



# St. John of the Cross



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## Our Parish COMMUNITY

December 14, 2025

**Third Sunday of Advent (A)**

Isaiah 35:1–6a, 10 / James 5:7–10 / Matthew 11:2–11



## Good News!

December 14, 2025

**Third Sunday of Advent (A)**

Isaiah 35:1–6a, 10 / James 5:7–10 / Matthew 11:2–11

FR. THOMAS M. SANTA, CSsR

We sometimes imagine that a sign of a strong faith is firm conviction and freedom from doubt. However, despite our imaginings, the authentic experiences of saints and ordinary people alike seem to point in another direction. The question of John the Baptist today—“Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?” (Matthew 11:3)—suggests that John is filled with questions, and these are important questions because they are asked from the depths of King Herod’s prison, which is not exactly the place of idle musings or concerns.

If John, who is a great saint and a man who encountered Jesus and witnessed the powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit at his baptism, can have a question, doesn’t it suggest that questions are acceptable—perhaps even needed? Perhaps questioning is an indication of faithfulness, not a lack of faith. Questions do not suggest that something is missing; rather, they confirm that something is growing and developing. The Baptist could just have easily said, “Jesus, you are doing and saying more than I ever imagined possible. Please help me to understand,” or, to quote an unnamed saint, “I do believe, help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24).

God will not shatter, and faith will not collapse, because you have questions or doubts.

Experience suggests that questions and doubts strengthen our belief and our commitment to a life of faith. ●

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### Mass Schedule

**Saturday: 6:00 PM**

**Sunday:**

7:30 AM & 11:00 AM ~ English

6:00 PM ~ Spanish

**Daily Mass:**

Mon., Tues., & Fri. ~ 8:00 AM

Thurs.(Sp.) ~ 6:00 PM

**1st Saturday Mass: 8:00 AM**

**Adoration**

**Thurs.~ Spanish—6:30PM**

### Reconciliation

**Thursday: 5:30 PM - 6:00 PM**

**Saturday: 5:00 PM - 5:30 PM**

**Sunday: 5:30 PM**

Please contact Fr. Patrick by phone or email if you need to make an appointment for **Confession** or **Anointing of the Sick**.

### Parish Office Hours

**Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs:**

8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

1:00 PM - 4:30 PM

**CLOSED FOR LUNCH**

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

**OFFICE IS CLOSED**

**Fri., Sat., & Sun.**

# Worship, Prayer, & Ministries

## MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK

<b>Sat.-13 6:00PM</b>	† Raymond Bartosch (12th anniv.) by Michael & Sharon Bartosch † Mr. and † Mrs. E. Del Bosque by David & Terrie Silva † Frances O. Guerrero (Birthday) by Bazan, Leal, and Hinojosa Families † Maria Jimenez (anniv.) by Dolores Borrego
<b>Sun.-14 7:30AM Gaudate Sunday</b>	† Damion Ray Garcia (15th Heavenly birthday) by Veronica Garcia † Francisco, † Celestina, and † Nick Garcia by Maria Beltran Living and Deceased Members of the St. John of the Cross Cemetery Association
<b>11:00AM</b>	† Jose and † Eusebio Alaniz by Janie Beltran † Praxesdis Jimenez (6 year anniv.) by Raquel S. Jimenez and Family Deceased Members of the Rios Family by Jesus Rios
<b>6:00PM</b>	† Manuel Diaz Enriquez, † Javier Diaz, † Angelica Loera, y † Sergio Mondragon por la familia Diaz Chavez Las familias de la parroquia
<b>Mon.-15 8:00AM</b>	Successful cancer surgery for Ann Shorter by Mike and Marion Donohoe Strength and comfort of widows and widowers
<b>Tues.-16 8:00AM</b>	Unwed mothers
<b>Thurs.-18 6:00PM</b>	Deceased of the Donohoe Family by Rev. Patrick Donohoe
<b>6:30PM</b>	<b>ADORACIÓN / HORA SANTA</b>
<b>Fri.-19 8:00AM</b>	† Gary Graham (Birthday) by Janet Graham † Enriqueta Puente by Her Loving Family

