Projects Underway to Ensure the Preservation of Mission History

Continuing its efforts to serve as a leader in conservation and preservation of history, Mission San Juan Capistrano is embarking on a significant and exciting project as it continues to mark the 300th birthday of Father Junipero Serra this year.

The Station of the Cross XII Conservation Project is now underway, a project that includes restoring a painting that is more than 200 years old and has been hidden in the Serra Chapel for the past 40 years.

The Mission has chosen Scott Hawkins of Fine Art Conservation Laboratories to lead the conservation project. Hawkins spoke about the project last Wednesday, in the Serra Chapel.

"When completed, the painting should be stable and preserved for generations to come," Hawkins said.

Jan and Warren Siegel have provided a generous gift to pay for a portion of the $95,000 project. The Mission Preservation Foundation is continuing in its efforts to raise the balance of the project's cost.

The Station of the Cross XII painting, titled "The Crucifixion," has been described as 167 by 200 cm. with painting because the original was in poor condition from years of exposure to harsh environment, movement and neglect. But in May of this year, Mission San Juan Capistrano Museum staff and conservators carried out an investigative process uncovering the original artwork.

The replica painting, painted by William Medallosado, will be displayed in the Mission and hung in Serra Chapel until the original is ready to display.

"We're privileged to have the opportunity to resurrect The Resurrection in the Serra Chapel," said Michelle Lawrence Adams, Executive Director of Mission San Juan Capistrano.

"It's going to be a challenging project that's worth every penny and every effort to reduce to its original integrity that was envisioned during the founding of the Mission period."

The original Station of the Cross XII painting is part of the Stations of the Cross collection of historic paintings that came from Mexico to Mission San Juan Capistrano in the early 1800s.

"What makes it so significant is that all the paintings are special because they are part of the architecture of Serra Chapel," Lawrence Adams said. "We stand ready to receive this painting hopefully in time for St. Joseph's Day (March 19), but for sure during the season of The Resurrection, Easter, in 2014."

For more information about making a donation to help pay for the conservation of the painting, contact Michelle Lawrence Adams directly at (949) 236-1300.

NEW ARTIFACTS ADDED TO MISSION TREASURES EXHIBIT

Mission San Juan Capistrano's permanent exhibit "Mission Treasures: Historical Collection: Revealed" has expanded with newly acquired artifacts.

On Nov. 1, the exhibit presented a pair of recently purchased watercolor paintings by California art artist Elmer Wachtel (1884-1926), who created the pieces in the early 1900s.

The unique pair of watercolor paintings by Elmer Wachtel depict portions of the Mission's south wing, Sala and Great Stone Church ruins. The paintings were purchased from Colin Youngman, President of Early California, with privately donated funds. They are the first paintings in the Mission's collection by this influential California artist, and important Members of the Mission's current collection which the staff hopes to continue to develop with donations and purchases of significant Mission-related works of art.

Also added to the exhibit's priceless collection are several personal items which belonged to the Great Restorer (1915-06) of Mission San Juan Capistrano, Father St. John O'Galli, including his rosary and a water pitcher.

Another change to the Mission Treasures exhibit includes moving the Mission's original birth, death and marriage registries to the Mission's Anne Gonzalez. It is a result of an effort to preserve and protect the delicate historic paper documents its accordance with generally accepted conservation guidelines.