

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint John Grande Román

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: June 3

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IN BRIEF

Saint John Grande Román

Andalusian consecrated layman, Hospitaller brother of Saint John of God, servant of prisoners and the sick, who died of the plague in Jerez.

Feast day	June 3
Born	March 6, 1546, Carmona, Andalusia, Spain
Died	June 3, 1600, Jerez de la Frontera, Andalusia, Spain
Canonized	June 2, 1996, by Pope John Paul II
Era	16th century
Patron saint of	Jerez de la Frontera, Diocese of Asidonia-Jerez, the sick, prisoners

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint John Grande, Servant of the Sick

Novena to Saint John Grande

Credits and sources

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LIFE

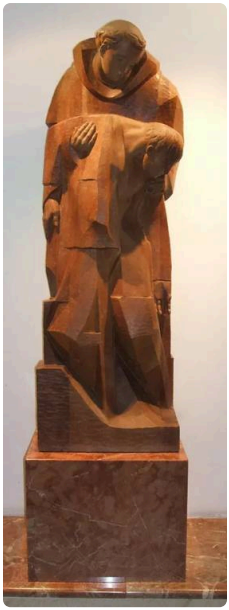
Saint John Grande Román

Saint John Grande Román (in Spanish, *Juan Grande*) was a consecrated layman of sixteenth-century Andalusia, born in Carmona in 1546 and died in Jerez de la Frontera in 1600. A cloth merchant who became a hermit, he called himself "John the Sinner" and gave his life to the poor, prisoners and the sick, before joining the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God. He died of the plague, caught at the bedside of the sick. Canonized in 1996, patron of the Diocese of Asidonia-Jerez, he is celebrated on June 3.

Who was Saint John Grande?

John Grande belonged to the first generation of disciples of Saint John of God, who died in Granada in 1550, four years after John Grande was born. Like his master, he began alone, without title or means, by putting himself at the service of the most wretched. He was never a priest: he lived his vocation as a Hospitaller brother, a consecrated layman. The Church presents him as a model of practical charity and humility.

The nickname he chose for himself, *Juan Pecador*, "John the Sinner," says a great deal about his spirituality. Far from thinking himself better than others, he knew he was poor before God, and he saw in every sick person the face of the suffering Christ.



John Grande, old engraving from the time of his beatification.

Key dates in the life of John Grande

- **March 6, 1546**: Born in Carmona, near Seville; baptized on March 15 in the church of San Pedro.
- **Adolescence**: Learns weaving and the cloth trade in Seville, then in Carmona.
- **c. 1565**: Leaves business and withdraws to a hermitage at Santa Olalla, where he takes the name John the Sinner.
- **Following years**: Settled in Jerez de la Frontera, he devotes himself to prisoners, the poor and the sick.
- **1570s**: During an epidemic, he founds a hospital in Jerez placed under the protection of the Virgin Mary.
- **Soon after**: He joins the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God and founds or supports other houses of charity.

- **1600**: A plague epidemic strikes Jerez; he cares for the sick and catches the disease.
- **June 3, 1600**: Dies in Jerez de la Frontera.
- **November 13, 1853**: Beatified by Pope Pius IX.
- **June 2, 1996**: Canonized by Pope John Paul II in Rome.

From the shop counter to the hermitage

John was born in Carmona, an Andalusian town near Seville, into a Christian family. He learned weaving in Seville, then a great port for trade with the Americas, and returned to deal in cloth in his hometown. But material success did not satisfy him.

At about twenty he gave up his business and withdrew to a hermitage at Santa Olalla. There he put on the habit of a penitent and took the name John the Sinner. In solitude and prayer he understood that God was calling him not to flee the world, but to serve those the world rejects.

Friend of prisoners and the sick

John settled in Jerez de la Frontera. He visited prisoners, often abandoned in dreadful conditions, begged to obtain food and clothing for them, and pleaded on their behalf. He took in the poor and sick people he found in the streets.