## Masses for December 20 & 21

<b>Sat.-20 6:00PM</b>	† Feliciano Borrego, Jr., by Dolores Borrego & Family † Enemencia Molina and † Susana Salazar by Maria Beltran † Marvin Mussman (Heavenly birthday) by Mussman Family † Russ Winterbottom (9th anniv.) by Anna & Eric Winterbottom
<b>Sun.-21 7:30AM</b>	† Allen Migura by Migura Family † Freddy Serna, Jr., by Murray Family † Adolph & † Olive Skrobarczyk by Skrobarczyk Family † Tommie Jean Winstead and † Robert Clemons by Bob & Dianna Winstead Living and Deceased Members of the Sociedad Guadalupanas
<b>11:00AM</b>	† Yolanda Ochoa by Her Loving Husband Congratulations & Welcome home Anthony Rios by Jesus Rios
<b>6:00PM</b>	Las familias de la parroquia



The sanctuary light is offered for  
**Graciela & Pablo Alaniz, Jr., and Family**  
by Graciela & Pablo Alaniz

## Ministry Schedule for Mass

### Ministry Schedule



**Dec. 20—6:00PM—Lector:** Norma Cornejo  
**EM:** Anita Bazan, Luis and Nora Romanos  
**Head Ushers:** San Juanita Gaza, Mike Schroedter

**Dec. 21—7:30AM—Lector:** Ed Ortiz  
**EM:** Maria Miller, Quinton Smithwick,  
Laura Gwosdz  
**Head Ushers:** Bart Miller

**11:00AM—Lector:** Mitch Hippensteal  
**EM:** : Karol Kocurek, Dee DeLeon, Jeri Alaniz,  
Diana Aguilar  
**Head Usher:** Tinker Villarreal

**6:00PM —Lector:** Mariela Ordonez  
**EM:** Maria Graciela Ordonez, Albina Resendez  
**Head Usher:** Paulin Becerril

We are in need of more lectors, eucharistic ministers,  
and ushers for all Masses. Please let the parish office  
know if you can help.

## PRAYER LIST

We continue to pray for the needs of those in our parish:

**Maria Bernal, Elias Bernal, Jr., Art Forbes,  
Angelica Frees, Cindy Lopez, James Matheny,  
Antonio Medrano, and Oscar Ortiz, Jr.**



*The names of newly added persons will remain for three  
weeks. Contact the Parish Office if names need to be  
added to the prayer list.*

*Praying for expecting mothers and their babies:*  
**Theresa Laurienti and Amanda Smithwick**



## Praying for our Military

**We remember these service personnel in each 'Mass for the  
Families of the Parish'**

**Air Force:** Preston Holliday, Alayah Moore,  
Deborah Thomas

**Army:** Father Jim Craig, Madeleena Delaney, Celine De Los  
Santos, Allen McDonald, Jacob Madrid, Eduardo  
Perales, Robert Ponce, Fernando Ramos III,  
Anthony Rios, and Tyree Winstead

**Coast Guard:** Corey Bunton and Joshua Salinas

**Marines:** Aurora Alarcon, Hunter Frees, and  
Andre Rodriguez

**Navy:** Cory Elyasevich, Diane Martinez, and Noah Vasquez

Please pray for our  
**ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY!**

Please call the parish office or use the online form to  
submit names & branch of service.

1. Go to [www.st-johnnog.org](http://www.st-johnnog.org)
2. hover mouse on **ABOUT** tab
3. click on **'Active Military Prayer Request'**

## A Note From Our Pastor

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

Thank you to everyone who made my 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration such a success. The “traveler” theme was so appropriate, and it brought a big smile to my face. The cruise ships, the flags of the different companies, and the globes of the earth were very ingenious. The cruise bed with towel animals was great. Enchiladas, tamales, rice, and beans are my favorite Mexican dish. But the four tables worth of sweet desserts, cookies, and cakes was a beautiful sight to behold. Pan de Polvo, Mexican wedding cookies, macaroons, Tres leches cake, German chocolate cake, and so many more! And since it was my birthday, I tried a little bit of almost all of them. (And took a shot of insulin to counteract the sugar rush!) Thank you to all you gave me a card or gift for my birthday – some of which I am still opening. Of special moments were the faces of close friends and former parishioners, from some of my prior parishes in Beeville, Taft, and Corpus Christi. Having my brother Michael and his wife Marion there to celebrate with me was so great. “Thank You” to all of those who had worked on this momentous birthday celebration.



