



**JANUARY 4, 2026
THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**

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 OCIADc. 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 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	1/5	8:30 AM	Kate Schirdewahn
Tue	1/6	8:30 AM	The McEvoy Family
Wed	1/7	NO MORNING MASS	
Thu	1/8	8:30 AM	Doris Smith
Fri	1/9	8:30 AM	The Giraldo Family
Sat	1/10	4:00 PM	Chuck Pogorelnik †
Sun	1/11	9:00 AM	Vo Van Thiet † & Judas Thaddaeus †

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 CANDLE: 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!



ERRATA: The sanctuary candle during the week of Christmas was lit in honor of and thanksgiving for Fr. Antonio. Due to a communications mix-up this dedication was inadvertently omitted from the Christmas week bulletin.

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!



ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

Mon	1/5	9:00 AM	Church and Hall Cleaning
Tue	1/6	6:00 PM	OCIA - Shea Hall
Wed	1/7	5:00 PM	SVdP - Shea Hall
Thu	1/8		
Fri	1/9		
Sat	1/10	4:00 PM	Vigil Mass
Sun	1/11	9:00 AM	Sunday Mass



ST. CLARE GIFT SHOP

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



THE EPIPHANY - CHRIST'S MANIFESTATION TO THE WORLD

Today we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. Epiphany means “showing forth” or manifestation. Epiphany was the original feast of Christ’s birth. In the ancient world an epiphany referred to a visit from a god or one who was revered as a god, such as a King. While at Christmas we celebrate the coming down of the Son of God, on the Epiphany we direct our attention to this Child’s divine dignity which already is beginning to manifest itself in the world.

Today’s reading from Ephesians resonates with the reading from Isaiah when it asserts that the Gentiles along with the Jews are also heirs to the promise of salvation. Mathew picks up the same theme with the arrival of the magi bearing gifts (gold, frankincense, and myrrh). The message of all three readings is not to be missed: Salvation is for all people. No one is excluded. Jew and Gentile alike share the covenant.

The Epiphany is another celebration of Christ’s manifestation to the world. Even though there is great emphasis placed on the story of the magi, the theme of this feast transcends the manifestation of God to the Gentiles; it centers in God’s self-revelation to humanity in the person of Christ.

The opening prayer of this liturgy exhorts us to listen to the readings “as an announcement of the mystery, of the good news, of what is and will be.” The celebration calls us to live in the glory that is ours. In the Epiphany liturgy when we pray the “Prayer over the Gifts” we ask God to accept our offerings, not of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, but our very selves – our hearts and our humanity. The preface for Epiphany proclaims the feast’s central theme: Christ the light of the nations.

Today’s gospel begins with the phrase: “*When Jesus was born*”.... Mathew puts the story in the context of the political environment. Herod takes the story of “the King of the Jews” quite literally and seriously. The mysterious magi enter the scene. Probably coming from Persia, tradition gave them the names Baltazar, Melchior, and Caspar. They became symbols of the diversity of the Church, of God’s manifestation to the Gentile world, to all nations.

Jesus is called “the King of the Jews” in order to name him the Messiah. The *star* is a reference to a messianic prophecy in the Old Testament Book of Numbers in which a star is identified with the Messiah. For Mathew the magi signify that Christ has always manifested his glory to people from distant lands. The Star merely served a purpose. The star was the instrument that would lead the people to the One who would break the power of any force who would bind people to a predetermined fate. When people are in God’s hands, their fate is secured in and through Jesus.

Finally, the magi find the child and their search ends. They offered the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, which became the symbols of Christ’s kinship, his divinity, and his suffering. The magi learned of Herod’s evil plotting and then return home by a different route. Having found the child Jesus, their lives were forever touched. They were transformed. Their change in direction alerts us to this transformation. An encounter with Jesus assumes a change in direction, of heart, conversion, a metanoia.

Like Christmas, the Epiphany is a feast of redemption. Christ became incarnated in our world and manifested the presence of God in order to save the world from itself. Sin could be conquered only through the life, death, and resurrection of the One who was born and the One who revealed his glory to all the nations. We are to proclaim the Glory of God through Christ.

The Epiphany is a reminder that God continues to make his presence known to us and invites us to respond to that presence. May our encounter with Jesus in this Christmas Season help us to give a new direction to our lives and prompt us to share with others the divine energy that has been given to us.

CATECHISM

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BY: Julie Dew

Welcome to January 2026 and today's feast of the Epiphany of the Lord!

