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ST. JOSEPH'S DAY AND RETURN OF THE SWALLOWS CELEBRATION MARCH 19

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. (March 5, 2014) -- Mission San Juan Capistrano will host St. Joseph's Day and the Return of the Swallows Celebration on Wednesday, March 19 from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. The celebration begins with Mass from 8:30-9:15 a.m. at Mission Basilica and continues with festivities on the historic Mission grounds beginning at 9 a.m. with the historic ringing of the bells in honor of Father Junipero Serra.

Father Serra also will be the topic of a lecture given by David Bolton, Executive Director of the California Missions Foundation. Bolton's lecture, titled "Junipero Serra: His Life, His Legacy and the Missions," will take place from 12:30-1:30 p.m. in the Soldiers Barracks Gallery.

Renown swallows expert Dr. Charles Brown returns for the fifth year to give his lecture on the swallows. Dr. Brown, who is a professor of biological sciences at the University of Tulsa, has implemented the "vocalization project," in which swallows are attracted from the sky to the Mission grounds through courtship songs played from a speaker hidden behind the Father Serra statue. The project is working, as observers have noted new swallows nests on the Mission grounds.

Dr. Brown's lecture will take place from 2-3 p.m. in the Soldiers Barracks Gallery.

Seat RSVPs are recommended for both lectures because seating is limited. Attendance is still possible without a reservation, but early arrival is recommended to get a seat. Please RSVP by calling (949) 234-1321 or emailing crobinson@missionsjc.com.

Other highlights for the day include:

- * Welcome from Mission San Juan Capistrano Executive Director Mechelle Lawrence Adams at 9:55 a.m.
- * Ringing of Historic Bells in honor of St. Joseph and the Return of the Swallows at 10:15 a.m., noon and 3:15 p.m.
- * Official Ceremony and community presentations at the Historic Bell Wall at 11:40 a.m. prior to the noon bell ringing.
- * Live performances of "When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano" from Renée Bondi and mariachi musicians of Capistrano Community Mariachi Program.
- * Mission Basilica School traditional student performances
- * San Juan Elementary School kindergartners bilingual language immersion program performances
- * Performance by Duende Flamenco
- * Mission Store Outpost, featuring St. Joseph statues, swallows gifts and special sampling opportunities.
- * Activities for Kids including Adobe Brickmaking and Panning for Gold
- * Swallows Walk and Talk tour at 11:15 a.m. and 1 p.m., 2:15 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.
- * Docents stationed at the Serra Chapel, Great Stone Church and museum exhibits to provide information and answer questions
- * Food Vendors including Las Golondrinas (Mexican food); Z Pizza (artisan pizza); and Hawaiian Delight (churros, shaved ice, cotton candy).

For a complete listing of times and events, please go to:

<http://www.missionsjc.com/activities/SwallowsDayProgram2014.pdf>

The cliff swallows migrate annually to Goya, Argentina, in October, and return to their spring and summer home in San Juan Capistrano each March. The Swallows celebration began centuries ago when Mission

padres observed that the birds' return roughly coincided with St. Joseph's Day on the church calendar, March 19. The celebration has achieved international prominence since then.

In his book, "Capistrano Nights," Father St. John O'Sullivan, pastor of Mission San Juan Capistrano from 1910-33, related how the swallows first came to call the Mission home. One day, while walking through town, Father O'Sullivan saw a shopkeeper, broomstick in hand, knocking down the conically shaped mud swallow nests that were under the eaves of his shop. The birds were darting back and forth through the air squealing over the destruction of their homes.

"What in the world are you doing?" Father O'Sullivan asked.

"Why, these dirty birds are a nuisance and I am getting rid of them!" the shopkeeper responded.

"But where can they go?" Father Sullivan responded.

"I don't know and I don't care," the shopkeeper replied, slashing away with his pole. "But they've no business here, destroying my property."

Father O'Sullivan then said, "Come on swallows, I'll give you shelter. Come to the Mission. There's room enough there for all."

The very next morning, the padre discovered the swallows busy building their nests outside the newly restored sacristy of Father Serra's Church. Another favorite spot was the ruins of the Great Stone Church, which was once lined with hundreds of swallows' nests.

General admission is \$10 for Adults, \$9 for Seniors (60+) and \$6 for Children (ages 4-11). Admission is free for Mission Preservation Society members, current volunteers with I.D., and children 3 and under.

Tickets are available now at the Mission's Gate House and may be purchased in advance or on event day. Reserved seating is not offered for this event.

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.