

December 2023

The Connection

A Publication from Mission San Luis Rey



As we near the end of this wonderful year of celebration of the 225th anniversary of Mission San Luis Rey, I continue to reflect on the connection that so many people in our community have to the Mission. I've always known this, but as I've had the chance to meet so many people this year, it has become even more apparent to me.

I have so enjoyed talking to people and hearing their stories about their connection to the Mission; many having grown up coming to the Mission as children with their families and others who have a more recent history here, but all feel a lasting connection.

And, along the way this year, new connections have been made with people in our community.

Whatever the reason for the connection - attending Mass, attending retreats, visiting a loved one in the cemetery, attending annual events, walking around the beautiful grounds, memories of your 4th grade tour, or celebrating a wedding - this spiritual connection just sticks with you.

I remember a quote from Fr. David Gaa whenever I think about this connection, "*The Mission is owned by the Friars, but it really belongs to the community.*"

My hope for the future is that Mission San Luis Rey will be here for decades to come in support of our community; that the Mission will continue to be a place where families come to embrace their faith, learn about our history, honor the Luiseño heritage, feel peace, remember their loved ones, and leave feeling connected to something very special.

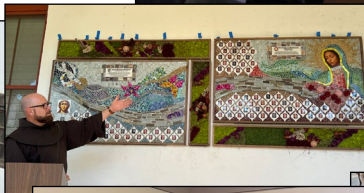
Thank you to all of you who have shared this special year with us.

Peace and all good,


Gwyn Grimes
Executive Director

The Chapter of Legacies for St. Barbara Province

In July, the friars from the Province of St. Barbara gathered at Mission San Luis Rey for their last Chapter as St. Barbara Province before joining five other provinces to form the US Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe. They shared memories, prayers, meals, and fun throughout the week.



MISSION MEMORIES



We have been associated with the Mission since we moved to Vista in 1985. We have had the pleasure of attending many activities and events over the years. From inspirational retreats, to lively Fiestas, gala Heritage Balls, music concerts of all genres, art and craft fairs, educational tours and lectures, Holy day and Holiday song-fests and celebrations, to name but a few. The Mission has greatly enriched our lives in so many ways. We feel honored to be able to give of our time, talents and treasure to help the Mission share its rich history, community involvement, and wonderful Franciscan Spirit with all who enter its grounds. Happy 225th Anniversary! And here's to many more to come!

~Diane and Jim Manning

The Zuniga family has been involved with the church for a long time. I just recently lost my husband, I did have a service here, I plan to be buried next to him and it's a circle of life.


~Ana Zuniga

"The Mission and its people have always been dear to us. We are honored to support it in any way we can because it has given us so much through its historical presence in our community as well as having given us comfort during challenging times."

~John and Leslie Denny

This beautiful mission, San Luis Rey, has been a part of my life for as long as I remember. Primarily because of my Dad and the devotion he had to his religion and faith. I was always aware of the love my parents, Bob and Estelle Gleason, shared for anything that involved the Mission and preserving its beauty and heritage. My personal experience began as a teenager, attending San Luis Rey Academy, which was housed on the Mission property. Although I was not part of the Mission parish then, I was acutely aware of its power and majesty. It was a part of my daily life, because it was an integral part of the culture of my high school years. Who knew then, that many years later, I would join my parents and serve on the very first Heritage Ball Committee in 1984. I have vivid memories of that evening - the excitement, the charm, the music, the dancing... it was as magical then as it is now. Mission San Luis Rey is not only a national historical landmark, but it represents so much to so many - spirituality, devotion, majesty, legacy, and love. It is that love that brought me back to this Mission time and time again, to serve on past Heritage Ball committees and to join other dedicated volunteers THIS year, as we recognize and honor the 225th anniversary of Mission San Luis Rey.

~Gigi Gleason



The Mission has become a home for our family and our kids and grandkids. All three of our kids have received their sacraments at the Old Mission, two were married here, and so far four of our grandkids have been baptized here, so the history is deep and rich. Our kids were raised with a Franciscan in their life; the love they share and give, our children have benefited from, and our grandkids are today as well.


