



St. John of the Cross



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**Our Parish
COMMUNITY**

August 23, 2026

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Isaiah 22:19–23 / Romans 11:33–36 / Matthew 16:13–20



Good News!

August 23, 2026

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Isaiah 22:19–23 / Romans 11:33–36 / Matthew 16:13–20

FR. THOMAS M. SANTA, CSSR

“Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” An easy answer if you just report what other people say and what you have heard. No commitment. No revelation. No risk. But it all changes when the question is more to the point: “Who do *you* say that I am?” Tell me what you know, not what you heard. The silence is almost deafening. Vulnerability, not just anonymous reporting, is required in the asked-for response.

No surprise—it is Peter who answers. Never one to hide his emotions or edit his thoughts, it is Peter who reveals what he knows, perhaps even what he is unsure of, perhaps the truth that he only hopes for but has not yet declared. “You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God” (Matthew 16:16).

Jesus responds with a prayer of blessing; the apostles, on the other hand, remain silent. Although we are very familiar with Peter’s assent of faith, his declaration was almost unheard-of or unexpected from a first-century Jewish man. It was dangerous to identify someone as Messiah. It was blasphemous to name someone as the Son of the Living God. Yet, in faith and humility, Peter made the declaration and, in the naming, entrusted his life, his hope, and all that he believed firmly into the hands of Jesus. This was no simple act. This was no ordinary day. ●

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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. James 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

Sat.-22	6:00PM	† Marrian Baldeschwiler by Janet Sikes † Margarita Guerrero (anniv.) by Bazan, Leal, and Hinojosa Families † Jim Van Blarcum by Estella Cortinas
Sun.-23	7:30AM	† Damian Ray Garcia by Veronica Garcia † Margie, † Vicky, † Jessica Leon-Guerrero by Ellie Mankin People of the parish
	11:00AM	† Marrian Baldeschwiler by Larry & Maria Adian † David Gaza by San Juanita Gaza † Francisca & † Cornelio Perez by Janie Beltran Healing of Sissy Thomas by Family
	6:00PM	Las almas del purgatorio por Gabriela Becerril
Mon.-24 <i>St. Bartholomew</i>	8:00AM	† Chip and Laura Adams' 35th wedding anniversary
Tues.-25	8:00AM	† Allen Wiechring (Heavenly birthday) by Michael & Sharon Bartosch Strong marriages
Thurs.-27 <i>St. Monica</i>	6:00PM	Familia de Liza Ochoa y almas del purgatorio Por Liza Ochoa
	6:30PM	Adoración
Fri.- 28 <i>St. Augustine</i>	6:00PM	Liza Ochoa's family & Momo Ortiz's family by Liza Ochoa

Masses for August 29th & 30th

Sat.-29 <i>The Passion of Saint John the Baptist</i>	6:00PM	† Marrian Baldeschwiler by Janet Sikes † Praxesdis & Raquel S. Jimenez's Wedding Anniversary by Raquel S. Jimenez † Luis Romanos by Shelly McDonald
Sun.-30	7:30AM	† Marrian Baldeschwiler by Larry & Marie Adian † Omar Vidal (Heavenly birthday) by Janie Beltran
	11:00AM	† Victoria & † Tomasita Barajas by Janie Beltran Healing of Sissy Thomas by Family People of the Parish
	6:00PM	† Jose Rosario Becerril por Maria Ordonez Las almas de purgatoria por Gabriela Becerril

The altar flowers are in memory of

William F. Stipp

by Sharry Stipp

The sanctuary light is offered in memory of

Ronnie Benavidez
Heavenly birthday

by Liza Ochoa



Gather — A Family Ministry—encouraging community, growing in God's word, and supporting families, will begin meeting the first Sunday of each month, starting October 4, from 9:15-10:45.

If you are interested in assisting this ministry with childcare, please contact the parish office.

Scan the QR code to register and for more details.



