

St. Francis of Assisi Mission



Parish Office:
361-384-2795

Pastor:
Rev. Patrick K. Donohoe

Bulletin Email
saintjohn0006@gmail.com

Parish Office Fax:
361-384-0056

Mission Office Email:
Saintjohn0003@gmail.com

Mission Website:
www.st-johnog.org/sfoa



Mailing Address—P.O. Box 329, Orange Grove, TX 78372

Physical Address—303 County Road 185, Sandia, TX 78373

Our Parish COMMUNITY

March 8, 2026

Third Sunday of Lent (A)

Exodus 17:3-7 / Romans 5:1-2, 5-8 / John 4:5-42 or 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42



Good News!

March 8, 2026
Third Sunday of Lent (A)

Exodus 17:3-7 / Romans 5:1-2, 5-8 / John 4:5-42 or 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42

FR. THOMAS M. SANTA, CSSR

“If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” (See Psalm 95.) Our psalm prayer invites us to respond to the Word of God. A positive response should be assumed as ordinary: very few among us would deliberately ignore God’s voice. The challenge is not in responding “yes” to the invitation of the Lord but rather in “hearing” his voice.

There are so many voices that daily compete for attention. We seem to be bombarded every waking moment with some kind of noise that demands attention and action. At one time, Neil Diamond might have been able to celebrate the “Beautiful Noise” of the city, but it is far more difficult for us today. Frankly, the noise around us is deafening, and most people long for true silence, a break in the pattern, a vacation from the frantic anxiety that seems to be present.

A wonderful Lenten practice—indeed, a spiritual practice that goes well beyond Lent—is to freely choose to disconnect from distraction. Resist the temptation to plug in the earbuds. Refrain from the distraction of social media content. Leave your cell phone in the living room, go sit in the backyard, and pay attention to nothing. “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:11), the psalmist reminds us. Listen for God’s voice, hear his call, and respond to the invitation. ●

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Mass Schedule

Sunday: 9:15 AM
St. John of the Cross

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 ~

Adoration ~

Thurs. (Sp.) - 6:30PM

1st Saturday Mass: 8:00 AM

Reconciliation

Thursday: 5:30 PM

Saturday: 5:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Sunday: 5:30PM

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

St. John of the Cross

Mon., Tues., Wed., and 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

MASS INTENTIONS

Sun.-March 8 9:15 AM	† Jerry Cross by his loving family † Irene Snelling, † Laura Taplin, and † Wayne Tate by Elizabeth Hackfeld People of the Parish
Sun.-March 15 9:15 AM	† Irene Snelling, † Laura Taplin, and † Wayne Tate by Elizabeth Hackfeld People of the Parish

PRAYER LIST

May He bless all who are in need of His strength, especially:

Ana Culpepper, Henry Garrett, Kenton Heider, Paula Heider, Gerald Lindsey, Melba Malik, Cheryl Marshall, Adrian Nunez, Daniel Nunez, Phillip Torres, Paige Trevino, Adolfo Trevino, and Bo Weaver



Praying for expecting mothers and their babies:

Theresa Laurienti, Ricki Rodriguez Choat and Amanda Smithwick



Please contact the parish office for any additions or deletions.

Praying for our Military

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



Air Force: Preston Holliday, Christopher Lauer II, Alayah Moore, Deborah Thomas, Audrey Winstead

Army: Father Jim Craig, Magdeleena Delaney, Celine De Los Santos, Allen McDonald, Jacob Madrid, Eduardo Enrique Perales, Robert Ponce, Fernando Ramos III, Anthony Rios, 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.

Stewardship of Treasure

PREVIOUS WEEK	02/22/2026	CURRENT WEEK	03/01/2026
Collection	\$655.00	Collection	\$1039.00
Phyllis Toler Seminarian Fund	\$500.00	Our Living Church Bldg Fund	\$143.00
Black and Indian Missions	\$65.00		
Altar Society V-day Auction	\$170.00		

 **2025 Tax statements Church Donation Records** ~ If you would like a statement of your church donations during 2025 for tax filing, please call the Parish Office. To save paper and postage, statements will only be provided upon request.

