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### **ABRAHAM LINCOLN HELPED MAINTAIN MISSION PRESERVATION**

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, CA. – May 16, 2011 – Abraham Lincoln never got to fulfill the dream he had of visiting California. But just 27 days before he was felled by an assassin's bullet, Lincoln made California history with the stroke of a pen.

In surely what was one of the final documents signed by nation's 16th President, Lincoln put his name to the Lincoln Document on March 18, 1865, which upheld the 1855 U.S. Land Commission's decision concerning all mission lands statewide and supported Bishop Alemany's 1851 petition to have all mission lands illegally confiscated and sold by the Mexican government returned to the Catholic Church.

This document, and many other priceless artifacts and relics, will be on display as part of the exhibit, "Mission Treasures: Historical Collection Revealed" at Mission San Juan Capistrano from May 27 to Sept. 5.

With Lincoln's signing of the Lincoln Document, also known as the "Patent of Title," any individual land claims for any of the California missions were returned to the guardianship of the Catholic Church, including

Mission San Juan Capistrano, which was privately owned by John Forster. Forster had purchased the land from his brother-in-law, a Mexican governor, for \$710 in 1845.

Before the Catholic Church regained ownership of Mission San Juan Capistrano, it had continued to fall into ruin. The Mission stood in an undeveloped rural area as a symbol of past prosperity. By the 1880s, articles about the missions began to appear in national publications and artists came to capture the lonely spirit of the old sites on canvas. It seemed the Mission was destined to return to dust.

Today Mission San Juan Capistrano remains under the ownership of the Diocese of Orange. The Mission receives no Church or State funding and must rely on its own efforts to ensure the long-term preservation of the landmark and its museum collection.

***Mission Treasures: Historical Collection Revealed***, the Mission's new exhibit will be on display starting May 27 and continues throughout the summer until September 5. The exhibit features rare paintings, precious religious and historic artifacts, and documents related to the Mission's history. They are treasures because of their connections with the people and place of Mission San Juan Capistrano and unique representations of the past.

**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 18<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.missionsjc.com).*