



St. John of the Cross



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Our Parish COMMUNITY

September 6, 2026

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Ezekiel 33:7-9 / Romans 13:8-10 / Matthew 18:15-20



Good News!

September 6, 2026

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Ezekiel 33:7-9 / Romans 13:8-10 / Matthew 18:15-20

ANN M. GARRIDO

As someone who works in the field of conflict management, I like to think that all situations can be worked out if we go about it in a skilled manner. If we use the right words. Ask the right kinds of questions. It's embarrassing to admit that even the best "tools" in my "conflict belt" sometimes still effect little change. Today's gospel can be consoling in a strange way. It acknowledges that even when we use all the tools we have on hand to heal a relationship, it doesn't always work out. Sometimes, we may need to become strangers to one another, at least for a while—like a Jew to a Gentile or a tax collector.

Of course, when Jesus says "treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector," it is important to consider how Jesus treated Gentiles and tax collectors. He healed the centurion's servant. He ate in Zacchaeus' house. Jesus did not see Gentiles and tax collectors as enemies and did not treat them as such. Rather, Jesus understood Gentiles and tax collectors as those with whom he might start a relationship should the opportunity present itself. The past cannot be rewritten, but perhaps a different kind of future is still possible.

Is there a relationship in your life that feels beyond healing at this point and from which perhaps you need some distance? Is it still possible to treat the other person with the kindness Jesus showed toward Gentiles and tax collectors? •

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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.-5	8:00AM	† Gary Graham by Janet Graham Liza Ochoa's family / souls in purgatory by Liza Ochoa
	6:00PM	† Diana Aguilar (2nd anniv.) by Family † Marrian Baldeschwiler by Larry & Marie Adian † Magdalena Romanos by Shelly McDonald
Sun.-6	7:30AM	† Larry Bruns (2nd anniv.) by His Loving Family † Mae Gwosdz by Her Family † David Samuel Sepeda (Heavenly birthday) by Liza Ochoa
	11:00AM	† Marrian Baldeschwiler by Janet Sikes † Sylvia Monguia & Eva Rios by Jesus Rios † Roger Villarreal (16th anniv.) by Family Living and Deceased Members of the St. John of the Cross Altar Society
	6:00PM	† Elena Centeno y † Martin Becerril por Paulin Becerril y familia Las almas de purgatorio por Gabriela Becerril los feligreses de la parroquia
Mon.-7	8:00AM	† Regino Flores (Heavenly birthday) by Janie Flores Unborn babies
Tues.-8	8:00AM	† Rafael Garza by Anita Bazan † David Gaza by Andres & Rosemary Perez † Lorenza Hatch (anniv.) by Hatch Family
Thurs.-10	6:00PM	la santidad de la vida familiar
	6:30PM	Adoración
Fri.- 11	6:00PM	Nurses and first responders

Masses for September 12th & 13th

Sat.-12	6:00PM	† Jeffrey & † James Gwosdz by their family Dr. Christine Mugridge by Saturday Morning Prayer Group Liza Ochoa's Family / Vocations by Liza Ochoa
Sun.-13	7:30AM	† Marrian Baldeschwiler by Janet Sikes † Larry Bruns (Heavenly birthday) by His Loving Family † Lisa Stewart by Jana Robinson Living and Deceased Members of the St. John of the Cross Cemetery Association
	11:00AM	† Marrian Baldeschwiler by Larry & Marie Adian † Samuel & Delia V. Chapa by Janie Beltran † Brianna Cantu Gonzales by Anita Bazan
	6:00PM	Paz los feligreses de la parroquia

Thank you for your donation to the altar flowers,
**Amanda Addkisson, Sharon Bartosch, Angie De Los Santos, Mar-
 gie Franco, Kathy Gafford, Janet Graham, Jill Ortiz, Mary
 Ortiz, Sharry Stipp, Shirley Syamken,
 and Carol Wiechring.**



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



Sept. 12 —6:00PM—Lector: Pablo Alaniz
EM: Anita Bazan, Sharry Stipp, San Juanita Gaza
Head Usher: Carlos Alaniz

Sept. 13 —7:30AM—Lector: Ed Ortiz
EM: Laura Gwosdz, Luz Paiz, Margie Svetlik
Head Usher: Bart and Maria Miller

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

6:00PM—Lector: Jose Isaia
EM: Joachin Ordenez, Jesus Perez
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



The parish office will be closed on
 Monday, September 7, in observance
 of Labor Day, and will reopen at
 8:30AM on Tuesday.



A Note From Our Pastor

What does the Catechism of the Catholic Church say about the end life?

1051. Every man receives his eternal recompense in his immortal soul from the moment of his death in a particular judgement by Christ, the judge of the living and the dead.