Parish Organizations

 **Attention all graduating seniors:** The **St. John of the Cross Joint** and the **Knights of Coumbus Scholarships** are now available in the church foyer, the parish office and the high school counselor's office.

ALTAR & ROSARY SOCIETY NEXT MEETING: MAY 4, 2026 @ 2PM

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS # 8335  NEXT MEETING: APRIL 6, 2026

Religious Education

No religious education classes on March 11 during spring break

FHC Masses: Sunday, May 3 at 9AM and 2PM.
2nd Reconciliation: Saturday, March 21 @ 9AM
(Parents must attend practice but are not required to receive the sacrament of reconciliation.)
Confirmation Mass: Wednesday, May 13, 6:00PM, at SJoC

Works of Mercy

Loom Kitting ~ Parishioners are invited to meet in the SJoC parish hall on Mondays at 9AM to knit hats for patients at Driscoll Children's Hospital Oncology Department. Contact the parish office or Bertha Forbes for more information.

The next bread and pastries distributions will be at 9AM at **SJoC** on **Wednesday, March 11**, and at **St. Francis** on **Saturday, March 14**.

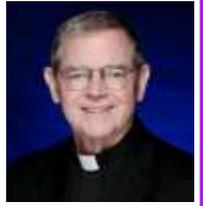


Coastal Bend Food Bank distributions at 9AM at **St. John of the Cross** on **Thursday, April 2**, and at **St. Francis of Assisi** on **Saturday, March 28**.



A Note From Our Pastor

“And I will give them another heart and a new spirit I will put within them. From their bodies I will remove the hearts of stone, and give them hearts of flesh, so that they walk according to my statutes, taking care to keep my ordinances”. Ez 11:19



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

For the first three weeks of Lent, I replaced the Holy Water in the fonts at the entrances of the church doors with pebbles. For most of us when we enter the church, we place our hands in the Holy Water and bless ourselves not realizing what we are actually doing. During these weeks when your hands hit the stones in the fonts, it was a look of surprise and questions, “Where is the Holy Water? Why are there stones?”. Then there was a look of “Oh, I forgot! It is Lent!”. Here is a slightly better understanding for everybody.

Baptismal Fonts were at the main door of the church as Baptism is the Sacrament of Initiation (Entrance) into the Mystical Body of the Christ – the Church. It is at the door of the church that we rejected Sin, Satan, and Evil. And it is there at the door of the Church where we proclaimed and professed our Faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It was there at the Baptismal Font that our sins were washed away and our souls were first filled with grace and the Holy Spirit. In that pouring of water over our heads, we became a Child of God, Brother to Christ Jesus, and a Temple of the Holy Spirit. And it is at the door that we begin our journey toward Heaven and our journey toward the Altar and Holy Communion. Each time we enter the Church and place our hands in the Holy Water and then sign ourselves with the Cross, we are to remember those Baptismal Promises – rejecting Sin and Satan, and more importantly proclaiming once again Faith in God the Father, Jesus His Son, and the Holy Spirit and right then we are asking once again for God’s grace and help in that journey begun at our Baptism. It is the very first prayer of our worship of God when we enter the Church. From the time of that Blessing of Holy Water, everything that we do in the church building should be part of our prayers for that day! Kneeling quietly and praying as we prepare for the Mass. (Not really a time for a lot of talking and catching up on the latest news from friends. A time for quiet as others prepare for the Mass.) The Eucharist / Mass does not start when the priest walks in, Mass starts for you with the Blessing of the Holy Water at the door of the church. That is the time we begin our worship, giving prayers of thanks to God for our blessings, and placing our petitions for help and graces before God.

