



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:** Joe Haakenson  
JUVE Creative, Inc.  
(714) 841 9600  
joe@juvecreative.com

### **ST. JOSEPH'S DAY AND THE RETURN OF THE SWALLOWS CELEBRATION**

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. (March 4, 2013) -- Mission San Juan Capistrano will host St. Joseph's Day and the Return of the Swallows Celebration on Tuesday, March 19 from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. The celebration begins with Mass from 8:30-9:15 a.m. at Mission Basilica and continues with festivities on the historic Mission grounds at 10 a.m. Though St. Joseph's Day and the Return of the Swallows celebration is an annual event, this year promises to feature something special -- the cliff swallows themselves.

Acting on the advice of cliff swallows expert Dr. Charles Brown, the Mission last year implemented a "vocalization project" in the hopes of attracting the birds who have been distracted in years past by urbanization. Once again, in effort to attract more swallows, speakers have been strategically placed on the Mission grounds and will play courtship songs for the next eight weeks to lure in the birds.

"The hope is to play calls and songs that will attract the interest and notice of passing cliff swallows," said Dr. Brown, who is a professor of biological sciences at the University of Tulsa. "Once they see this site, there's a good chance they will be interested. It's a matter of attracting them in; we know they are overhead and in the area."

Dr. Brown will give a lecture beginning at 2 p.m. in the Soldiers Barracks, part of a festive day of activities that will include:

- New Gate House and front entrance now open to the public
- Daily Ringing of the Historic Bells in honor of Father Serra at 9 a.m.
- Ceremonial Ringing of Historic Bells in honor of St. Joseph and the Return of the Swallows at 10:15 a.m., noon and 3:15 p.m.
- Historic School Bell Ringing at 10 a.m. in the Central Courtyard
- Live music from Renée Bondi and Mariachi for All of Capistrano Community Mariachi Program
- Mission Basilica School traditional student performances
- San Juan Elementary School kindergartners bilingual language immersion program performances
- Performance by Ballet Folklórico de California State University Fullerton
- Performance by Duende Flamenco
- Native American Tushmal Singers and Basketweavers
- Journeys to the Past California Native American stories and dances
- Activities for Kids including Adobe Brickmaking and Panning for Gold
- Windows of the Past Exhibit on new Mission Store facility in public plaza on Ortega Highway
- Swallows Walk and Talk tour at 11:15 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- Docents stationed at the Serra Chapel, Great Stone Church and museum exhibits to provide information and answer questions
- Vendors Las Golondrinas (Mexican food); Z Pizza (artisan pizza); Hawaiian Delight (coffee, churros, cotton candy); and Gavin Arts (Swallows Celebration Commemorative T-shirts and Sweatshirts)

The cliff swallows migrate annually to Goya, Argentina, in October, and return to their spring and summer home in San Juan Capistrano each March. The Swallows celebration began centuries ago when Mission padres observed that the birds' return roughly coincided with St. Joseph's Day on the church calendar, March 19. The celebration has achieved international prominence since then.

In his book, "Capistrano Nights," Father St. John O'Sullivan, pastor of Mission San Juan Capistrano from 1910-33, related how the swallows first came to call the Mission home. One day, while walking through

town, Father O'Sullivan saw a shopkeeper, broomstick in hand, knocking down the conically shaped mud swallow nests that were under the eaves of his shop. The birds were darting back and forth through the air squealing over the destruction of their homes.

"What in the world are you doing?" Father O'Sullivan asked.

"Why, these dirty birds are a nuisance and I am getting rid of them!" the shopkeeper responded.

"But where can they go?" Father Sullivan responded.

"I don't know and I don't care," the shopkeeper replied, slashing away with his pole. "But they've no business here, destroying my property."

Father O'Sullivan then said, "Come on swallows, I'll give you shelter. Come to the Mission. There's room enough there for all."

The very next morning, the padre discovered the swallows busy building their nests outside the newly restored sacristy of Father Serra's Church. Another favorite spot was the ruins of the Great Stone Church, which was once lined with hundreds of swallows' nests.

General admission is \$10 for Adults, \$9 for Seniors (60+) and \$6 for Children (ages 4-11). Admission is free for Mission Preservation Society members, current volunteers with I.D., and children 3 and under.

Tickets are available now at the Mission's Gate House and may be purchased in advance or on event day. Reserved seating is not offered for this event. Please RSVP separately for Dr. Brown's lecture by phone: 949-234-1321 or by email: [crobinson@missionsjc.com](mailto:crobinson@missionsjc.com).

Attached is a complete schedule of events.

***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 18<sup>th</sup> 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); \$6 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](http://www.missionsjc.com).*