Am I the only one that cannot believe how fast 2025 went? AND Merry Christmas!! – because the liturgical season of Christmas is still going on! Christmas begins with the vigil Mass on Christmas Eve and concludes on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. So, we are correct in saying Merry Christmas for a few more days! SO much going on!

As we celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord. You may ask yourself what does the word "Epiphany" mean? "Epiphany" simply means "manifestation." It comes from Greek roots that mean "to show, to display." An epiphany is thus a time when something is shown, displayed, or manifested to an audience.

This feast commemorates the mysterious visit of the magi to the Baby Jesus. My big question is: Who were these "magi"? And then I would ask: Why would they come to see a baby? The "concept" of Magi encompasses a wide range of meanings, from the wholly positive to the wholly negative. They were regarded as "rulers of a distinctive religion," but at the same time their religious ideas were thought to be "strongly influenced by philosophy." Even if they were not exactly members of the Persian priesthood, they were nevertheless custodians of religious and philosophical knowledge that had developed in that area and continued to be cultivated there.

Ok, now you know "who" they were, but why would they venture so far to see a baby? Apparently, they had material of a prophetic nature (some have suggested that they got it from an eastern Jewish community, such as the one in Babylon) that allowed them to identify the birth of the new "king of the Jews" astronomically. They may have been especially motivated to come see this king of the Jews since there was an expectation at the time that a universal ruler would shortly come from Israel, and I assume that is probably why they went to King Herod. I guess they only assumed the newborn king would be a son of Herod - the current "king of the Jews."

The Magi have a symbolic role to play in this feast day. Coming from the east, they represent the Gentile world coming to worship the new king. Also, compared to the humble shepherds, they represented people with a different status in society worshipping Jesus. There is an Armenian tradition identifying the "Magi of Bethlehem" as Balthasar of Arabia, Melchior of Persia, and Caspar of India, which means they would have travelled more than 900 miles!

Here are some facts that I would like to share with you concerning the Epiphany:

- 1.) It marks the day Jesus was revealed to the world.
- 2.) In some countries, the Epiphany is as important as Christmas day.
- 3.) Some believe it is the wise men, not Santa, who bring gifts for children.
- 4.) Eastern Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas on Epiphany, which is on January 19.

Let's all go to Bethlehem like the Magi. Allow ourselves, allow our hearts to be there at the manger and to allow Jesus to be born in our hearts. Let us allow Him to take up residence in our hearts, in our families, in our circle of loved ones. Let's bring God into everything, every aspect of our lives and to be the center of our lives in every thing we do. We need His moral law, we need God's presence, we need His Grace to have a fully satisfactory, happy and abundant life. We need God in order to work out our salvation in this life, so we can be with Him in eternal life – that's our goal. We need to seek out Jesus, we want Him to be the Lord of our lives – so go to Bethlehem..... (some excerpts from when Father Kirby was on morning reflections).

Have a joyous week!



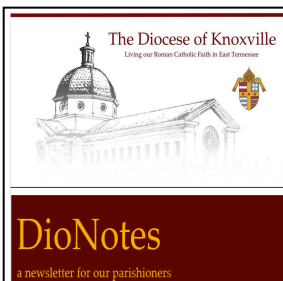
Image Courtesy of BrotherFrancisStore.com

ADDING ARTWORK TO OUR SANCTUARY

The parish has received an anonymous, directed-donation offer to add four paintings to the sanctuary. The idea is to have a painting of each of the four Gospel writers on each side of the sanctuary next to each stained glass window. St. Matthew and St. Mark would be on the side with the Baptism stained glass window and St. Luke and St. John on the Nativity stained glass window side. The paintings would be the same size as the stained glass windows and would have similar looking framing as the stained glass windows to almost make it appear like we have six stained glass windows in the sanctuary.

While we would like to take advantage of this offer, we would like some feedback on whether parishioners would support the idea or not. The paintings would be at no cost to the parish and they would be painted by professional artist Michael Corsini, son of Mike and Sue Corsini of our parish. Michael has provided a rough sketch of the sanctuary and descriptions of the theology behind each painting, giving them deeper spiritual meaning. The paintings would be completed around June and hung shortly after that.

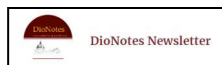
We have asked David Quinn to gather the feedback and consolidate the feedback to report out to the parish. Please email him at dquinn@sensibleprocess.com by the end of January with your feedback or any questions about this project.