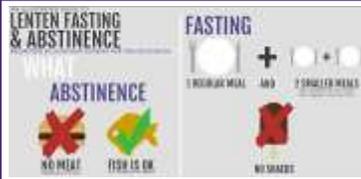
The stones in the fonts are for us to remember that with each sin that we commit, a portion of heart turns hard like stone against God and our relationship with Him. How many stones would be in your heart right now? How many of them would be much larger than these pebble-size stones? Our hearts turn hard and to stone when we begin to only think of ourselves and what we want! This passage from Scripture is the basis for a person being mean or unforgiving; they are being “hard hearted”. Potter’s clay is soft and can be shaped into many different beautiful things, and that is the image that we use for ourselves being open to God’s grace and being shaped into the person and vocation God has for us. But when the clay dries out, it becomes hard and brittle. Our Baptism is the moment that the “clay” of our souls is wetted and made pliable by God’s grace and we begin to be formed “in His Will”. Each sin that we commit hardens a portion of the soul, and with enough sins we can become hard-hearted. Confession is the sacrament by which we remove those harden portions and seek the grace to be made pliable to God’s will again. Is my soul full of stones that need to be removed? Is my heart becoming hard-hearted?

I used the small pebble-size stones because there is space between them for water to enter the font. And there are spaces in your hearts and souls where God’s grace can enter into and make them pliable and soft to God’s Will. Each time we bless ourselves with Holy Water, we are asking for grace to help us remove the stones and to be filled with God’s loving presence. Each time you bless yourselves with the Holy Water, don’t do it because it is a mindless habit, but realize that it is my first prayer, “Take my sins away and make me once again your faithful disciple”.

Love and Prayers,

Fr. Patrick

Lent



Lenten Fasting and Abstinence

Fasting on Good Friday

Though Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are not holy days of obligation, fasting is required. Those ages 18-59 should limit themselves to no more than one meal that day.

Abstinence on Fridays during Lent

Those ages 14+ are required to abstain from eating meat every Friday during Lent.



Parish organizations will lead the **Stations of the Cross** at SJoC at **6PM on Fridays** during Lent.

March 13—Knights of Columbus

March 20—Altar Society

March 27—Casa de Lucy

Good Friday, April 3 — Stations of the Cross on

English —3:00PM

Spanish—5:00PM

No Greater Love, a bible study from Ascension, will walk through the last hours of Jesus Christ's life here on Earth. 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 historic context will shed light on the mystery of Christ's suffering and death

No Greater Love will meet Tuesdays, from 6:15PM-7:30PM, in the SJoC parish hall through March 31.

Night of Adoration ~ Saturday, March 14, 2026 St. John of the Cross

Come spend some time with Jesus this Lent.

6:00PM—Mass in English

7:00PM—Rosary in English by Liza Ochoa

8:00PM—Adoration in English

9:00PM—Rosary in English by Anita Bazan

10:00PM—Adoration with piano in Spanish

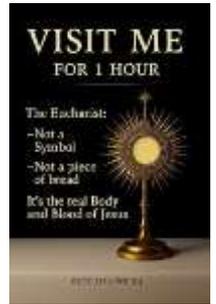
11:00PM—Silent contemplation

12:00AM—Rosary in Spanish by Maria Ordonez

1:00AM—Praise with choir in Spanish

2:00AM—Silent contemplation

3:00AM—Chaplet of Divine Mercy



Adoration is every Thursday from 7PM—8PM.

Reconciliation

Confession cleanses the soul.

"Even a clean and unoccupied room gathers dust; return after a week and you will see that it needs dusting again!"- St. Padre Pio.

Confessions are offered every Thursday and Sunday at 5:30PM and Saturday at 5:00PM.

Our Lenten Penance Service is scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, from 6PM—8PM. Four visiting priests will be available for confession.

An extra opportunity for confession will be offered on Holy Thursday from 8:30PM—9:30PM.

Prepare for Easter Sunday! Don't wait until the end of Lent!

Matthew cautions us, "Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come."
"(Matthew 24:42)



40 CANS FOR LENT FOOD DRIVE ~ Almsgiving is one of the pillars of Lent. Please support our "40 Cans for Lent" food drive to stock our St. John of the Cross Food Pantry.