~Lee and Jackie Bickford

Mission San Luis Rey is much bigger than just myself and my family. I really did grow up here. One of my earliest memories was Midnight Mass at Christmas in the Historic Church, it was incredibly special. I was married here at the Mission and have two beautiful daughters who love being a part of everything we do at the Mission, knowing this is a special place for our family.

The friars are so down to earth and so relatable. They are there to help guide you and really love you for who you are. I've met so many wonderful friars who have truly exemplified that.

I love to go into the sacred church and give thanks and feel the history of those that came before me

~Kathryn De Anda



"I was 4 yrs old and one of my first memories of the Old Mission San Luis Rey was in the cemetery. I was with my family attending the funeral of my great grandmother, Francisca Monoa Foussat; she passed in the year 1954. She was the mother of 11 girls, one of them being my grandmother Helen Yanes Foussat, who had 2 daughters, Joyce Vernon and Betty Valenzula, all interred at the Mission Cemetery. My sister Diania Caudell and I visit our loved ones almost every time we are at the Mission. On Nov 2, All Souls Day, at dusk, we were there to burn sage and say prayers to honor our Luiseño Ancestors at the Native Monument in the Old Cemetery - which we have done for generations.

My journey throughout life has brought me full circle back to the Mission. Taking part in the Mission's 225th Birthday by sharing the Luiseño Culture in January lecture and in Feb. with a Native Flute Concert - both events were well attended in the mission. My band, the Kings of La Jolla has played at various events at the mission like the Fiesta and Blessing of the Animals.

On November 4, our Spirit of the Valley cultural community event was held at Heritage Park. The festival honors the heritage of the Luiseño people. We are looking forward to the PowWow 2024 in June !!"

~ Mel Vernon

MEMORIES OF MISSION 225TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS



LUISEÑO FLUTE CONCERT



LUISEÑO LECTURE



**ART FESTIVAL
Painting the
Mural**



ART FESTIVAL



**ART FESTIVAL
Ballet Folklorico**



**ART FESTIVAL
Artist in Church**



**ART FESTIVAL
Drum Circle**



**ART FESTIVAL
Chalk Art**



**ART FESTIVAL
Basketweaving**



CANDLELIGHT CONCERTS

MEMORIES OF MISSION 225TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR



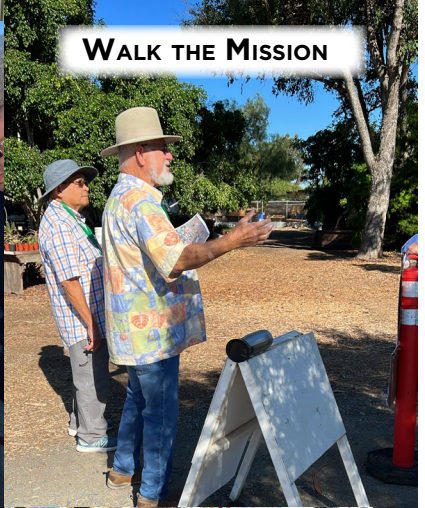
ANNIVERSARY MASS



PRIESTLY ORDINATION OF TWO OF OUR FRIARS



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS



WALK THE MISSION



FEAST OF SAN LUIS REY



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS



GRAND OPENING OF THE HACIENDA



VESTMENT LECTURE



CHRISTMAS CONCERT

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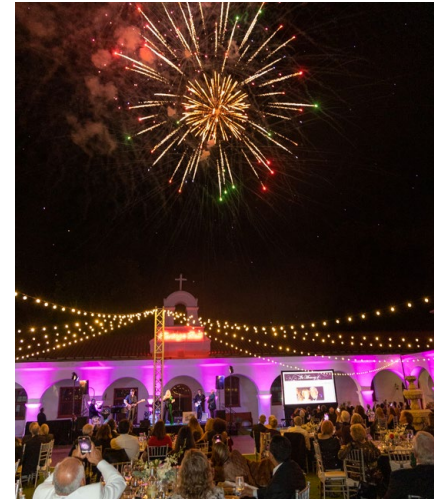
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Retreats & EVENTS

