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BIRTCHERS DONATE HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT PAINTING

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, CA. – Dec. 8, 2011 – Thanks to the generous donation from Brandon and Dorine Birtcher, Mission San Juan Capistrano has acquired a historically significant painting and plans to add it to its priceless collection on display in the "Mission Treasures: Historical Collection Revealed" exhibit.

According to a report from Yvonne M. Karn, Accredited Senior Appraiser and member of the American Society of Appraisers, the artwork is a Spanish Colonial painting depicting St. John of Capistrano -- San Juan Capistrano, the saint -- his head shaven in tonsure style, a halo around his head (indicating sainthood) wearing Franciscan order brown habit tied at the waist by a cord and bearing the red Teutonic Cross (symbol of religious military order of crusaders).

It is oil on heavy linen canvas affixed to a wooden stretcher, and is of the type used during the late 18th and 19th centuries. There is no signature on the painting and the artist is unknown. The painting is in need of an assessment and conservation treatment and will await private funding to do so.

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.