



MISSION SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO ANNOUNCES ST. JOSEPH'S DAY AND THE RETURN OF THE SWALLOWS CELEBRATION ON MARCH 19

Tickets on Sale Now for this Signature Orange County Event 90 Years in the Making

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. (February 13, 2018)---Travelers with a passion for California history should add Mission San Juan Capistrano to their bucket lists this March. An official California Historic Landmark founded in 1776, the Mission is gearing up for their annual St. Joseph's Day and The Return of the Swallows Celebration, marking a decades-old tradition dating back to the 1920s.

The tale of the Swallows of Capistrano has brought both global renown and beloved traditions to the Mission San Juan Capistrano, culminating in an annual celebration each year on March 19. Event-day festivities include a lineup of local school performances, live mariachi music, tasty treats, multiple museum exhibits, new audio tours and more, with a special guest presentation by Dr. Charles R. Brown from the University of Tulsa, who has partnered with the Mission on their Return of the Swallows Program.

"This annual tradition brings together students, families and travelers to take part in a near 100-year-old tradition," says Executive Director Mechelle Lawrence-Adams. "We are excited to welcome back the birds, and the people, in what we believe is a living-history experience celebrating the Mission's rich traditions."

EVENT INFORMATION

What: Saint Joseph's Day and The Return of the Swallows Celebration is a world-renowned celebration that takes place every March 19, marking the return of the famous swallows to Capistrano and the coming of spring, a time of renewal and rebirth.

Where: 26801 Ortega Highway, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

When: March 19, 2018 from 9am-3pm

Admission: Free to Mission Preservation Society Members; Non-members: \$12 for Adults and \$11 for Seniors; \$8 for Children (ages 4-11); and children ages 3 and under are admitted free. Discounted admission rates on event day for Veterans and Military with ID: \$11 for Adults and \$10 for Seniors

More info: Call (949) 234-1317 or visit www.missionsjc.com/swallows; to view the schedule of events and the Legend of the Swallows story, click [here](#).

Journalists interested in covering or attending the event should contact Sienna Spencer-Markles at sienna@mccuecommunications.com for more information.

THE LEGEND AND THE RETURN OF THE SWALLOWS CELEBRATION

Every spring, cliff swallows migrate 6,000 miles from Goya, Argentina to San Juan Capistrano as part of their natural migration pattern. Cliff swallows build mud, gourd-shaped nests to begin their breeding season, some of which can be seen in the eaves of the Mission. Even though the swallows do not always adhere to a human calendar, the Mission celebrates their return annually on March 19, St. Joseph's Day.

The Mission tradition of celebrating the return of the swallows on St. Joseph's Day (March 19) began in the 1920s when Mission pastor, Father O'Sullivan's legendary story captured the media's attention.

Legend has it that Father O’Sullivan offered the swallows refuge at the Mission after seeing the destruction of their nests. The next morning, to his surprise, the padre saw the swallows building their new homes right outside the Serra Chapel.

St. Joseph’s Day & Return of the Swallows Celebration became world-famous in the 1930s after musical composer Leon Rene composed “When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano,” a chart-topping hit in the 1940s, which was ultimately recorded by many artists including the Ink Spots, Glenn Miller, and Pat Boone. The song popularized these miraculous little birds and put the Mission on the worldwide map.

ABOUT MISSION SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO

Located in San Juan Capistrano’s Historic Downtown just four miles from the stunning coastal cliffs of Dana Point, Mission San Juan Capistrano is a remarkable historic landmark and museum that is unique both in its picturesque beauty and its role in connecting visitors with California’s cultural past, present and future. The Mission’s stunning grounds and impressive architecture are a compelling setting in which visitors can learn about the region’s cultural roots, take inspiration from its spiritual significance, engage with local traditions, or explore both permanent and traveling exhibits of original artifacts that bring its history into the present.

Founded on November 1, 1776 by Padre Junípero Serra, who was canonized as a saint in 2015, Mission San Juan Capistrano is known as the “Jewel of the Missions” because of its Great Stone Church, which was completed in 1806 after nine years of construction and was considered an architectural gem that no other church compared with in size or beauty on the West Coast of California. The seventh of nine missions founded by Serra (of a total 21 California missions established by Spain), it is Orange County’s only mission and is considered the birthplace of the region.

###