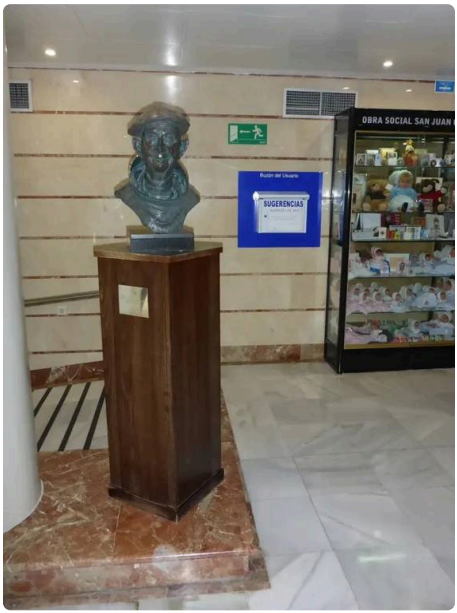
During an epidemic he opened a hospital, which he placed under the protection of the Virgin Mary. He cared for the sick himself: he washed them, fed them and comforted them, living on alms as Saint John of God had done in Granada.

Having heard of the brothers of Granada, he joined them and entered the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God. His hospital in Jerez was incorporated into the order. John then took part in other foundations, always in the same

spirit: to welcome without conditions, to care with tenderness, and to see Christ in everyone who suffers.

A martyr of charity

In 1600 a plague epidemic ravaged Jerez. John spent himself without counting the cost among the sick, without fear of contagion. He caught the disease in turn and died on June 3, 1600, at the age of fifty-four. The people of Jerez immediately venerated him as a saint. His relics now rest in Jerez, in the church of the hospital that bears his name, run by the Brothers of Saint John of God.



The San Juan Grande hospital in Jerez de la Frontera.

Why is Saint John Grande the patron saint of the sick and prisoners?

Beatified by Pius IX in 1853, John Grande was canonized by John Paul II on June 2, 1996. He is the patron saint of Jerez de la Frontera and of the Diocese of Asidonia-Jerez, created in 1980, the city where he served and died.

He is also invoked as the patron of the **sick** and of **prisoners**, the two groups to whom he gave his life. His death among plague victims makes him a natural intercessor for caregivers in times of epidemic, and for those who accompany the dying.

Symbols and how to recognize Saint John Grande in art

He is shown in the habit of a Hospitaller brother of Saint John of God, often **carrying a sick person** or holding a **bowl** and a **cross**, signs of his life of service and of begging for the poor.

What can we learn from Saint John Grande?

John Grande gave up a comfortable life to become the servant of prisoners and the sick. He reminds us that holiness often takes the form of humble acts: visiting, feeding, washing, comforting. His nickname "the Sinner" is an invitation to humility, and his death in the service of plague victims is an example of courage for all caregivers.

To entrust these intentions to him, read the prayer to Saint John Grande or follow the novena to Saint John Grande.

Where to pray to Saint John Grande

- **Jerez de la Frontera** (Andalusia, Spain): the church of the San Juan Grande hospital, where his relics rest.

- **Carmona** (Andalusia): the church of San Pedro, where he was baptized, which keeps the memory of his baptism.
- The hospitals and houses of the Brothers of Saint John of God throughout the world.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint John Grande, Servant of the Sick

Saint John Grande, a Hospitaller brother of Saint John of God, became the servant of prisoners and the sick in Jerez de la Frontera, until he died of the plague in 1600. Since no traditional prayer to him is widely known in English, Saintspedia offers here an original prayer inspired by his life and his patronages.

Prayer to Saint John Grande, servant of the sick

Saint John Grande, you left trade and wealth to become poor with the poor: teach me to prefer love to the goods of this world.

You called yourself "John the Sinner": give me a humble heart that does not judge others and that surrenders to the mercy of God.

You visited prisoners: watch over those in prison, their families and those who work in prisons. Obtain for them dignity, hope and conversion of heart.

You cared for the sick as for Christ himself: bless the sick, the elderly, the dying and those who accompany them. Give caregivers strength, skill and gentleness.

You died of the plague in the service of the sick: protect us in times of epidemic, and give us the courage not to abandon those who suffer. I entrust to you this intention: (name it in silence).

Through your intercession, may I learn to recognize Jesus in every wounded person, and to serve him with joy. Amen.

This prayer is an original text by Saintspedia, free to use for personal and community prayer.



Saint John Grande, patron of Jerez de la Frontera.

Short invocation

"Saint John Grande, friend of prisoners and the sick, pray for us." (Original invocation by Saintspedia.)

