	Holy Day Mass
Tue 12/9	9:00 AM	Advent Lectio Divina
	6:00 PM	OCIA - Shea Hall
Wed 12/10		
Thu 12/11		
Fri 12/12		
Sat 12/13	4:00 PM	Vigil Mass
Sun 12/14	9:00 AM	Sunday Mass



AN INVITATION TO RENEWAL THROUGH JESUS CHRIST'S POWER AND GRACE

Our readings today provide three powerful spotlights to draw our attention to dimensions of the Christmas season that we might overlook.

John the Baptist is a recognized figure during Advent, alongside traditions such as the Advent wreath, seasonal music in retail environments, charitable collections for individuals in need, and gatherings with family and friends, all of which contribute to the observance of the Advent season.

In contrast to the atmosphere of joyful warmth, John the Baptist emerges in the wilderness urging repentance, as the Lord approaches. Most of us favor Isaiah's tranquil and comforting vision from today's first reading: "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the calf and the young lion will walk together, guided by a little child." This image evokes Paradise.

And so, we have John the Baptist in camel's hair calling the Pharisees a "brood of vipers!" You won't find that scripture on any Christmas card, or a Hallmark movie this year. But we need John the Baptist to remind us of the fact that if there is no need to be saved, there can be no joy of salvation.

Many people often participate in Christmas celebrations without considering Advent, or enjoy Easter while overlooking Lent, seeking happiness without sacrifice, peace without justice, or hope for heaven without undergoing genuine personal change. John stresses the importance of transformation, maintaining that Christmas is more than just a festive time; it is an invitation to renewal through Jesus Christ's power and grace. At its core, the primary message is one of reform.

Isaiah's message of harmony offers hope even in times of widespread conflict. His vision reminds us that peace remains possible; every generation has the opportunity to pursue it despite ongoing tensions. Jesse's family tree appeared worn out, but it still produced fresh growth. In our time, our history doesn't need to dictate what lies ahead. Will we choose to actively shape a new direction and way of life?

If we desire harmony, peace, honesty, and respect for human dignity and life, we must be prepared to embody these values ourselves. Isaiah's light reminds us that achieving such peace is possible for every generation.

The third insight is found in St. Paul's message to the Romans: "Welcome one another as Christ welcomed you." This invites us to reflect on how Christ received us. St. Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises includes a meditation on the Incarnation, where the Trinity observes humanity's flaws and chooses to redeem it. God's love is shown not by accepting saints, but by saving sinners.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS: During the liturgical season of Advent, flowers are not present in the sanctuary so as to emphasize the solemnity of the season. The focus during Advent is on eager expectation and preparation for Christmas. If, after the Advent season 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!

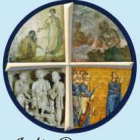


For parishioners who receive tithing envelopes in the mail, you will have received an envelope for Christmas flowers. The donation in this envelope is used to help purchase flowers and Christmas trees to decorate the altar and the church. If you do not receive tithing envelopes, you can still contribute to this fund by placing your contribution in an envelope marked "Christmas Flowers," and your contribution will be put toward purchasing poinsettias and Christmas trees for our church decorations. You can place your **marked envelope** in any collection basket at weekend Masses or drop it off in the church office Monday through Friday 9:00 AM until Noon.



CATECHISM

ORNER



BY: Julie Dew

ST. BONIFACE, THE THUNDER OAK AND THE TREE OF THE CHRIST CHILD

This weekend we celebrate the Second Sunday of Advent! Last week we talked about the Advent Wreath, this week I would like to “talk” about the Christmas Tree.

In the seventh century, a monk from Crediton, Devonshire (Crediton is a town located in the Mid Devon district of Devon, England) went to Germany to teach the word of God. His name was Saint Boniface. He did many good works there and spent much time in Thuringia, a region later to become the center of the Christmas decoration industry.