1052. "We believe that the souls of all who die in Christ's grace...are the People of God beyond death. On the day of resurrection, death will be definitively conquered, when these souls will be reunited with their bodies." (Paul VI)

1053. "We believe that the multitude of those gathered around Jesus and Mary in Paradise forms the Church of heaven, where in eternal blessedness they see God as He is and where they are also, to various degrees, associated with the holy angels in the divine governance exercised by Christ in glory, by interceding for us and helping our weakness by their fraternal concern." (Paul VI)

1054. Those who die in God's grace and friendship imperfectly purified, although they are assured of their eternal salvation, undergo a purification after death, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of God.

1055. By virtue of the "communion of saints," the Church commends the dead to God's mercy and offers her prayers, especially the holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, on their behalf.

1056. Following the example of Christ, the Church warns the faithful of the "sad and lamentable reality of eternal death" also called "hell."

1057. Hell's principal punishment consists of eternal separation from God in whom alone man can have the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs.

1058. The Church prays that no one should be lost: "Lord, let me never be parted from you." If it is true that no one can save himself, it is also true that God "desires all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4), and that for him "all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

1059. "The holy Roman Church firmly believes and confesses that on the Day of Judgement all men will appear in their own bodies before Christ's tribunal to render an account of their own deeds." Council of Lyons II).

1060. At the end of time, the Kingdom of God will come in its fullness. Then the just will reign with Christ for ever, glorified in body and soul, and the material universe itself will be transformed. God will then be "all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28), in eternal life.

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

It has been my contention that the main theme of the New Testament is conversion (what Matthew's Gospel today calls "gains"), and that the Old Testament main theme was observance (of the law, customs, rules and regulations). Take a look at the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) and find there all kinds of directives, rules, procedures, rituals and instructions on how to effectuate compliance with the Law. Today is the Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, September 6, 2026. (Today I am 83 years old!). The readings are from Ezekiel 33:7-9; Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9, (Psalm 94 in Spanish); Romans 13:8-10 and Matthew 18:15-20. From the first reading we get the idea of the "Watchman." You will find the theme of the Watchman or Sentinel in Ezekiel in several places. Chapter 33, today's reading, chapter 3, and chapter 21—warning the people to turn to the Lord, and holding the watchman responsible if he does not announce the Word to the people. Look at this particularly harsh warning to the Prophet: "If I tell the wicked, 'O wicked one, you shall surely die,' and you do not speak out to dissuade the wicked from his way, the wicked shall die for his guilt, but I will hold you responsible for his death." Do you think that was a motivating factor for the Apostles when they went to the ends of the earth to proclaim the basic message of the Lord Jesus? I think they had an impulsive desire to spread the Word. They were convinced of the Truth, and they felt responsible for spreading it. And they were willing to give up their lives in furtherance of the Truth and the conversion of hearts. This is what Pope Francis wrote about when he identified the joy of the Gospel. There

is a certain joy that comes to us when we bring the presence of the Lord into peoples' lives. The Lord says in Ezekiel: I will hold you responsible. In the New Testament we make ourselves responsible because we are driven by the Word which gives us satisfaction when we notice that persons change their lives because of their recognition of the presence of the Lord. Paul says to the Romans: "'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law." The Gospel of Matthew seems hostile to the sinner. "Treat them like you would the tax collectors or the gentiles." The commentary says this as to verse 17: "...tell it to the church. 'Church' here has the sense of a local community, *let him be to you as a Gentile or a publican*: This is a way of saying, let him be excommunicated, excluded from the community, a drastic step to be taken only in serious matters where the welfare of the community is at stake." Yet in every encounter he has in the Gospels with sinners and gentiles, he accepts them if and when they repent. This is a familiar refrain: "Go your way, your faith has healed you." To Zacheus the tax collector: "Come down, today we eat at your house." The Church has the authority to bind and loosen. The church is not in the business of excommunicating people willy nilly because when we commit a mortal sin, we automatically excommunicate ourselves. In extraordinary cases, like the SSPX, does the Pope have authority to excommunicate people in authority of movements or sects? Absolutely! Let us preach that all those who come to the Lord will be set free.

Deacon Cavada



Stewardship of Treasure

CURRENT WEEK	08/23/2026	CURRENT WEEK	08/30/2026
Envelope Collection	\$1,145.00	Our Living Church [Capital Campaign] Online Giving (Aug)	\$7,560.00
Loose Collection	\$2,133.00	Summer Electric August Online Giving	\$2,452.00
August Online Giving	\$1,036.00	Retired Priests August Online Giving	\$20.00

Parish Organizations

PARISH COUNCIL

NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 14 @ 6PM

ALTAR SOCIETY

NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 28 @ 6PM

September Month Procession Leader: Diana McBride

ALTAR DUTY CLEANING SCHEDULE

September 10-12— Mrs. Dee DeLeon, Ms. Gloria Contreras, Mrs. Anna Marie Saenz, Mrs. Angela Facundo, Ms. Beatriz Jimenez

September 17-19— Mrs. Bertha Forbes, Mrs. Olga Carranza, Ms. Jessie Hernandez, Mrs. Lupita de los Santos

The Altar Society is planning a fall raffle fundraiser and is asking for donations to be used as prizes. Please contact the parish office if you can donate a gift card or make a cash donation to be used to purchase prizes. Deadline for prizes is September 14.