Ministry Schedule for Mass

Ministry Schedule



Aug. 29—6:00PM—Lector: Norma Cornejo
EM: Don and Kim Rokohl, San Juanita Gaza
Head Usher: Raquel S. Jimenez

Aug. 30—7:30AM—Lector: Rick Svetlik
EM: Laura Gwosdz, Jose Isaacs, Margie Svetlik
Head Usher: Bart and Maria Miller

11:0AM—Lector: Kathleen Garza
EM: Diana DeAnda, Karol Kocurek, Jeri Alaniz, Janie Flores
Head Usher: Tinker Villarreal

6:00PM—Lector: Jesus Perez
EM: Albina Resendiz, Joachin Ordonez
Head Usher: Paulin Becerril

Please let the parish office know if you can help as we need more lectors, eucharistic ministers, and ushers for all Masses.

PRAYER LIST

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

Roel Galván, Blanca Gonzalez, Art Forbes, Tyler Forbes, Antonio Medrano, and Sissy Thomas



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:

Mary Margaret Skrobarczyk



Praying for our Military

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

Air Force: Juan Luis Alonzo, Jr.; Vincent Gordon; Preston Holliday; Christopher Lauer II; Alayah Moore; Deborah Thomas; Audry Winstead

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, Aubrey McCown, Andrew Saenz, Robert Silva, 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-johnog.org
2. hover mouse on **ABOUT** tab
3. click on **'Active Military Prayer Request'**



A Note From Our Pastor

Greetings to all of you! I trust all is well with everyone as we begin this Twenty-First Week in Ordinary Time.



Just a reminder, I will be leaving on Monday afternoon to head to Grand Rapids, Michigan, for the National Council of Catholic Women Convention. I will return next Sunday, August 30th, in the afternoon. There will be a visiting priest for the Sunday evening Spanish Mass on the 30th just in case a delay happens. So that Mass will be covered.

Looking forward to “being blessed among women,” renewing friendships from throughout the United States, and meeting new people. Be assured that you will be in prayer while I am away, and I will be taking the Mass intentions with me to remember at the Masses that will be celebrated each day. The weather is showing that it will be rainy and in the upper 70’s while I am there. So, we will see...

Someone asked me a question last week that I am sure is a question that may be on many minds, so here is an answer. The person had come to the Solemnity of the Assumption Mass on Saturday morning the 15th, but also came to the Mass on Saturday evening (the Vigil Mass for Sunday the 16th) and wondered if they could receive Communion at that Mass if they had received Communion at the morning Mass.

The official 1983 Code of Canon Law understanding is: If you receive Communion once, you may receive Communion a second time on the same day, **only if you fully participate at the second Mass.** You cannot just come to receive Communion and then leave. As the Second Vatican Council’s document on the Sacred Liturgy teaches us, we are to fully and consciously participate in the celebration of Mass. So, if you go to Mass once, you can go a second time, if you fully participate in that Mass.

God bless us everyone!

Fr. James G. Stembler



Please join us at an official Installation Mass for
The Very Reverend James G. Stembler

on Sunday, September 20, 2026,
at the 11AM Mass at St. John of the Cross Catholic Church.

Bishop Mario Avilés will formally present Father James G. Stembler to our parish.
All are invited to a potluck luncheon in the St. John parish hall immediately after Mass.
The Knights of Columbus will provide spaghetti. Please bring a side or dessert.

We have been blessed to have Father Stembler assigned as our pastor. Please keep him in your prayers as he continues to transition to his new pastoral leadership and shepherd our community.