When to pray this prayer

Saint John Grande is celebrated on June 3, the anniversary of his death in Jerez in 1600. You can pray to him at the bedside of a sick person, in times of epidemic, before a visit to a prison or a nursing home, during a hospital shift, and for vocations to the service of the sick. For nine days of prayer, follow the novena to Saint John Grande, and to discover his story, read the life of Saint John Grande.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint John Grande

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life of Saint John Grande, Hospitaller brother of Saint John of God, servant of prisoners and the sick in Jerez de la Frontera. It is not an official liturgical text. To end it on his feast day, June 3, begin on May 26. You may also pray it at any time of the year: for a sick person, for someone in prison, for caregivers, or in a time of epidemic.

How to pray this novena

Each day, begin with the Sign of the Cross and entrust your intention to God, naming the person or situation you are praying for. Read the meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. End with the invocation: "Saint John Grande, friend of prisoners and the sick, pray for us." The act suggested for each day invites you to live, in a small way, the charity that filled his life.

Day 1: A Christian home

John was born in Carmona in 1546 and baptized a few days later in the church of San Pedro. Everything began there, at the baptismal font. Our baptism, too, is the root of every call to holiness.

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for the grace of my baptism. Through the intercession of Saint John Grande, help me to live as your child each day.

Today: Find out or recall the date of your baptism, and thank God for it.

Day 2: Success that does not satisfy

A cloth merchant trained in Seville, John could have built a comfortable life. But material success left his heart empty. Only God can fill the deepest desire of the human heart.

Prayer: Lord, free me from the anxious search for money and comfort, and teach me to seek first your Kingdom.

Today: Give something you do not need to someone who does.

Day 3: John the Sinner

In his hermitage at Santa Olalla, John took the name "John the Sinner." He did not think himself better than others. Humility is not self-contempt: it is the truth of a heart that knows it needs God's mercy.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner. Give me a humble heart that never looks down on anyone.

Today: Make a careful examination of conscience, and if possible go to confession.

Day 4: Called to serve

In solitude and prayer, John understood that God was not asking him to flee the world but to serve those the world rejects. Prayer opened his eyes to the poor.

Prayer: Lord, let my prayer make me more attentive to others, not less. Show me whom you are asking me to serve.

Today: Ask God in prayer: "Who needs me today?" and act on the answer.

Day 5: Visiting prisoners

In Jerez, John visited prisoners left in dreadful conditions, begged food and clothing for them and pleaded their cause. He saw in them the Christ who said, "I was in prison and you came to me."

Prayer: Lord, watch over prisoners and their families, over victims and over all who work in prisons. Give them hope and the grace of conversion.

Today: Pray for prisoners, or support a prison ministry.

Day 6: A hospital under Mary's protection

During an epidemic, John opened a hospital and placed it under the protection of the Virgin Mary. He washed, fed and comforted the sick with his own hands, living on alms.

Prayer: Holy Mary, Health of the Sick, watch over those who suffer in body and mind, and over all who care for them.

Today: Visit, call or write to someone who is sick.

Day 7: In the family of John of God

Having heard of the brothers of Granada, John joined the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God. He did not hold on to his own work: he placed it within a larger family. Charity grows when it is shared.

Prayer: Lord, bless the Brothers of Saint John of God and all who serve the sick in hospitals, clinics and homes.

Today: Thank a nurse, doctor or caregiver you know.

Day 8: Facing the plague

In 1600, when the plague struck Jerez, John stayed with the sick without fear of contagion. He gave his life as Jesus gave his. His courage speaks to all who care for the sick in times of epidemic.

Prayer: Lord, protect caregivers and give them courage. Strengthen the sick, comfort the dying and receive into your peace those who have died.

Today: Pray for those who have died in an epidemic, and for their families.

Day 9: A martyr of charity

John died on June 3, 1600, at fifty-four, and the people of Jerez at once venerated him as a saint. The one who called himself a sinner became a light for his city. Love given to the end is never lost.

Prayer: Lord, at the end of this novena, I place my intention in your hands. Through the intercession of Saint John Grande, teach me to recognize Jesus in every wounded person and to serve him with joy. Amen.

Today: Do a work of mercy for someone who cannot repay you.

Closing prayer

Saint John Grande, John the Sinner, servant of prisoners and the sick, I entrust to you the intention of these nine days. You left everything to serve Christ in the poor and you gave your life among the plague-stricken: obtain for me a humble heart, generous hands and the courage not to abandon those who suffer. Protect the sick, prisoners and caregivers, and lead us all to the mercy of God. Amen.

To go further: the life of Saint John Grande and the prayer to Saint John Grande.

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