



MARCH 22, 2026
5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

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
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 & ENVIRONMENT.....Michele Girard & Norene O'Donnell
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

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 3/23 8:30 AM Judas Thaddeus, Vo Van Thief †
Tue 3/24 8:30 AM George Murr †
Wed 3/25 **NO MORNING MASS**
Thu 3/26 8:30 AM Marianne Horan †
Fri 3/27 8:30 AM Janet Murr †
Sat 3/28 4:00 PM All the Sick
Sun 3/29 9:00 AM Gwendolyn Schultz †

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): Amy Frink, Pat Sanders, Doreen Mancuso, Claire Cheadle, Paul Fain, Joyce Fain, Julie Schirack, Marcus Bolte, Stephanie Romer, John & Maria Bermudes, Michael Slater, Marion McCaughey, Sue Corsini, Teresa Williams, Jeffrey Garrison, Ann Day, Ed Welsh, Dale DuRussel, Robert Schumacher, German Giraldo, Jean Claude Augustin, Connor Dietrich, Sofia Graziano, Mark Reddan, Terry Keran, Beryl Quinton, Obed Sexton, the Gruber Family, Betty Gonzalez, Carmen Milton, Carolyn & Bruce Haverkos, Marlene Doerrer, Monica Meyerkord

SANCTUARY FLOWERS: During the Lenten season, we change our sanctuary floral decorations from fresh cut flowers to dried floral arrangements to reflect the dry period of Jesus' 40 days in the desert.



If, after the Lenten 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!

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!



ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

Mon 3/23	9:00 AM	Church and Hall Cleaning
Tue 3/24	6:00 PM	OCIA - PRC
Wed 3/25		
Thu 3/26		
Fri 3/27	5:00 PM	Stations of the Cross
Sat 3/28	4:00 PM	Vigil Mass
Sun 3/29	9:00 AM	Sunday Mass
	10:30 AM	No Greater Love Lenten Study Group - PRC



**ST. FRANCIS WORDS OF WISDOM
JUBILEE YEAR 2026**



*The deeds you do
may be the only sermon
some persons will hear today.*



- St. Francis of Assisi
1181 - 1226



ST. CLARE GIFT SHOP
OPEN
after weekend Masses
and by request/appointment
after daily Mass



MIRACLES HAPPEN WHEN A COMMUNITY JOINS TOGETHER

We are blessed again today to have our Candidates and the Elect join us as we celebrate the third and final Scrutiny. It is during this time that the Elect, those who will be baptized in two weeks, and all of us, are to examine our personal garbage. We are called to sift through our hurts, wounds, and addictions in order that our eyes may be opened to the light of Christ that dwells within us.

Cycle A readings from John's Gospel are chosen for the Scrutinies due to their baptismal themes. The story of Lazarus reveals Jesus' humanity and divinity, as well as his connection to the community through genuine dialogue and emotion. Here, I will briefly outline three key scenes leading to a vital conclusion that offers good news for today.

The relationship between Jesus and His disciples is highlighted when He asks them to go back to Judea. The disciples are tired and they realize the danger in going back. After all Jesus was nearly stoned to death there. Jesus insists on them staying together and going back. He wants his band of brothers with Him. It is St. Thomas, the very man who later would doubt him that speaks. Ok Jesus, if you insist on going back to die, then we'll go and die with you!

The second important interaction occurs when Jesus meets Martha, who previously expressed frustration over household duties while Mary listened to Jesus. This time, Martha confronts Jesus outside her home, distressed that his absence led to her brother's death, expressing both sorrow and disappointment.

Jesus, fully human, responds with compassion to Martha, assuring her that her brother will rise again. Martha refers to the resurrection on the last day, showing her familiarity with his teachings. Jesus then reveals a central message of John's gospel: "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live." When asked, Martha affirms her faith, declaring Jesus as the Son of God.

