MISSION SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO WELCOMES SPRING WITH SIGNATURE EVENT
CELEBRATING THE RETURN OF THE SWALLOWS ON MARCH 19
Tickets on Sale Now for Orange County’s Iconic Family-Friendly Spring Break Celebration

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. (March 1, 2019) --- Known as the Birthplace of Orange County, the historic Mission San Juan Capistrano is gearing up for their signature spring celebration. The annual Return of the Swallows Celebration began nearly a century ago as Mission San Juan Capistrano became an iconic landmark.

Taking place on Tuesday, March 19th, this historic celebration is filled with tradition, community, and festivities making it the perfect spring break outing for the entire family. Family field trips to the Mission are remembered for generations. Saint Joseph’s Day and the Return of the Swallows Celebration welcomes back the famous “Swallows” of Capistrano and celebrates the coming of spring - a time of renewal and rebirth.

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.

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

WHEN: Tuesday, March 19, 2019 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: $8 for Adults and Seniors

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: 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.

Highlights of the Day Include:

● Ringing of the Recently Conserved Historic Bells
● Special Guest Presentation On Cliff Swallows by Dr. Charles Brown
● 100th Anniversary of the Mission’s Original Gate House, circa 1919
● New Plein Air Art Exhibit “Mission SJC En Plein Air featuring works from 1990 to 2016”
● A Bird’s Eye View Sticker Tour for families and kids
● Dance Performances from schools and cultural groups including special performance by Jacque Nunez, Native American Storyteller and Award-Winning Educator
● Live Mariachi Music
Journalists interested in covering or attending the event should contact Sienna Spencer-Markles at sienna@mccuepr.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 Saint Junípero Serra, Mission San Juan Capistrano is known as the “Jewel of the Missions” because of its Great Stone Church Ruins, 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.

###