Deacon's Corner

Today is the Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time, thirteen weeks until the First Sunday of Advent. How time flies! This week my wife and I celebrated 57 years of marriage. And we say the same thing about that, how time flies. When our Pastor was retiring, I asked him if in his vocation as a priest his love for God increased as the years passed. He said "yes." I feel the same way about the vocation of marriage. As the years pass, I love my wife more and more, and I love God even more. There is something about a sacramental life that helps us to focus on the meaning of love, the exercise of loving, and the commitment to love. I think the sacramental life of the Church is the key. I see so many broken families in our society because we fail to understand the power of love. Today's readings are from Isaiah 22: 19-23; Psalm 138 (137 in Spanish):1-2, 2-3, 6, 8; Romans 11:33-36 (probably the best rendition of the glory of God ever expressed in the Scriptures); and the Gospel from Matthew 16:13-20 (the power of the keys). There are many scriptural verses in the Gospels that are important either because they express a doctrine, or a healing is imparted, or they bring light to our understanding, or they inspire us to change our way of thinking. But Matthew 16: 18 and 19 are special. Those verses are the basic reason for the existence of the Church and our being Catholic. And through the power of God himself, the Church can never be destroyed. There is a well-known anecdote about Napoleon and Cardinal Ercole Consalvi, the Papal ambassador to France during the time of Napoleon. Napoleon wanted to and did annex the Papal States, but Pope Pius VII would not concede. Napoleon reportedly told Consalvi that if the Pope didn't concede, he could destroy the Church. Imagine a conversation like this: Napoleon: "I will destroy your Church." Consalvi: "No, you won't." Napoleon: "I will destroy your Church!" Consalvi: "We have been trying to

do that ourselves for eighteen hundred years—and we haven't succeeded." There are other renditions of the Cardinal's response, like for example: "If bad popes, immoral priests and thousands of sinners in the Church haven't succeeded in destroying it from within, how do you think you will destroy it from without?" Consalvi was trying to make an essential point: the Church's survival does not depend upon the virtue or power of its members. It depends upon Jesus Christ. That is why these two verses: "You are Peter and upon this rock, I will build my church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it..." and "I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven...." are so important. Over the centuries, the councils of the Church have consistently upheld that the Holy Father cannot err in matters of faith and morals. That was declared in Vatican I in 1870, and that Council cited 4 or 5 earlier ecumenical councils. I think Vatican II expanded the definition and refined it in *Lumen Gentium*, paragraph 25. It is too lengthy to quote here, but the Church has reaffirmed the doctrine from the beginning, and the authority to do so comes from Jesus when he asked the Apostles who they thought he was, and Peter answered correctly. That power and authority can never be diminished. The same is true of the Sacraments of the Church, which is the way that we celebrate our faith. We partake of the real presence of the Lord in each sacrament. We celebrate the Paschal Mystery in each one of them, beginning with Baptism. That, my dear brothers and sisters, is the wonder of verses 18 and 19 of Chapter 16 of Matthew. The more we truly believe that nothing can destroy the church, not even ourselves, that belief should lead us to an ever greater appreciation of the Church and our constant adherence to it and its teachings. I love you all.
Deacon Cavada

Stewardship of Treasure

CURRENT WEEK	08/16/2026
Envelope Collection	\$2,268.00
Loose Collection	\$1,472.27
Assumption of Mary	\$329.00
Altar Server Fund	\$523.00
Summer Electric Fund	\$45.00
Catholic School Development	\$387.00

2026 Bishop's Stewardship Appeal

The SJoC BSA goal is \$22,629 of which \$11,870 has been pledged.

With a projected \$2,060 recurring gift, SJoC has a total of \$13,930 expected pledge & recurring gifts.

That is 62% of the diocesan goal with 11% of the parish participating in the 2026 BSA.

Your continued support of the Bishop's Stewardship Appeal is truly appreciated!



Parish Organizations

PARISH COUNCIL

NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 14 @ 6PM

ALTAR SOCIETY

NEXT MEETING: AUGUST 24 @ 6PM

September Month Procession Leader: Diana McBride



ALTAR DUTY CLEANING SCHEDULE

August 27-29—Mrs. Anna Winterbottom, Mrs. Margie Franco, Mrs. Jill Ortiz, Mrs. Janey Flores, Mrs. Delilah DeLaPaz
September 3-5 —Paid Professional