This episode marks the story's climax. Christ's miracle in raising Lazarus glorifies God and affirms his divine mission. However, the deeper meaning lies in the events around the miracle: the tomb of Lazarus represents the hardships and emotional deadness we each confront in life, urging us to reflect on and examine these difficult parts of ourselves.

Before performing the miracle, Jesus asks everyone, including his disciples, to roll away the stone. After calling Lazarus from the dead, he again involves the community by instructing them to remove Lazarus's burial cloths. Rather than acting alone, Jesus invites others to participate in bringing life to others.

The core of the Lazarus story is that God alone gives life but wants our participation. Miracles happen when a community joins in removing obstacles, supporting each other through challenges, and choosing to walk together - even when it's difficult.



INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES TO PROMOTE DEVOTION TO JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST

*If one primary force drew me to Catholicism from afar,
it was a thirst for the sacraments.*

*Or, to be more precise, God's grace was the force,
and it worked patiently, gently,
creating a growing hunger for the Eucharist.*

- Abigail Favale

from her book, Into the Deep: An Unlikely Catholic Conversion

CATECHISM

C
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BY: *Julie Dew &
David Quinn*

WRAPPING UP LENT

Happy Fifth Sunday of Lent! Can you believe **next** week is Palm Sunday and we start Holy week! I certainly pray your Lenten journey has been fruitful for you. Today we have the opportunity to “hear” from my friend David Quinn again:

Over half of Lent is gone as we have Palm Sunday in view now. It is a great time to renew our energy towards the three pillars of Lent: fasting, praying, and almsgiving. There’s a sports philosophy that says, “It’s not how you start but how you finish.” We want to finish Lent strong.

The fasting pillar is kind of what Lent is famous for. We abstain from meat on Fridays. We skip snacking between meals and pass on desserts after meals. It is an act of sacrifice that is supposed to strengthen our willpower. I’ll be honest and say that it is much easier for me to cheat on diets or exercise programs when I haven’t promised to do those things for God. It is probably why most New Year’s resolutions only last about two weeks. For resolutions, diets, and exercise programs, we haven’t made a promise to God, but fasting in Lent feels like it has a holier purpose.

Fasting is supposed to be a private practice as well. It is okay to go to a restaurant on a Friday in Lent but don’t make a big deal by saying “No steak for me tonight. I’m abstaining from meat because it is Lent.” Just order the fish dinner or the mac and cheese meal like it is your first choice. When they ask about dessert, just say “That’s tempting but I think I’ll pass for tonight.” We need to finish our fasting humbly.

The praying pillar is a wonderful way to strengthen our relationship with God. Lent is a wonderful time to create a new prayer habit. They say if you do something for more than 30 days, it is more likely to become habit. Whatever new prayer practices we’ve been doing throughout Lent are at that threshold of becoming habit. Use these last two weeks to solidify that new prayer habit.

It is also not too late to add a new prayer practice to your Lenten observance. This can be especially meaningful if you want to set a longer-term goal and see this as an opportunity to get things started soundly. About a dozen years ago, I used Lent to start towards a long-term goal of reading the entire Bible cover to cover. I decided I would read a chapter a day from the Bible for Lent and continued after Lent was over. I finally read the entire Bible. Lent is a wonderful opportunity to start what could become a lifetime activity.

Unlike fasting where we treat each Sunday as a “little Easter” where we can break the fast, the prayer pillar is something we should be doing every day in Lent - including Sundays. Fasting can weaken our bodies physically, even though we aren’t supposed to really show it, but praying is about building up our spiritual strength. It also doesn’t make sense to skip praying on the Lord’s day.

The almsgiving pillar stands out during Lent for one particular aspect. Fasting and praying are things we do for ourselves and our personal relationship with God. Almsgiving is an external act where we are doing things for God’s children. While we may typically think of almsgiving as tossing loose change into the poor box, turning in our Operation Rice Bowl boxes, or writing a check to help St. Vincent DePaul (all beautiful acts that we highly endorse), the heart of almsgiving is helping others. We can look to do things that are not financial: Jesus and the rest of Scripture tells us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick and imprisoned, or other acts of corporal mercy. Our parish and the diocese have lots of opportunities to volunteer for those in need. We have parishioners who volunteer for St. Vincent DePaul, the St. Mary’s Legacy Clinic, Samaritan’s Purse, and other groups that just ask for a little bit of your time each month.