Boniface spent the rest of his life evangelizing the areas of modern Germany and parts of the Netherlands. He also became a friend of the Frankish court and helped reform and reorganize the Church in that area. From his missionary travels, Boniface knew that in winter the inhabitants of the village of Geismar gathered around a huge old oak tree (known as the “Thunder Oak”) dedicated to the god Thor. This annual event of worship centered on sacrificing a human, usually a small child, to the pagan god. Boniface desired to convert the village by destroying the Thunder Oak, which the pagans had previously boasted the God of Boniface could not destroy, so he gathered a few companions and journeyed to Geismar.

His fellow missionaries were fearful that the Germans might kill them, so they balked when they reached the outskirts of the village on Christmas Eve. Boniface steadied the nerves of his friends, and as they approached the pagan gathering, he said, “Here is the Thunder Oak; and here the cross of Christ shall break the hammer of the false god Thor.” Boniface and his friends arrived at the time of the sacrifice, which they interrupted. In a show of great trust in God, and born from a desire to enkindle the fire of Christ in the German pagans, Boniface grabbed an axe and chopped down the Thunder Oak of mighty Thor.

Tradition has it that Saint Boniface used the triangular shape of the fir tree that was behind the “Thunder Oak” that had fallen to describe the Holy Trinity of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. St. Boniface told the crowd: “This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be your holy tree tonight. It is the wood of peace. It is the sign of an endless life, for its leaves are ever green. See how it points upward to heaven. Let this be called the tree of the Christ-child; gather about it, not in the wild wood, but in your own homes; there it will shelter no deeds of blood, but loving gifts and rites of kindness.” *catholic.com*

The people were in awe of the destruction of the great oak and St. Boniface’s preaching that they requested to be baptized at once. The converted people began to revere the fir tree as God’s tree, as they had previously revered the oak, dedicated to the god Thor.

By the twelfth century it was being hung, upside-down, from ceilings at Christmas time in Central Europe, as a symbol of Christianity and was referred to as the ‘Tree of Christ’.

The first decorated tree was at Riga in Latvia in 1510. In the centuries that followed, the Catholic tradition of using an evergreen tree to celebrate the birth of Jesus spread throughout Germany. Christmas trees became popular in the United States during the 19th century. Their introduction is largely attributed to German settlers who brought the tradition with them in the early 1800s.

Although there are many stories, legends, and myths surrounding the founding of the Christmas tree, including the claim that the custom originated with Martin Luther, there is only one story rooted in a real person and a real event: Boniface, converter of the Germans, who destroyed Thor’s mighty oak.

Happy Advent! Next week the story of the poinsettia!





FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS!

As you may have noticed recently, a new exit door has been added to the South side of Shea Hall close to the walkway. Once the finishing touches are complete on the exterior ramp, the door will be ready for use. For security reasons, this new door is an EXIT ONLY door with a push/crash bar release on the inside.

And speaking of security: a new/upgraded security system has been installed on the church grounds which includes the Church/Shea Hall building, the PRC, and the Rectory. The security system will be armed nightly from 10 PM until 7 AM. Please be advised that if you need to be in the Church, Shea Hall, or the PRC during alarmed hours, you will need to make arrangements with the church office to have the security system disarmed during your use of the facility and then armed upon your departure.



Daily CATHOLIC WISDOM



Make Advent more meaningful for your self and your family by filling this time of preparation with prayer, action, and reflection.



- Kelly Guest

Catholic Mom - Holy Cross Family Ministries

SECOND COLLECTION - DECEMBER 13 & 14



Please be generous in your support of the National Collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious on December 13 and 14. This collection assists religious institutes in providing for the retirement needs of senior religious priests, brothers, and sisters. The fund also helps religious institutes plan and manage their retirement needs and programs. Please be generous in helping to care for our priests and religious who dedicated their lives to caring for us and who are now in need of our support.