Our Christmas Angel Tree was the biggest response we have ever had with over 172 angels taken and returned. The response to this appeal was so welcome to see and almost overwhelming with large bags of clothes, gifts, and toys being returned for almost every angel. Several people gave some cash donations to cover any extra expenses or needs to make this project a success. There will be many happy faces come Christmas morning. On behalf of the many children, “Thank you”!

Children’s needs at Christmas often soften our hearts as we remember our own childhood and the joy of getting presents and toys. But at Christmas there are two other groups of people who are in great need as well – those retired religious sisters who have served our church for many years and those in nursing homes.

A very important group that needs to be remembered at Christmas is the many elderly Religious Sisters and Brothers who have retired from active ministry and are in great need in their “senior or golden years”. Many of these women and men had devoted their entire lives to service in the Church as teachers, nurses, and in parish ministry – some of them for over sixty and seventy years. With regular aging and other medical issues, they retire from public ministry in the Church but not from their religious life in community. And as they no longer have any income from their “employment”, and many are not eligible for receiving Social Security, their need for help with basic needs of food, medicine, and medical care is growing every year. Think of your grandparents, great aunts & uncles, and beloved elderly members of your families who are no longer working but still part of the family and who often need a little help from family members to cover their food expenses and bills. Now imagine those many more Religious Sisters in the same situations, but they do not have the family members to step in to help them. These Religious women and men gave so much of themselves in service to God and to us – the Church, and now they are in need. And they are members of our Church family. Each year on the Second Sunday in December, the entire Catholic Church in the United States takes up a Special Second Collection for these senior members of our Church family. I see this as the most important second collection each year, and I strongly encourage everyone to make a truly sacrificial gift toward our Collection for the Retired Religious. If we made a donation equal to the amount we spent on our Angel Tree gifts, or for our own children or grandchildren, it would be a significant response to their need. You can make that donation in this weekend’s second collection, or bring it (send it) to the parish office this coming week. We remember our children at Christmas, then let us remember also our senior family members. Thank you for supporting our Retired Religious in their need.

Nursing homes are often kept at a very cool temperature, and the residents frequently remark that their feet are cold. As most of us know, whenever we wash our socks one or two of those little guys seems to run away to “sock heaven” never to be found again. How many unmatched socks do you have in your sock drawer? The St. John of the Cross Altar Society has for the last several years collected new socks to distribute to the residents at the local nursing homes. This is a very simple need of nursing home residents that our parish, under the Altar Society’s direction, has been supplying the residents with socks to help keep their feet warm. The deadline for donations of these new socks is December 15. Socks can be delivered to the bin in the church foyer or to the parish office.

Love and prayers,

Fr. Patrick



## Deacon's Corner

The Third Sunday of Advent is known as *Gaudete Sunday*. *Gaudete* is the Latin word for “rejoice.” On this third Sunday we wear rose colored vestments. Rose symbolizes rejoicing. It is a color between violet and white. It means “we’re almost there!” On the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday we go back to purple and then on Christmas and the Christmas season we wear white. The U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) tells us that the Christmas season ends on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord Jesus, on January 11, 2026. The readings for *Gaudete Sunday* are from Isaiah 35:1-61, 10; [Psalm 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10](#); [James 5:7-10](#); and the Gospel is from [Matthew 11:2-11](#). The theme is Joy. We can look at the lists and events of the first reading, including supporting those who are weak, those who are afraid, who are insecure, who are suspicious, with mistrusting hearts. *Gaudete* is a time of rejoicing and expresses, really, a time when we make a decision to follow Jesus. If we are serious about it, we are filled with a joy that no one can destroy. Look at the last part of today’s first reading: “Those whom the LORD has ransomed will return and enter Zion singing, crowned with everlasting joy; they will meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning will flee.” The reading from James includes suffering. We can withstand any trial, any obstacle if we rejoice in the Lord. Now, let’s contemplate the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 11. Notice how the emphasis is on the poor, the lame, the blind, the lepers. In the first proclamation of this reading, at the end of the proclamation, the gospel writer says: “and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them.” What is the *good news* that is proclaimed to the poor? I think this expression by Matthew is a way to express the support that Matthew has for the poor in the heart of God, and by extension in the God-man—Jesus. In the Old Testament and in the New, the Lord has a predilection for the poor. He wants them protected, and he wants