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There are many retirement centers that love having people stop by and visit with people who have no family in the area. Lent is a great time to do something that may get you out of your comfort zone for a little while but could possibly lead to a lifelong engagement of service to others.

Thank you, David! I know that I probably sound like a “broken record” (you may have to explain this to our younger parishioners! LOL!) but here are some more tips to help you with your 3 disciplines of Lent:

FAST by eating just one meal today (light snacks are ok)

PRAY that when you find yourself feeling alone, you look for comfort not in society but in God.

GIVE time today to someone in your life you know is lonely.

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS
FRIDAY 3/27/2026 - 5:00 PM**

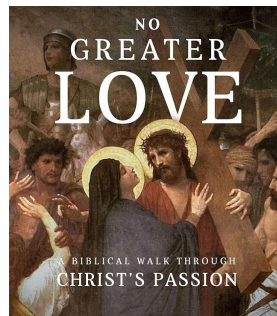
**FACILITATED BY THE
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL MINISTRY
MEATLESS LENTEN SUPPER TO FOLLOW**



Praying the stations of the cross - especially on Lenten Fridays - is a beautiful, spiritual experience and a wonderful way to enhance your Lenten journey. Please plan on joining your parish family in this beloved tradition.

For more information please see the Lenten schedule inserted in this week’s bulletin, on the website, and on the bulletin board in Shea Hall. There may also be some copies on the table in the church vestibule.

This year, since Pope Leo has declared 2026 as a Jubilee Year for St. Francis of Assisi, each facilitating ministry will be offering a mini-presentation on the life of St. Francis after each Lenten supper.



**LENTEN STUDY GROUP
SUNDAY, MARCH 22
(FINAL SESSION 5)
10:30 AM IN THE PRC**

No Greater Love is a biblical pilgrimage that reveals Christ’s amazing love for us. Best-selling author Edward Sri guides

you through the last hours of Christ’s life. You will walk step-by-step with Jesus from the garden of Gethsemane to Mount Calvary. Every step of the way, Old Testament prophecies, messianic expectations, biblical symbolism, and historical context shed light on the mystery of Christ’s suffering and death. Experience a deeper understanding and appreciation of God’s immeasurable and unconditional love for you - grow closer to Jesus than you ever have before. For more information please contact Julie Dew 954-749-3929; jdewtn2018@att.net

**DEACON
FORMATION**



BY: DAVID QUINN

BECOMING A DEACON – COUPLES’ RETREAT

The official end of the deacon formation summer break is the couples’ retreat in August. In August, we get to bring our wives with us to a weekend at the retreat center. It is not a formation weekend per se but an opportunity for wives to connect on their shared experience with the program. As much as the deacon candidates are creating a brotherhood, the wives are building a bond too.

At a retreat weekend, we have someone guiding us through a spiritual topic. Our first retreat weekend was led by Fr. Jerry Daniels. Our second retreat was led by Deacon Tim Elliott. Our third one was led by Fr. David Mary Engo. Each weekend was spent with time presenting a topic, time to reflect on the topic, and time to talk with other couples on the topic. We also had our usual Evening Prayer, Morning Prayer, Holy Hour/Adoration, and Mass.

THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



The Gospel today, challenges us to see and believe the signs of grace in our lives: joy, peace, forgiveness, mercy and kindness. This month, through your gifts, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was able to assist local families, providing food and financial assistance for utility and rent bills, etc. Thank You!

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 MARCH "PRODUCT OF THE MONTH" RICE A RONI AND PASTA SIDES



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.