SOCIEDAD GUADALUPANA

NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 21 @ 6PM

Hostess grp # 2: Jennifer Alejandro

Corporate Mass—September 20 @ 7:30AM

Rosary at 7:00AM

Leader: Isabel Alanis

Offertory: Dee DeLeon, Angie Facundo, & Gloria Pena

Roses provided to Our Lady of Guadalupe—by Norma Cornejo & Jana Robinson



ANNUAL GUADALUPANA SOCIETY BINGO FUNDRAISER

Sunday, September 27, 2026 Parish Hall

Doors open at 11:45am for Concession Stand. BINGO starts at 12:45pm.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS # 8335



NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 1



CASA DE LUCY

MEETS TUESDAYS @ 9AM

Religious Education



Save the Date – Registration and orientation for Religious Education:

Wed., Aug. 26, at 6:00PM, and Sun., Aug. 30, at 12:00 PM.

Religious education begins Wednesday, September 2.

All students in junior high thru high school and a parent/guardian must attend a mandatory orientation in the parish hall to register. Parents who have children in jr. high – high school AND elementary grades and the student(s) MUST attend the orientation to register ALL of their children.

Parents who ONLY have children in elementary grades are not required to attend an orientation to register their child(ren) and can register in the Religious Ed building.

Works of Mercy

Looming Ladies meet in the parish hall on Mondays at 9AM to knit hats for patients a Driscoll Children's Hospital Oncology Department.

The next bread and pastries distribution will be at 9AM at SJoC on on Wednesday, September 9, and at St. Francis on Saturday, September 12.



Coastal Bend Food Bank distributions at 9AM at St. John of the Cross on Thursday, September 3 and at St. Francis of Assisi on Saturday, September 26.

Dear Padre,

Can a non-Catholic serve and hold an office in a Catholic parish organization?

According to their knowledge, competence, and position, the Christian faithful have an obligation to assist in the necessary works of the Church and promote the common good of the parish—its worship, its apostolic mission, its charities, the care of its ministers, and its care of the poor. (See *Code of Canon Law*, 222.) In general, canon law and most diocesan regulations stipulate that members of primary decision-making entities must be active, registered Catholics who participate in the sacramental life of the Church. For example, members of a pastoral council must be “in full communion with the Catholic Church” (CCL 512 §1). However, non-Catholics—such as spouses of parishioners or experts in their fields (e.g., finance, law, architecture)—are sometimes invited to lend their skills by serving on advisory boards and committees or in other support roles that are usually in a non-voting capacity. In all cases, the pastor or bishop has the discretion to involve non-Catholics in specific initiatives. For instance, a bishop “can invite as observers to the diocesan synod other ministers or members of churches or ecclesial communities which are not in full communion with the Catholic Church” (CCL, 463 §3). A non-Catholic interested in serving should consult the local priest about available opportunities, based on the norms of a diocese. ●



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A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

I genuinely hope that our Christian lifestyle will always reflect this fraternal, “Samaritan” spirit—one that is welcoming, courageous, committed, and supportive, rooted in our union with God and our faith in Jesus Christ. Enkindled by this divine love, we will surely be able to give of ourselves for the good of all who suffer, especially our brothers and sisters who are sick, elderly, or afflicted.

MESSAGE ON WORLD
DAY OF THE SICK,
ROME, FEBRUARY 11,
2026



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Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to **DearPadre.org** to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

Monday

August 24
St. Bartholomew,
Apostle
Rv 21:9b–14
Jn 1:45–51

Tuesday

August 25
Weekday
2 Thes 2:1–3a, 14–17
Mt 23:23–26

Wednesday

August 26
Weekday
2 Thes 3:6–10, 16–18
Mt 23:27–32

Thursday

August 27
St. Monica
1 Cor 1:1–9
Mt 24:42–51

Friday

August 28
St. Augustine, Bishop
and Doctor of the
Church
1 Cor 1:17–25
Mt 25:1–13

Saturday

August 29
The Passion of St.
John the Baptist
1 Cor 1:26–31
Mk 6:17–29

Sunday

August 30
Twenty-second
Sunday in Ordinary
Time
Jer 20:7–9
Rom 12:1–2
Mt 16:21–27