



Mission San Juan Capistrano to Celebrate St. Joseph's Day & Return of the Swallows on March 19

San Juan Capistrano, Calif., (February 15, 2024) - Mission San Juan Capistrano's annual St. Joseph's Day and Return of the Swallows festivities will be held on the historic Mission grounds on Tuesday, March 19. The world-renowned return of the swallows is celebrated each year on St. Joseph's Day (March 19), a liturgical feast day recognized in the Catholic Church.

St. Joseph's Day will feature ringing of the historic Mission bells, mariachi performances, Flamenco dancers, local food and craft vendors, activities for children. Mission Basilica School will return to the program for the first time since pre-pandemic (2019).

"Traditions that bring us together help build a community. Mission San Juan's St. Joseph Day and the return of the swallow's traditions are proof of how to build a fabric of this very unique and special place," said Mission San Juan Capistrano Executive Director Mechelle Lawrence Adams.

Other event highlights include interpretive station tours led by Mission Docents, Native American basket weaving demonstrations, the Legacy of Saint Serra Exhibit, virtual presentations by world famous swallow's expert Dr. Charles R. Brown and St. Joseph Table, an ecumenical effort to feed those less fortunate hosted by Mission Preservation Foundation board member Vicky Carabini.

St. Joseph's Day Celebration Schedule

- 9:00 a.m. Gates open; Historic bell ringing upon the Mission's opening in honor of St. Junipero Serra; Live music by *Mariachi Tapatio*
- 9:55 a.m. Welcome by Mission Executive Director, Mechelle Lawrence Adams
- 10:05 a.m. Ringing of the School Bell and Mission Basilica School Procession
- 10:10 a.m. Rendi Bondi performs *When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano*
- 10:15 a.m. Mission Basilica School performs traditional songs and dances
- Noon Historic bell ringing in honor of St. Joseph and the Swallows return
- 12:15 p.m. Journeys to the Past: California Native American Stories and Dances
- 1:00 p.m. Live ancient folklore dance by Duende Flamenco

For details, tickets and advanced reservations, visit www.missionsjc.com/swallows. Mission San Juan Capistrano is located at 26801 Old Mission Road, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675.

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

St. Joseph's Day is a feast day marked by the Catholic Church which 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 1920's when then Mission resident priest Father St. John O'Sullivan wrote the legendary swallow's story on St. Joseph Day, which happened to be his birthday.

The Mission's 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 found 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 exhibits, five-language audio tour, festivals and public programming. As Orange County's only mission, the site is home to Serra Chapel, the Ruins of The Great Stone Church (circa 1796) and original padres' quarters.

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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