Items most needed are canned meat (tuna, chicken, Vienna sausages, SPAM), canned chili, canned vegetables and fruit, pasta, rice, boxed cereal, and snack bars.

All nonperishable items may be left in the church foyer or brought to the parish office through Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026.

Jesus said, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink..." (Matthew 25:35-40)



Holy Thursday—April 2

Holy Thursday Rehearsal for altar servers @ 5:30PM

Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper: 7PM

Washing of the Feet
Rededication of Eucharistic Ministers
Eucharistic Procession
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Adoration Shifts on Holy Thursday

8PM-9PM: Altar Society
9PM—10PM: Soc. Guadalupanas
10PM—11PM: Altar Servers & Youth
11:00PM—12:00AM: KCs



Good Friday Service (bilingual) @ 7:00PM

Easter Vigil Mass -

Saturday, April 4—@ 8:00PM

Altar Server practice for Easter Vigil
@ 10:00AM



**Easter Sunday Mass, April 5
Regular Mass times**

Upcoming Parish Events



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

ANNUAL GUADALUPANA SOCIETY BINGO FUNDRAISER

Sunday, March 15, 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”



SJoC Altar Society's Silent Auction & Vendors' Arts/Crafts Fair



SATURDAY, MARCH 21
9:00 A.M.—1:00 P.M.

There will be unique gifts and crafts.
If you have items to donate to the Silent Auction
or are interested in selling your crafts, candles,
jewelry, snacks, pastries, snow cones, roasted corn,
etc. Please contact the Parish Office. (\$10.00/booth)

Dear Padre,

When I was young, my parish covered all the statues during part of Lent. What did it mean exactly? Do any churches still do this?

In 2001, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the practice of veiling statues and crosses during the last two weeks of the season of Lent, beginning on the fifth Sunday of Lent. This practice is optional, at the discretion of the local pastor. According to the Roman Missal, "Crosses remain covered until the end of the celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday, but images remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil."

Covering crosses and statues in violet cloth in the final weeks of Lent indicates a shift in the Church's focus from Jesus in the desert (gospel for the first Sunday of Lent) to Christ during his Passion. Similar to other Lenten disciplines of penance and fasting that align us in solidarity with Christ, the veiling custom is meant to deepen our appreciation for Christ's ultimate sacrifice. It represents our "fasting" from sacred depictions of the cross on which hung our salvation and from images of the saints, who glorify Christ and in whom he is glorified. This concealment creates an absence to make our hearts grow fonder for the Lord, who "bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24). ●



CATHOLIC

Fr. Byron J. Miller, CSSR / DearPadre.org

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
MARCH 9	MARCH 10	MARCH 11	MARCH 12	MARCH 13	MARCH 14	MARCH 15
<i>Lenten Weekday</i>	<i>Lenten Weekday</i>	<i>Lenten Weekday</i>	<i>Lenten Weekday</i>	<i>Lenten Weekday</i>	<i>Lenten Weekday</i>	<i>Fourth Sunday of Lent</i>
2 Kgs 5:1-15ab Lk 4:24-30	Dn 3:25, 34-43 Mt 18:21-35	Dt 4:1, 5-9 Mt 5:17-19	Jer 7:23-28 Lk 11:14-23	Hos 14:2-10 Mk 12:28-34	Hos 6:1-6 Lk 18:9-14	1 Sm 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a Eph 5:8-14 Jn 9:1-41 or 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

Do you have a question for the Padre?

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



MARCO JACOBILLO/EPY / SHUTTERSTOCK

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

We feel a deep and burning thirst that no drink in this world can satisfy. Knowing this, let us not deceive our hearts by trying to satisfy them with cheap imitations!... Let us turn this thirst into a step stool, like children who stand on tiptoe, in order to peer through the window of encounter with God.

HOMILY, ROME, AUGUST 3, 2025