



IN CELEBRATION OF THE
250TH ANNIVERSARY
OF
CALIFORNIA'S FIRST MISSION



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
(Photos Available Upon Request)

Contact: Bernie Bogdanovs-Naggs
(760) 213-6826
Bernie@PalmSpringsDesktop.com

**SCHOLARS' SYMPOSIUM CONVENES TO MARK 250-YEAR ANNIVERSARY
OF MISSION SAN DIEGO DE ALCALÁ**

San Diego, CA, March, 2019 – Fr. Peter M. Escalante, Pastor of Mission San Diego de Alcalá, and Janet Bartel, Cultural Chair of 250th Anniversary Jubilee Steering Committee, are honored to announce that a panel of distinguished experts and scholars will visit Mission San Diego de Alcalá to participate in a three-day symposium. Scholars from throughout the United States will gather at the historic Mission, (designated a Basilica in 1976,) to share their wealth of knowledge and expertise about early California mission history and related subjects. Beginning on March 22 and concluding on March 24, the public is invited to hear from a group of California's most well-respected historians in a once-in-a-lifetime gathering to commemorate the founding of California's first mission church.

Two-hundred and fifty years ago, Europeans arrived in California to establish the first settlement at the request of the King of Spain, who was hoping to secure the land of Alta California for New Spain. Among the first to set foot on California soil in 1769, was Fr. Junipero Serra, a Spanish missionary priest who walked the entire journey from Mexico on foot. Fr. Serra celebrated the first mass in California on July 16, 1769, dedicating the site at Presidio Hill in San Diego. This year marks the 250th anniversary of that historic event.

PAGE ONE OF THREE

Prior to the arrival of Fr. Junipero Serra, the area was inhabited by Native Kumeyaay Indians, who had lived in the region for approximately 10,000 years. Fr. Serra established the first settlement in San Diego by developing a relationship with the Kumeyaay, and working together, Mission San Diego de Alcalá was founded as the first mission church in California, making it the birthplace of Christianity in the Western United States and one of the most historically significant sites in California. Canonized a saint in 2015, Fr. Serra continued his journey up California's coastline on foot, establishing a total of 9 missions before his death in 1784. Mission San Diego de Alcalá is the first of the 21 missions. It was founded 7 years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and 80 years before California would join the Union.

Among the distinguished guests who will make a presentation at the Symposium is Milford Wayne Donaldson. Donaldson was appointed by President Barack Obama to chair the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Selected initially by Governor Schwarzenegger, Donaldson is the first architect to serve as Chair of the California Office of Historic Preservation, a nine-member state review board responsible for identifying, registering, and preserving California's cultural heritage.

Serving as the keynote speaker is Jack Williams, Ph.D., Director Emeritus of the California Missions Foundation and Founder of the Center of Spanish Colonial Research. Others include Robert Kittle, Former White House Correspondent for *U.S. News & World Report* and longtime political analyst for PBS's *News Hour with Jim Lehrer*. Kittle is also the longtime editor of the *San Diego Union-Tribune's* editorial page and former host of the public affairs television program SignOn San Diego. His book, entitled *Franciscan Frontiersmen: How Three Adventure Chartered the West*, describes the little-known story of the pioneering friars who accompanied Junipero Serra to California.

Representing the Native American Kumeyaay, is Deacon Andrew Orosco, the first Kumeyaay to become an ordained deacon in the Catholic Church. He serves Bishop Gerald Barnes in the diocese of San Bernardino, which ministers to thirteen federally recognized Indian tribes, six of which have Catholic missions on their land.

PAGE TWO OF THREE

Due to this extraordinary gathering of scholars, Loyola Marymount University will offer college credit as an extension course for attendees. Symposium Chair, Janet Bartel, is to be congratulated for her efforts in securing the involvement of these distinguished speakers, which include Jarrell Jackman, the longtime CEO of the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation whose primary project was rebuilding and interpreting the Santa Barbara Presidio. Jackman is well-known for his years devoted to the Santa Barbara Presidio Commandant Felipe de Goicoechea, for which he was knighted by Spain's current monarch, King Felipe VI.

Serving as guest speakers are Rose Marie Beebe, Ph.D., and Robert Senkewicz, Ph.D., co-editors of *Lands of Promise and Despair: Chronicles of Early California*. Other presenters include: Richard Carrico of San Diego State University; John Clements, longtime researcher of the Mission dam and aqueduct system; Greg T. Granham, Past-President of the San Diego Association of Geologists; William Fairbanks, Ph.D., Past-President of California Mission Studies and Former Chair of the Southwestern Anthropological Association; Kristina W. Foss, Director Emerita of the California Missions Foundation; Robert H. Jackson, Ph.D, author of *Missions and the Frontiers of Spanish America*; Daniel Krieger, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and Former President of the California Missions Foundation; Max Kurillo, author of *California's El Camino Real and its Historic Bells*; Jennifer Lucido, recipient of the Father Fermin Francisco de Lasuen Award for her work in *Furthering the Preservation and Protection of the California Missions*; David J. McLaughlin, author of *The California Missions Source Book* and *Patron Saints of the California Missions* which features an illustrated timeline of Junípero Serra's life; Ruben Mendoza Ph.D., of California State University, Monterey Bay, the archaeological investigator of San Juan Bautista, San Carlos Borromeo and San Miguel Arcángel missions; Kevin Sheehan, Ph.D., Curator of the Maritime Museum of San Diego; Patty West, a fine arts conservator of paintings, sculptures, altars, tabernacles, and pulpits for 18 of the California missions, and Craig Alan Huber, a photographic artist whose work is found in the permanent collections of the Vatican Library, Huntington Library, National Steinbeck Center, Stanford University and the Museo de Fray Junipero Serra in Majorca, Spain.

The Scholars' Symposium runs March 22, 23 and 24, 2019. Tickets for the three-day event are \$120 and include Continental Breakfast and Lunch on March 22 and 23 and Dinner on Friday evening, March 22. Tickets for a Paella Dinner on March 23 are available at an additional cost of \$45 per person. Tickets are limited and advance registration is advised. For additional information and to purchase tickets call (619) 283-7319 or visit the Mission website at: www.MissionSanDiego.org.

PAGE THREE OF THREE