800th Anniversary of Greccio *The Story of the Christmas*



- **January 5, 2024**
First Friday Reflection Activity with Br. Tito.
- **January 19, 2024**
Candlelight Concert
Mozart's Requiem and More

- **January 19, 2024**
Serenity Retreat
Presenter: Fr. Tom Weston

- **February 10, 2024**
Making Crosses: A Creative Way of Prayer
Presenter: Glenda Campos

- **February 14, 2024**
Ash Wednesday Retreat
Presenter: Fr. Michael Guinan

- **February 16, 2024**
Candlelight Concert
Vivaldi's Four Seasons

- **February 20-March 19, 2024**
Spring Lecture Series: The Psalms - Prayers for the Ups and Downs of Life
Presenter: Fr. Michael Guinan

- **February 24, 2024**
Life as a Pilgrimage
Presenter: Br. Dick Tandy, OFM

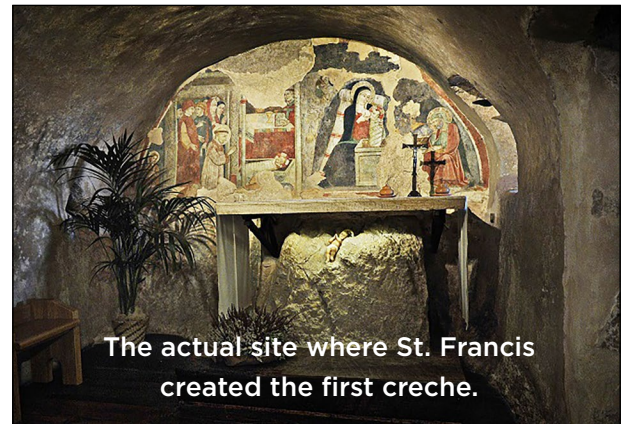
- **March 15 O 17, 2024**
Spring into Serenity: A Weekend for Women in Al-Anon

Visit our website for more information and to make reservations.

www.sanluisrey.org



Eight hundred years ago, in 1223, St. Francis of Assisi had spent several weeks in prayer at the hermitage outside the beautiful village of Greccio, spiritually preparing for Christmas. As Christmas approached, Francis organized a living nativity scene with the help of the people of Greccio. Francis wanted to show the people in a very real way how Jesus actually entered into our everyday world with real people and real animals enacting all the roles of the first Christmas in Bethlehem. Francis, in creating his Nativity re-enactment in Greccio, communicated the humility of Jesus. By using real animals and real people, the people were moved by the Holy Spirit to encounter Jesus in his humanity. That year, in 1223, the community of Greccio gathered to celebrate the Incarnation at Christmas midnight Mass while enacting Jesus' birth. It was a night of human reality and such joy! So many people were involved with the Nativity celebration, carrying their torches that evening to the live Nativity scene, that Greccio became a light in the darkness with "torches and candles to light up that night." It was a message of love, of Jesus being born into the world. People received this message in their hearts, and it has resonated in people's hearts for 800 years. Francis' biographer, Thomas of Celano, tells the story of how lovingly



The actual site where St. Francis created the first creche.

Francis preached that night. Unlike most medieval preaching which tended to be rather harsh, Francis spoke so tenderly that his "mouth was filled more with sweet affection than with words." Francis stood by the manger, overcome with love, and filled with a wonderful happiness. In creating the scene of the Nativity at Greccio, Francis created something new. Bethlehem was no longer just a faraway location reached by traveling through dangerous lands. Francis allowed Jesus's ordinary birth to become a sacred place in the human heart. Bethlehem that night was in Greccio and now Bethlehem can be wherever we set up a Nativity scene and recall the beautiful humility of God becoming one with humanity in the form of a little baby. Francis had used this beautiful Christmas scene to light not only that night, but to share the experience and understanding the Light that Christ brought to the world.

Edited from an article by Laura Chun, OFS and Anthony Garibaldi, OFM, San Diego Diocese Website