SOCIEDAD GUADALUPANA

NEXT MEETING: OCTOBER 19 @ 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: OCTOBER 6



CASA DE LUCY

MEETS TUESDAYS @ 9AM

Altar Servers

Calling all youth of our parish interested in serving the Lord during Mass!

The **Altar Server Ministry** will hold a second (and final) **New Server Orientation** for the 2026/27 school year on **Sunday, September 13**, at 1:30 PM in the church. This is for any youth of our parish wishing to become an altar server who is at least in the 3rd grade and has received FHC. The next opportunity to join will be next summer. Please contact the parish office for more information and to preregister.

Religious Education

The last day to register for the St. John of the Cross Religious Education Program will be **Wednesday, September 9**.

Registration for children in **elementary grades** will take place *in the church at 5:30PM on Wednesday, Sept. 2 and 9*.

Registration for children in **junior high thru high school** will take place *in the church at 6:30PM on Wednesday, Sept. 2 and 9*.

All junior high thru high school students must attend orientation with a parent / guardian in order to register.

Thank you, **Jenna Robles**, for providing the meal for our jr high—high school religious education students. They enjoyed the nachos, Frito pie, and chips.

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 **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, October 1** and at **St. Francis of Assisi** on **Saturday, September 26**.

Dear Padre,

I had not been to confession for decades until recently, and I've probably committed mortal sins I can't remember. I want God's forgiveness, but I'm unsure how to get it at this time.

You ask if God has forgiven you for sins that you may have committed in the past but that you don't remember now. You say you have been to confession recently.

A mortal sin has three criteria: it is seriously wrong; the person knows it is seriously wrong; and the person is free to commit the sin or not. In the case you are describing, you don't even remember what the mortal sin might have been, or even if there was one. So, no, you don't have to confess something you don't remember. Also, you have already gone to confession recently, and you sound truly repentant for your past sins. You do not indicate that you were deliberately trying to hide any sins from the priest. So, you have already been forgiven, not only for the sins you remembered but also for those you don't remember. That is why usually we will say something like "for these sins and for those I may have forgotten" when we go to confession.

The bottom line is that confession is for you to experience God's mercy. It is not to test how good your memory is. Be at peace. God loves you and particularly wants you to experience the peace that comes from his forgiveness. ●

Fr. Gary Lauenstein, CSSR / DearPadre.org



JOHN TYSON / UNSPLASH

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

The Church is at the same time an earthly community and the mystical body of Christ, a visible assembly and a spiritual mystery, a reality present in history and a people journeying toward heaven (Lumen Gentium, 8; Catechism of the Catholic Church, 771). The human and divine

dimensions integrate harmoniously, without one overshadowing the other.... [The Church] is a reality that is both human and divine.

**GENERAL AUDIENCE,
ROME, MARCH 4, 2026**

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CHRISTIAN HARR / UNSPLASH

Do you have a question for the Padre?

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

Monday

September 7

Weekday

1 Cor 5:1-8

Lk 6:6-11

Tuesday

September 8

*The Nativity of the
Blessed Virgin Mary*

Mi 5:1-4a or

Rom 8:28-30

Mt 1:1-16, 18-23

or 1:18-23

Wednesday

September 9

St. Peter Claver, Priest

1 Cor 7:25-31

Lk 6:20-26

Thursday

September 10

Weekday

1 Cor 8:1b-7, 11-13

Lk 6:27-38

Friday

September 11

Weekday

1 Cor 9:16-19,

22b-27

Lk 6:39-42

Saturday

September 12

Weekday

1 Cor 10:14-22

Lk 6:43-49

Sunday

September 13

*Twenty-fourth Sunday
in Ordinary Time*

Sir 27:30-28:7

Rom 14:7-9

Mt 18:21-35



St. John of the Cross Catholic Church
200 S. Metz, Orange Grove, TX

ANNUAL GUADALUPANA SOCIETY
BINGO FUNDRAISER

Sunday, September 27, 2026
Parish Hall

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

Participate in our Sweets Auction & 50/50 Raffle

6 On Bingo Book: \$35.00 for 20 games
Plus FREE door prize ticket with book purchase

"Cash and Credit Cards accepted"

