

MISSION CHRONICLES

Information for Locals

Presented by Mission San Juan Capistrano

Projects Underway to Ensure the Preservation of Mission History

THE TRUTH IS HERE ABOUT THE RETURN OF THE SWALLOWS

Yes, it is true, urbanization has caused a reduction of swallows at the Mission in recent years, but they are beginning to return -- and build nests -- thanks to the Swallows Vocalization Project that began in 2012.

The vocalization project, now in its third year, began earlier this month, where speakers playing swallows courtship calls and songs are projected behind the Father Serra statue on the Mission grounds.

The idea came from swallows expert Dr. Charles Brown, who was summoned to the Mission in 2012 from the University of Tulsa, where he is a professor of biological sciences.

Dr. Brown's idea to lure the swallows using recorded courtship calls and songs has worked. Swallows that were flying overhead and might not have explored the Mission and considered it as a place to nest are now descending to the Mission grounds and building nests.

"The recording is of courtship songs that males use to attract females. And males would be attracted too because they are very social birds," Dr. Brown said. "It's a matter of attracting them in; we know they are overhead and in the area."

Dr. Brown will be at Mission San Juan Capistrano to give a lecture on March 19 during the St. Joseph's Day and the Return of the Swallows celebration.

HISTORY OF ST. JOSEPH'S DAY AND THE SWALLOWS LEGEND

The swallows are said to migrate annually to Goya, Argentina in October, and return to their spring and summer home in San Juan Capistrano each March.

The Swallows Celebration began centuries ago when Mission padres observed that the birds return roughly coincided with St. Joseph's Day on the church calendar, March 19. The celebration has achieved international prominence since then.

Download the Swallows Story at www.missionsjc.com.

Join us Swallows Day March 19th, annually!