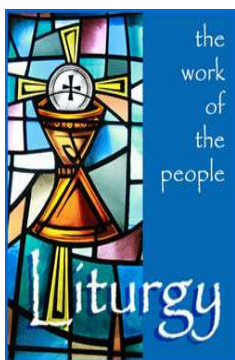
ARE YOU RECEIVING YOUR WEEKLY DIOCESAN DIONOTES E-MAILS?

DioNotes is an electronic/online newsletter covering the news, events, and the ministries of the Diocese of Knoxville. If you are not yet on the mailing list, and would like to be, go to www.DioKnox.org, scroll all the way down to the bottom of the page and

- 1 click on the DioNotes Newsletter area:
- 2 fill in the form that pops up
- 3 click on the **SUBMIT** button at the bottom of the form.



DioNotes will be delivered (for free 😊) to your email inbox every Friday.



LITURGICAL MINISTRIES QUARTERLY SIGN-UPS FOR FEBRUARY, MARCH AND APRIL

The time for Liturgical Ministries signup is approaching! The signup sheets will be on the tables/counter in Shea Hall **NEXT** weekend. Please plan on taking a few minutes after Mass NEXT weekend and the weekend after that to sign up for your ministry/ministries.

If you would like more information about our Liturgical Ministries, please check out our website, the bulletin board in Shea Hall, or contact one of our ministry heads:

Lectors	Martha Frink	865-556-4684	marthafrink00@gmail.com
EMHC*	Karen Messenger	225-572-9400	komessenger@gmail.com
Ushers	Paul Czerniewski	847-877-7347	paul.czerniewski@gmail.com
Sacristans	Kathy Meyerkord	630-698-5563	kmmeyerkord@gmail.com
Altar Servers	Dan Meyerkord	708-846-4144	dkam27@sbcglobal.net

* Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion



THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Today we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany, where the Magi find the newborn king and offer him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. In the spirit of the Magi, please put your gift in the St. Vincent de Paul Poor Box so that comfort and peace can once again be given to a newborn child.

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 JANUARY "PRODUCT OF THE MONTH" SOUP



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.



WELCOMING EVENTS & SOCIAL TEAM MEETING

Thursday, January 8, 2026
NOON in Shea Hall

If you are a member of this parish, you are automatically a member of this team! 😊

Please come and join in the Spring and Summer planning activities for our parish!
A light lunch will be served.



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.

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!

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

*St. John Chrysostom
347 - 407*

*“If we approach with faith,
we too will see Jesus.....;
for the Eucharistic table
takes the place of the crib.
Here, the Body of the Lord
is present, wrapped,
not in swaddling clothes
but in the rays
of the Holy Spirit.*



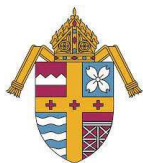
Daily CATHOLIC WISDOM



Let us consider the faith of the Magi, a faith which was willing, lively and active. They saw in the sky the star which heralded the Infant Jesus and experienced the divine inspiration in their hearts. Immediately they went in search of Him.

They were not even deterred by the long and hazardous journey which lay before them. ...Unfortunately, when we hear the divine call, no matter how clear and simple it is, we find a thousand excuses for delaying and perhaps, for not responding to it at all! Let us humbly promise to be more generous in listening for it and more energetic in complying with it, regardless of the cost.

*- Antonio Cardinal Bacci
1881 - 1971*



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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS
1/10/26	St. Josephine Bakhita and the Gift of Understanding - St. Mary's Johnson City, TN	Online: Scan QR Code on poster in Shea Hall E-Mail: N/A Phone: N/A
1/31/26	March For Life Chattanooga, TN	Online: Details Coming Soon E-Mail: N/A Phone: N/A
2/1/26	NFCYM - National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry Louisville, KY	Online: nfcym.org/featured-events/exchange E-Mail: N/A Phone: N/A
2/27/26	SEARCH - Juniors & Seniors St. Therese of Lisieux Cleveland, TN	Online: Scan QR Code on poster in Shea Hall E-Mail: irene.scoggins@gmail.com Phone: 423-596-0053 (Irene Scoggins)
3/6-7/2026	Frazzled in the Vinyard Drury Inn & Suites Knoxville West	Online: Scan QR Code on poster in Shea Hall E-Mail: N/A Phone: N/A
3/8-12 and 3/15-19	Serve4 Spring Break Service Week For 7th and 8th graders Johnston Woods - McDonald, TN	Online: More information on poster in Shea Hall E-Mail: djones@dioknox.org E-Mail: ahenderson@dioknox.org
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)

