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MISSION FAMILY MEMBER, CHA CHA BELARDES LOSES CANCER BATTLE

San Juan Capistrano, CA – November 9, 2009 ---Mission San Juan Capistrano's family member, Cha Cha Belardes passed away at 12:30 am Saturday, November 7, 2009 having lost her battle against cancer.

"As a Mission Family, we have extended our sympathy to the Belardes family and will be here for them in this difficult time." stated Nancy Davis, Human Resource Director at the Mission.

Vigil for Cha Cha will be in Serra Chapel on Sunday, November 15th at 7:00 PM. Funeral Mass will take place in the Basilica on Monday, November 16th at 10:00 AM followed by the traditional walk to the historic cemetery for burial. A reception will be held in the Gym following the funeral mass and burial.

"She is at peace, and we all need to stand ready to help and support in any way needed. This is a huge loss for us, and I am beyond words as to what to say. May she rest in peace." stated Mechelle Lawrence-Adams, Executive Director at the Mission.

About Mission San Juan Capistrano:

Known as the "Jewel of the Missions," Mission San Juan Capistrano is a historic landmark and museum that boasts of quality permanent exhibits featuring original artifacts as well as traveling and temporary exhibits on a wide variety of topics.

The site itself serves as a living outdoor museum with original buildings constructed by Native Americans in the 18th century including the Serra Chapel, Great Stone Church, and the original padres' quarters of the South Wing.

The Mission was founded on November 1, 1776 by Padre Junipero Serra as the seventh in the chain of the twenty-one California missions established by Spain, and is Orange County's only mission. Every year, over 50,000 students visit the Mission and engage in an inspirational learning experience via the Mission Matters programming, as part of their State required California history studies.

Mission San Juan Capistrano is owned by the Diocese of Orange and is supported by the Mission Preservation Foundation, which is comprised of business and community leaders committed to ensuring the long term preservation and viability of Orange County's only Mission. The Mission receives no funding from either the Church or the State of California and charges admission funds as a means of providing public access.

Mission San Juan Capistrano is located at 26801 Ortega Highway, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. Open Daily 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Good Friday afternoon. Admission is \$9 adults; \$8 seniors (60 years or over); \$5 children (ages 4 to 11); and children ages 3 and under are admitted free. Free audio guide with senior and adult admission. For more information, call (949) 234-1300 or visit www.missionsjc.com.

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