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47th EL VIAJE DE PORTOLÁ ANNUAL SPRING RIDE AND EMPTY SADDLES CEREMONY

San Juan Capistrano, CA—March 29, 2010—Mission San Juan Capistrano celebrated the 47th El Viaje de Portolá Annual Spring Ride and Empty Saddles Ceremony on Friday, March 26, 2010.

El Viaje de Portolá Riders, a generous group of 250 members, each year raise funds to support Orange County's only Mission.

This year's Ride was dedicated to the Memory of Richard O'Neill, who passed away during last years Ride. On hand to receive a plaque in Richard's honor was Tony Moiso, Mission Preservation Foundation Member and President and Chief Executive Officer of Rancho Mission Viejo.

Beginning at 7:30 a.m. the Portolá Riders walked to the Old Mission's Serra Chapel for the annual "Gibby's Mass" where Father Steve Sallot presided over the mass. Followed by the "Empty Saddles Ceremony," at 8:45 a.m., which was held in the Mission's Plaza de Portolá, Riders were greeted by Mariachis and the ringing of the old bells as they gathered to honor those members who have passed away. An especially moving ceremony this year, as the names of 86 fallen riders such as Richard O'Neill, Tony Forster, and Fulton Shaw were read aloud.

For a detailed listing of events, visit www.missionsjc.com or call 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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