EAST TENNESSEE CATHOLIC 2026 READER POLL



The East Tennessee Catholic newspaper is conducting a diocese-wide reader poll during Lent this year and they need our help to ensure the results reflect the voice of every parish in the diocese.

The poll is live now through the end of March and is advertised in both the February and March editions of the newspaper. The goal is to better understand who is reading the newspaper, what content resonates most with readers, and how the faithful can best be served in the pews for years to come.

In addition to the digital option of participation, 1,000 paper surveys will be mailed out to randomly selected reader households. If you prefer a paper copy, please call or email the diocese office to request one: Ebooker@dioknox.org; 865-584-3307 ask for Emily Booker.


Please take a few minutes to complete the brief poll and share your insights. Your perspective helps our diocesan newspaper understand its role in your life and how to best serve the East Tennessee Catholic community for years to come.

UPDATE: The diocesan Office of Communications extends their sincere gratitude to every person who has participated in the Reader Poll. They are seeing a great response and are about one-third of the way to their goal at month's end!

HOLY WEEK 2026



Holy Thursday	April 2 nd	Mass of the Lord's Supper	7:00 PM
Good Friday	April 3 rd	Stations of the Cross	3:00 PM
Good Friday	April 3 rd	Good Friday Service	7:00 PM
Holy Saturday	April 4 th	Easter Vigil Service	8:00 PM
Easter Sunday	April 5 th	Easter Sunday Mass	9:00 AM
Easter Sunday	April 5 th	Easter Sunday Mass	11:00 AM

 **Daily CATHOLIC WISDOM**


“ *Redemptive suffering is an essential part of our master story. This is what it means for us to bear the image and likeness of God.* ”

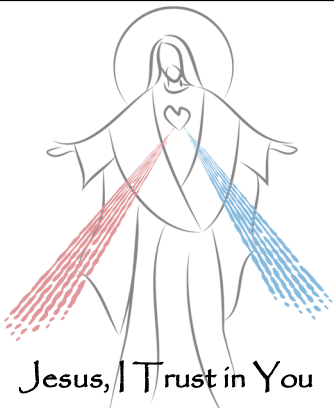
- Scott Hahn

POPE LEO'S MONTHLY PRAYER INTENTION MARCH 2026

For Disarmament and Peace

Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.





DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY SPECIAL HOLY HOUR OF ADORATION

Sunday, April 12, 2026 - 3 PM

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
 Scripture Readings
 Praying the Rosary (with special text)
 Praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy
 Benediction

Jesus, I Trust in You

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS
3/23/2026	Lenten Penance Service 7:00 PM in the Church	Online: N/A Hall: Flyer on Liturgy Bulletin Board Phone: 865-448-6070
4/5/2026	Easter Sunday Masses: 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM	Online: StFrancisTownsend.org Hall: Lenten Schedule on Liturgy Bulletin Board Phone: 865-448-6070
4/12/2026	Divine Mercy Sunday Holy Hour of Adoration 3:00 PM in the Church	Online: StFrancisTownsend.org Hall: Flyer on Liturgy Bulletin Board Phone: 865-448-6070
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)



E-MAIL AND TEXT SCAM ALERT

**BEWARE OF
EMAIL/TEXT
SCAMS**

We have received word from the Diocese that parishioners have been receiving E-Mails and Texts purportedly sent by Priests, Deacons, or other Clergy asking for urgent financial assistance. Additionally, within our OWN parish, parishioners have reported receiving emails and texts from Fr. Antonio with a similar message. If you have received correspondence like this, please DO NOT respond to it and report it to the Church or Diocesan office. Our diocesan

office has asked that we share that **no priest or deacon will ever contact you by email or text asking for your assistance.**

To report a suspicious email or text to the Diocesan office please contact Mara Lentz at mlentz@dioknox.org or 865-862-5734. To report a suspicious email or text to the Parish Office please call 865-448-6070 or send an email to StFrancisTownsend7717@gmail.com.