OCIA AT ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

OCIA (Formerly RCIA) is an acronym for **O**rders of **C**hristian **I**nitiation of **A**dults which is a process through which adults become members of the Roman Catholic Church. 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

Feast of the Immaculate Conception Holy Day of Obligation Monday, December 8, 2025 Mass at 9:00 AM

*“Chosen in advance
to be the mother of the incarnate world,
Mary is at the same time
the first fruits of his redeeming action.*

*The grace of Christ the Redeemer
acted in her in anticipation,
preserving her from original sin
and from a contagion of guilt.”*

Pope John Paul II - December 8, 2003

THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



In today's Gospel, John the Baptist urges us to "Prepare the way of the Lord." This is what Advent is all about, for we are called to help prepare the way of the Lord by making the real meaning of Christmas come alive in our own hearts, in our family and to reach out to those in need. Is there a family you know who needs assistance? Please call the Society of St. Vincent de Paul so that together we can help the suffering and poor to celebrate Christmas.

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



THANKSGIVING MEAL GIVEAWAY

St. Vincent de Paul organized a "community effort" to provide a full a thanksgiving meal plus extra items to fill the cupboards of our needy families with food and cleaning supplies.

Those involved included: SVdP Members, IGA Manager Todd Lowe and staff, Camp Ground Church Pastor Janice Keebler and the Congregation.

120 meals were given out to Seniors with the Blount County Outreach Department, Townsend needy residents, Families of Townsend Elementary School, Foster Families of Blount County, TSA and FAA families.

The fun was followed by a delicious Fellowship Luncheon shared by all!



*Advent Retreat/Mission:
Go and Make Disciples!*

Saturday, December 13th

9 AM - 3 PM - Shea Hall

Speaker: Dennis Daniel

9:00 - 9:30	.....	Mass
9:30 - 10:00	.....	Registration (Coffee, Pastries, Etc.)
10:00 - 10:25	.....	Talk: Concepts of Discipleship
10:25 - 10:45	.....	Breakout Session
10:45 - 11:00	.....	Break
11:00 - 11:25	.....	Talk: Stages of Discipleship
11:25 - 11:45	.....	Breakout Session
11:45 - 12:00	.....	Break & set up for Lunch.
12:00 - 1:00	.....	Lunch
1:00 - 1:25	.....	Talk: Contemplation: A.R.R.R.
1:25 - 1:45	.....	Breakout Session
1:45 - 2:00	.....	Break
2:00 - 2:25	.....	Meditation
2:25 - 3:00	.....	Strengths and Weaknesses
3:00	.....	Closing remarks
3:00 - 3:40	.....	Sacrament of Reconciliation available in the church
4:00	.....	Mass

Coffee and pastries will be available during morning registration and a light lunch will be served at noon.

Copies of Dennis' book *Step Up*, upon which this retreat/mission is based, will be available for sale for \$8 per copy.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS
12/13/25	Parish Advent Retreat 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM Shea Hall	Online: N/A (Sign up in Shea Hall) E-Mail: stfrancistownsend7717@gmail.com Phone: 865-448-6070
12/14/25	Parish Christmas Party 4:00—7:00 PM Tremont Lodge - Townsend, TN	Online: N/A (Sign up in Shea Hall) E-Mail: stfrancistownsend7717@gmail.com Phone: 865-448-6070
12/21/25	Santa's Visit to SFA 10:00 AM Shea Hall	Online: N/A E-Mail: stfrancistownsend7717@gmail.com Phone: 865-448-6070

SAINTS BE PRAISED!

December 9	St. Juan Diego
December 10	Our Lady of Loreto
December 11	St. Damasus I, Pope
December 12	Our Lady of Guadalupe
December 13	St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr

ADVENT LECTIO DIVINA
A CONTEMPLATIVE JOURNEY DURING ADVENT

Lectio Divina is an ancient, contemplative approach to listening for God in scripture.

TUESDAYS OF ADVENT
BEGINNING 12/2/24 AT 9:15 (AFTER MASS)

ST. CLARE GIFT SHOP



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



INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES TO PROMOTE DEVOTION TO JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST

*Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito
1950 -*

“The eucharist is the advent of Christ in the most sublime and mystical manner. As we prepare to come to Christmas, this holy season, may the eucharist help us to know his advent among us every hour of our life.”