



## **Celebrate St. Joseph Day and Return of the Swallows with Mission San Juan Capistrano *Virtually or In-Person***

**San Juan Capistrano, Calif.**, (March 9, 2021) — Mission San Juan Capistrano is open for visitors and will mark St. Joseph Day and its world-renowned annual return of the swallows tradition with both virtual and in-person activities on Friday, March 19 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The historic Mission grounds are open with limited capacity and strict COVID-19 requirements (properly worn masks and social distancing).

“Mission San Juan Capistrano will proudly open its doors this year on St. Joseph’s Day after last year’s events were cancelled and the bells were silenced. Although our festivities have been reduced, or shifted to virtual experiences, the bells will ring on March 19 to welcome everyone home, including the swallows,” said Mission San Juan Executive Director Mechelle Lawrence Adams.

She says, “We’ll feature special signage located throughout the grounds that describe and pay tribute to the festivities that usually occur as part of the annual celebration. Guests can wander the grounds and learn about the annual traditions and we hope they’ll return next year for a full-scale celebration.”

A special St. Joseph’s Table marking the Year of St. Joseph, led by Mission Board member Vicky Carabini and the Italian American Museum of Los Angeles, will raise money for the local foodbank, Serra’s Pantry.

### **On-site Timeline:**

#### **9:00 a.m.: Gates Open**

9:10 a.m.: Bell Ringing and official welcome by Executive Director, Mechelle Lawrence Adams; Prayer by Mission Pastor, Reverend Monsignor J. Michael McKiernan; Native Prayer by Adelia Sandoval, Spiritual Leader of the Juañeno Band of Mission Indians/Acjachemen Nation; and National Anthem performed by entertainer, Darren Huntting

9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. and Noon: Historic Bell Ringing

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.: St. Joseph’s Table – Fundraiser for the local community.

All Day: Museum rooms and Serra Chapel open, audio tour available. Coloring pages available for children, Swallows “Sticker Tour” available for purchase at the Gate House and Store.

### **Virtual Timeline:** [www.facebook.com/MissionSJC](http://www.facebook.com/MissionSJC)

9:00 a.m.: Bell Ringing and official welcome by Executive Director, Mechelle Lawrence Adams; Prayer by Mission Pastor, Reverend Monsignor J. Michael McKiernan; Native Prayer by Adelia Sandoval, Spiritual Leader of the Juañeno Band of Mission Indians/Acjachemen Nation; and National Anthem performed by entertainer, Darren Huntting

9:30 a.m.: Mission Basilica School’s 2021 Royal Court Presentation (Recorded Video)

10:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.: Mission Basilica School Dance Performances Livestream (Facebook)

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.: "The Swallows of Capistrano" a virtual lecture by swallow expert, Dr. Charles Brown. Pre-register at: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/SXBLNKR](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SXBLNKR)

9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. and Noon: Historic Bell Ringing

2:00 p.m.: "Walk and Talk Swallows Tour" led by Mission Guide, Alexander Warner. Pre-register at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/SFMQWZY](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SFMQWZY)

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.: Themed coloring pages available for download at [www.missionsjc.com](http://www.missionsjc.com)

**Pricing:**

Individual adults - \$14, individual seniors - \$12, youth/students - \$9, Children under four - free. Special pricing/discount offered for groups of four of any age are \$45. VIP Tours for up to eight, available by advance reservation at [myan@missionsjc.com](mailto:myan@missionsjc.com). Multi-language on-site audio tour is free with admission. Members of the Mission Preservation Society are free.

**Location:**

Mission San Juan Capistrano is located at 26801 Ortega Hwy, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. For online tickets, schedules, virtual reservations, and more information, visit <https://www.missionsjc.com> or call (949) 234-1316, Stephanie Montes De Oca, Events Director.

**About St. Joseph Day/Return of the Swallows and Mission San Juan Capistrano**

Saint Joseph's Day, a feast day marked by the Catholic Church, has been celebrated on March 19 since the 10th century. Mission San Juan Capistrano began celebrating the Return of the Swallows on Saint Joseph's Day in the 1920s when then Mission resident priest Father St. John O'Sullivan wrote the legendary swallows story on St. Joseph Day, which happened to be his birthday.

Swallows migrate 6,000 miles from Goya, Argentina to San Juan Capistrano in large groups. Some cliff swallow colonies number more than 3,500 nests and may be found in places such as freeway underpasses or under the eaves of the Mission. The gourd-shaped nests are made of mud pellets consisting of sand, silt and clay while the nest chambers are lined with grass and feathers.

Known as the "Jewel of the Missions," Mission San Juan Capistrano is a historic landmark and museum that features permanent exhibits with original artifacts as well as traveling and temporary exhibits. As Orange County's only Mission, the site is home to the Serra Chapel, the Ruins of the Great Stone Church and the original padres' quarters of the South Wing and promotes faith, education, preservation and cultural event programming.

Founded on November 1, 1776, by Saint Junipero Serra as the seventh of 21 California missions established by Spain, Mission San Juan Capistrano is owned by the Diocese of Orange and receives no church or state funding. The Mission Preservation Foundation, comprised of business and community leaders, is its fundraising entity committed to ensuring education, preservation and its long-term historic and religious significance.

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