them to know that he loves them and protects them, if not in this world, then in the next. The last verse of the Gospel today has always bothered me: “Amen, I say to you, among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” These “least ones” are the ones that the Lord prefers, according to Matthew (and Luke). What is proclaimed to them? Compare this idea from the quote from Isaiah: “Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with *vindication*; with divine recompense he comes to save you.” Vindication here does not mean destruction, in my opinion, but preferential treatment. I know most people don’t want to hear this, but I think the whole idea of Christmas is a message to the world that the Lord is concerned more with how we treat each other rather than how we treat Him! The poor are totally dependent on the Lord because they have little or nothing else. Those of us who have many material things have sought satisfaction in something or someone other than God. Christmas is not so much about giving to each other, but giving to those who have more need than we. Look at Acts of the Apostles chapter 2:42 *et seq.* and Chapter 4, verses 32 through 37. The early church practiced care of the vulnerable. When the Blessed Mother appeared at Fátima, she said: “...lead all souls to heaven, especially those most in need of your mercy.” I think the children of Fátima and Sister Faustina were experiencing some of the same inspirations from God at different times, 1917 and 1931, respectively. Finally, does that mean that God has favorites and that the poor are they? Why did Matthew make serving the poor a prerequisite for entering the kingdom of Heaven—Matthew 25:31, *et seq.*

Have a blessed and faith filled Christmas.

Deacon Cavada

# Stewardship of Treasure

Week #23	COLLECTION	Totals Prior Week -	Goal	Actual	Total Annual Over / (under)	YTD Goal	TOTAL OFFERTORY
12/07/2025	Envelope Collection	\$ (9,124.78)	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 3,280.00	\$ (7,944.78)	\$ 48,300.00	
	Loose Collection	\$ 8,510.08	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,419.00	\$ 8,729.08	\$ 27,600.00	
	On-Line Collection	\$ 6,225.13	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 3,657.17	\$ 8,482.30	\$ 32,200.00	
	TOTAL Collection	\$ 5,610.43	\$ 4,700.00	\$ 8,356.17	\$ 9,266.60	\$ 108,100.00	\$ 117,366.60

The second collection this weekend supports **the Retirement Fund for Religious**. For decades, women and men religious have cared for others, and now many religious face retirement without sufficient savings. Your generosity today is not just a donation; it is a way of thanking them for their lifelong service. Please give to the **Retirement Fund for Religious**.

## Parish Organizations

PARISH COUNCIL

NEXT MEETING: JANUARY 5, 2026 @ 6PM

## ALTAR SOCIETY

### ALTAR DUTY CLEANING SCHEDULE

**Dec. 18-20**—Gracie Alaniz, Kimberly Bowen, Angie Alejandro, Valerie Alaniz, Priscilla Alaniz

**Dec. 25-27**—Mrs. Nora Romanos, Ms. Mary Villarreal, Mrs. Mary G. Becerril, Ms. Janie Beltran

The Altar Society's annual sock drive has begun. The socks will be delivered to nursing homes in the Alice and Mathis areas. Please leave your socks in the baskets in the foyer of the church. Deadline to donate is December 15. Your generosity of supporting this ministry project is appreciated!



## SOCIEDAD GUADALUPANA



**Corporate Mass—December 21 @ 7:30AM**

**Rosary at 7:00AM** **Leader:** Jana Robinson

**Offertory:** Maria Miller and Frances Matheny

**Roses provided to Our Lady of Guadalupe—by the Sociedad Guadalupeana**

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS # 8335



NEXT MEETING: JANUARY 6, 2026



CASA DE LUCY WILL RESUME MEETING ON JANUARY 6, 2026.

