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MISSION SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO TO HOST HISTORIC RESTORATION EFFORT

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. (May 21, 2013) -- In a never before attempted public preservation effort, Mission San Juan Capistrano Museum staff and conservators will carry out an investigative process to uncover the hidden art behind a painting that has been in the Serra Chapel for the last 40 years.

Thanks to a donation from a generous Mission supporter, the Mission has contracted the services of Susan Brown Painting Conservators and display Art Installation Services for this possible preservation and conservation of a 200-year-old painting in Serra Chapel on Thursday, May 30, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

In the Serra Chapel there is a series of historic paintings that came from Mexico to Mission San Juan Capistrano in the early 1800s. The 12th station from this set is missing, but in its place hangs another painting.

This painting, much larger than the others, is also from Mexico from the year 1800, and has been displayed at the Mission for 200 years. The years of exposure to harsh environment, movement and neglect took its toll on all of the paintings. In 1973 Father Vincent Lloyd Russell noted the poor condition of the large Station of the Cross and commissioned a copy of the painting, created by William Maldonado.

This reproduction was then attached to the top of the original work, covering it, as the Mission lacked the funds to restore the original painting. The 11 smaller Stations of the Cross paintings were all examined and

conserved from 2005-09. This larger painting remained untouched due to the expense and logistical difficulty of removing the reproduction painting to reveal the original painting below.

Following morning Mass in the Serra Chapel on May 30, approximately 40 years since it was hidden behind a reproduction, the original painting will be revealed and examined by the painting conservators, who will then propose a course of treatment. Serra Chapel will remain open to the public during the work. Visitors are invited to watch, though the entire process is expected to take several hours.

"Having never seen the original painting except in old historic photos, I am excited to uncover and see for the first time, this piece of early Mission history," said Jennifer Ring, Museum Registrar at Mission San Juan Capistrano.

Visitors are invited to bring a lunch and enjoy a discussion on stewardship options of the artwork with Mission Executive Director Mechelle Lawrence Adams and Museum Registrar Jennifer Ring between noon-12:30 p.m.

Visitors are asked to observe courteously as the Serra Chapel is a place of worship and the work is being carried out with this in mind.

The event is free to Mission Preservation Members and free to the public with regular paid admission to Mission San Juan 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 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); \$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.