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### **SWALLOWS, AND ST. JOSEPH'S DAY, FAST APPROACHING**

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. (Feb. 19, 2013) – "When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano" is more than a legendary song written decades ago, it's a goal of Mission San Juan Capistrano's.

The birthplace of Orange County is getting ready for its annual St. Joseph's Day and the Return of the Swallows celebration on March 19, a time which the swallows will be welcomed back to what has been a spring and summer home for so many of the birds for hundreds of years.

Urbanization has resulted in fewer sightings of the birds during their annual migration from Argentina each spring in recent years. But cliff swallows expert Dr. Charles Brown came up with an idea last year that is making a difference.

Under Brown's direction, the Mission established a vocalization project that lures the swallows back to the Mission. The project involves speakers playing cliff swallow courtship calls that are placed behind the statue of Father Junipero Serra on the Mission grounds.

The project proved successful last year after the onset of the program. After the recordings began to be played, cliff swallows were spotted feeding overhead at the Mission several times, and a few cliff swallows flew in to investigate the recorded sounds.

"The recording is of courtship songs that males use to attract females," Dr. Brown said. "And males would be attracted too because they are very social birds. A systematic program of playing it a few times a day, when the weather is good and during the times they would be foraging, I think there's a good chance they will come in."

"I think if we keep trying long enough, eventually, some individuals will come by, they'll see the Mission and they will realize it's a good place to nest, as they did in the past."

The project this year begins on March 1. They built it, now come watch the swallows return to Capistrano.

***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); \$6 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).*