## Works of Mercy

The next bread and pastries distribution will be at 9AM  
at **SJoC** on **Monday, December 29 and at**  
**St. Francis** on **Saturday, January 10.**



Coastal Bend Food Bank distributions at 9AM at  
**St. John of the Cross** on **Tuesday, January 6,**  
and at **St. Francis of Assisi** on **Friday, December 19.**

## Diocesan News



Mass of Installation

**Most Reverend**

**Mario Alberto Avilés, C.O.**

As the ninth bishop of the Diocese of Corpus Christi  
Wednesday, January 28, 2026

Location details for the Mass of Installation will be available soon.



### Upcoming Diocesan events

**Let's Brighten our Community** ~ January 10—11, 2026—Stay tuned for more information.

**Texas Rally for Life** ~ Saturday, January 24, 2026—register at <https://diocesecc.org/texasrallyforlife>

**DCYC** ~ Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference—March 1, 2026, at Richardson Event Center on teh Heritage Campus of Del Mar College

**Our Lady of Guadalupe Pilgrimage**—May 31, 2026—June 5, 2026. For more information contact Director of Young Adult Ministry:  
[soconnor@diocesecc.org](mailto:soconnor@diocesecc.org).

# Advent

**Children's Christmas Pageant:** Parishioners are invited to enjoy the Christmas story performed by our religious education students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade on **Wednesday, December 17, at 5:30 PM.**

**Children in grades K - 5 MUST meet in their classroom at 5 PM.**

**Grades 3, 4, & 5 MUST stay after the performance to return all costumes/props.**

**Parishioners are invited to stay for the Advent Penance service after the performance.**

**Note that all junior high and high schools students must meet in the parish hall at 6:30 for attendance and will be dismissed after celebrating the sacrament of confession.**



**Advent Penance Service ~ Wednesday, December 17—6:30 PM—8:00PM**  
Visiting priests will be available to hear confessions.

**Decorating the Church for Christmas Season ~ All parishioners are invited to help prepare the church for the Christmas season on Thursday, December 18, at 10AM.**

Help is needed in carrying the decorations up from the basement and setting up all the Christmas trees.

## Christmas Ministry Schedule

### December 24, 2025

**6:00PM**

**Lector:** San Juanita Gaza

**EM:** Liza Ochoa, Sharry Stipp, Anita Bazan

**10:00PM**

**Lector:** Kim Rokohl

**EM:** Don Rokohl, Jose Isais, Quinton Smithwick

### December 25, 2025

**9:00AM (Spanish Mass)**

**Lector:** Joachin Ordenez Maldonado

**EM:** Mariela Ordenez, Albina Resendiz

**11:00AM**

**Lector:** Karol Kocurek

**EM:** Maria Galvan-Gordon, Dee DeLeon, Janie Flores, Vol.

## Solemnity of Mary Schedule

### December 31, 2025

**6:00PM**

**Lector:** Pablo Alaniz

**EM:** Sharry Stipp, Luis and Nora Romanos

### January 1, 2026

**7:30AM**

**Lector:** Rick Svetlik

**EM:** Margie Svetlik, Maria Miller, Luz Paiz

**11:00AM**

**Lector:** Jeri Alaniz

**EM:** Diana DeAnda, Don and Kim Rokohl, Volunteer

**6:00PM (Spanish)**

**Lector:** Maria Esmeralda Castro

**EM:** Paulin Becerril, Joachin Ordenez

# Christmas & New Year's Schedule



## Solemnity of Christmas

**Christmas Eve ~ Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2025**

6:00 PM Mass

8:00 PM @ St. Francis of Assisi

10:00 PM Mass

**Christmas Day ~ Thursday, Dec. 25, 2025**

9:00 AM Mass (Spanish)

11:00 AM Mass



## Feast of Epiphany

**January 4, 2026 ~ Regular Mass times**

## Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

**Vigil Mass— Wednesday, December 31, 2025**

6:00 PM Mass

**Solemnity of Mary ~Thursday, Jan. 1, 2026**

7:30 AM Mass @ SJoC

9:15 AM Mass @ St Francis of Assisi

11:00 AM Mass @ SJoC

6:00 PM (Spanish)

## Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

**January 11, 2026 ~ Regular Mass times**