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**WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH MISSION SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO'S FAMOUS CLIFF SWALLOWS
ST. JOSEPH'S DAY & THE RETURN OF THE SWALLOWS CELEBRATION**

San Juan Capistrano—March 11, 2010—Thousands will flock to the birthplace of Orange County – Mission San Juan Capistrano – to celebrate the world famous annual Return of the Swallows and St. Joseph's Day events taking place March 19-20, 2010.

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 Return of the Swallows Celebration began nearly a century ago when Mission Padre, Father St. John O'Sullivan, observed that the birds' return roughly coincided with St. Joseph's Day on March 19th. The celebration has achieved international prominence ever since.

"Every March 19th the Mission marks the return of the famous cliff swallows to San Juan Capistrano and the coming of spring—a time of renewal and rebirth," said Mechelle Lawrence-Adams, Executive Director of the Mission.

This year, in response to concerns about when the birds arrive, and where they choose to nest, the Mission will host renowned cliff swallows expert **Professor Charles R. Brown** from the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Brown has received several awards honoring his work in ornithology and has published countless pieces on the topic of swallows; his most recent being in the Phi Kappa Phi Forum Magazine, "How Cliff Swallows Choose Where to Live" (accessible via www.missionsjc.com).

On Friday, March 19th, at 2 p.m., Dr. Brown will give a lecture on "Choosing Where To Live and When To Come Back, The Cliff Swallows of Capistrano, A Perspective" in the Soldiers Barracks at the Mission. All who are interested

in the topic are invited to attend (space is limited to 100 people) and RSVP at sirsay@missionsjc.com or (949) 234-1317. The lecture is free to members, and free with paid admission.

Beginning at 9 a.m. March 19th, guests can also take part in the annual traditions which include festivities for the entire family:

- Live entertainment
- Mission Parish School spirited dance performances
- The ringing of the historic bells at 10 a.m. and 12 p.m.
- Official Press Conference with guest speakers and announcements

When the **gates open at 8:30 a.m.** guests will be greeted by the authentic sounds of **Mariachi Espuelas de Mexico** in the front courtyard area. The group, led by Director Jose Luis Jañez, was formed in 1994 and has played at The Hollywood Bowl and most mariachi festivals throughout the U.S.

After the **ringing of the historic bells at 10:00 a.m.**, San Juan resident, and much loved personality and talent, **Renée Bondi** will perform Leon René's hit song, "When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano," a song that hit the top pop charts in 1940, the year of its release. Born and raised in San Juan Capistrano, Renée is an author and recording artist who's traveled throughout the U.S. sharing her story and music.

In the Central Courtyard, guests will enjoy "Journeys to the Past" Native American story telling with **Jacque Nunez**, a descendant of the Juaneno Indians who built the Mission. Jacque received the 2009 California Indian Education Association's Award for Distinguished Educator of the Year.

Sajama, Music of the Andes will perform from 12:15 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.. Sajama, named after the highest peak in the Andes, is a unique group with Andean musical roots. The group was formed in 1990 by its leader Ruben G. Ortiz. Sajama has performed in numerous events, concerts, movies and television shows throughout the United States, including many years at the Mission.

Following the Swallows Day Parade, **Saturday, March 20th**, Mission guests can continue to celebrate with Mariachi Espuelas de Mexico who will be performing in the front courtyard from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

The history of St. Joseph's Day, the Swallows legend, and community presentations are just a few of the many events to enjoy at Orange County's only mission. For the complete schedule of events, visit www.missionsjc.com or call the Events Hotline at (949)234-1315.

About Mission San Juan Capistrano:

Known as the “Jewel of the Missions,” Mission San Juan Capistrano is a historic landmark and museum that boasts of quality permanent exhibits featuring original artifacts as well as traveling and temporary exhibits on a wide variety of topics.

The site itself serves as a living outdoor museum with original buildings constructed by Native Americans in the 18th century including the Serra Chapel, Great Stone Church, and the original padres’ quarters of the South Wing.

The Mission was founded on November 1, 1776 by Padre Junipero Serra as the seventh in the chain of the twenty-one California missions established by Spain, and is Orange County’s only mission. Every year, over 50,000 students visit the Mission and engage in an inspirational learning experience via the Mission Matters programming, as part of their State required California history studies.

Mission San Juan Capistrano is owned by the Diocese of Orange and is supported by the Mission Preservation Foundation, which is comprised of business and community leaders committed to ensuring the long term preservation and viability of Orange County’s only Mission. The Mission receives no funding from either the Church or the State of California and charges admission funds as a means of providing public access.

Mission San Juan Capistrano is located at 26801 Ortega Highway, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. Open Daily 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Good Friday afternoon. Admission is \$9 adults; \$8 seniors (60 years or over); \$5 children (ages 4 to 11); and children ages 3 and under are admitted free. Free audio guide with senior and adult admission. For more information, call (949) 234-1300 or visit www.missionsjc.com.

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