



# Sharing the Catholic Journey

Discovering faith, joy, and community  
St. John the Apostle Parish, Bloomington, IN

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Fr. Daniel Mahan, Pastor

**Sharing the Catholic Journey** is a monthly newsletter for the parishioners of St. John the Apostle Parish. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please write to: [sawyerdenise@yahoo.com](mailto:sawyerdenise@yahoo.com)

## St. John's Summer Festival 2015



It was a great start to a new St. John annual tradition! Join us next year!

# Catholicism 101....

by Scott Benningfield, DRE

## Early Monasticism



As we know, Christians were persecuted. These persecutions 'officially' began with Nero in 64 A.D. – blaming the Christians for the fire that *he* set. Scapegoating is not something new to the modern era! Fast forward to the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D. when Emperor Constantine makes Christianity a legal religion – one that can now be openly practiced. Before this edict, those that were serious about the faith were willing to witness to it and even die for it. Now, with its legality, some laxness settles in. The witnessing decreases. This is one of the reasons people begin to move to the fringes of society. The “going through the motions” spirituality shown by some is not enough; they need a deeper relationship with God. They leave the cities in order to embrace “white martyrdom” (in contrast to “red martyrdom” [shedding of blood for the faith]).

I want to focus on three important figures crucial for early monasticism: St. Anthony of Egypt, St. Pachomius, and St. Benedict of Nursia.



St. Anthony of Egypt (a.k.a. St. Anthony of the Desert and also St. Anthony the Great of Thebes) was born around 251 A.D. into a wealthy Catholic Christian family south of Memphis, Egypt (near Thebes). One day, he enters church while the Gospel is being read (Matthew 19:21) where Jesus says to the rich young man, “to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor...” Moved by this, Anthony sells his possessions and lives in solitude as a hermit. He would return to populated areas but would always return to the wilderness – the desert. He exhorted all he encountered to prefer nothing to the love of Christ.

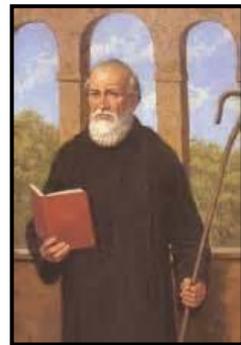
St. Pachomius was born around 292 A.D. in Egypt. Around 311 A.D., Pachomius is conscripted into the Roman army and is assigned to Thebes in Upper Egypt. While there, some Catholic Christians from Thebes bring food and drink to the soldiers. Those who were drafted did not want to be there! This act of mercy while under guard impresses Pachomius. He prayed to God and said that one day he would like to be like them. After release from the army, Pachomius receives instruction about the faith and is baptized.

Pachomius develops an ascetical lifestyle and seeks out Palamon – a desert hermit. They live a life of prayer and work. One day while praying, he hears a voice telling him to prepare a monastery. He does and eventually the number of disciples grows tremendously! At one point, there were 3,000 monks. This required a system. Pachomius – more so than Anthony or other monks at the time – set the stage for what we see as monasticism today.



There were monks living as hermits before Anthony (*eremitical* monasticism [hermits]) and there were even some communities of monks (*cenobitic* monasticism [community]) before Pachomius. However, Pachomius is unique in setting up a system of affiliated monasteries (*koinonia*) and writing a rule for the monks. His approach – his rule – to monasticism consisted of work, times set for prayer and meals together, and catechetical instruction.

St. Benedict was born in Nursia, Italy in 480 A.D. He was educated in Rome. In the year 500, he leaves Rome disgusted by its debauchery and vices. He decides to become a hermit and lives in a cave for about 3 years. Due to his holiness, he is sought out. He is eventually asked to become an abbot to a community. However, they are not happy with his strictness and they try to poison him. He leaves and eventually settles at Monte Cassino. There he destroys a pagan temple and builds a monastery around 530 A.D.



St. Benedict used Pachomius's rule as a basis for his rule which would become much more famous. What made his rule effective was his “Roman practicality”. From the Rule of St. Benedict, he acknowledged that he needed “the strong to have something to yearn for and the weak nothing to run from.” Though it would be too strict for some, the balance and moderation for *ora et labora* (prayer and work) along with study, moderate asceticism, and community life were what made his monastic vision so appealing and popular.

It's important to note that monasticism started off as a lay movement. In the Middle Ages, monasticism is formally developed into what we term as “religious orders”.

# Saints of the Americas....

## Blessed Junipero Serra

Canonization date: September 23, 2015



When Pope Francis visits the United States in September, he will canonize Blessed Junipero Serra, a Franciscan missionary who established missions throughout

southern California during the late 1700's. He was, as Pope Francis said, the "evangelizer of the West in the United States. He is also viewed as the founder of modern California.

As Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles said, "It will be a day to remember that our state and our country and all of the nations of the Americas are born from the Christian mission and built on Christian foundations."

Born Miguel Josep Serra in 1713 on the Spanish island of Majorca, he joined an order of the Franciscans in 1730, at the age of 17, taking the name of Brother Junipero, who had been a companion of Saint Francis of Assisi. He spent the first part of his priestly vocation as a theology professor at Lullian University in Palma de Mallorca, one of the most respected universities in Europe at the time. However, he began to discern a call from God to help to spread the Gospel in the New World. In 1749 he was sent to Mexico City.

While traveling from Vera Cruz, on the coast, to Mexico City, he badly injured his leg, an injury that would cause difficulties for him for the rest of his life. He remained in the Mexico City area for twenty years; then in 1768, he was appointed as the superior of a group of 15 Franciscans who were being sent on mission work to Baja.

California had first been discovered in 1542 by a Spanish explorer, although it was over 200 years before Spanish colonization began to reach that area. The expedition that Fr. Serra was to lead included both missionaries and soldiers, and their purpose was to establish both missions and presidios (forts), the first of which were established in San Diego. A year later, in 1770, both soldiers and Fr. Serra gathered in the Monterey Bay area. In a formal ceremony, the Holy Cross was erected, marking the first step in the establishment of a second mission, Mission San Carlos Borromeo.

The purpose of the missions was to teach the native people about Christianity, as well as to educate them and train them for practical work.

Their mission often conflicted with that of the soldiers who sometimes treated the Indians very badly. The Indians, associating Fr. Serra with the soldiers, stayed away, so in

1771, he moved the Mission to its present location in Carmel where there was fresh water and more fertile land for crops. The construction of the first church began, made primarily of wood and mud. After Fr. Serra's death, a new church was made on the site of the original church, built from rocks from a nearby quarry.



A relationship developed between the Padres and the Indians. The mission depended upon supplies coming from Spain, which were sometimes few and far between, and so the Indians shared their food with the missionaries. However, there continued to be conflicts with how the soldiers treated the Native Americans. Fr. Serra was so concerned about their well-being that he walked most of



the way from Carmel to Mexico City to advocate for a bill of rights for the Indians in front of the viceroy who governed the territory, making this journey with what was most likely a

cancerous leg. In 1784, thirteen years after establishing the Mission in Carmel, Fr. Serra died.

## The Opposition...

This canonization is not welcome by all, especially by Native Americans who accuse Father Serra of suppressing their culture and causing the premature deaths of thousands of their ancestors at the missions. However, it is often unfair to judge the actions of those living in very different times. Once the New World had been discovered by the Europeans, settlement was inevitable. That spirit of adventure (and the desire for riches) has endured for thousands of years. The missionaries who came with the soldiers were there to evangelize this new world, just as Jesus had commissioned his twelve disciples to go to the ends of the earth. They offered a mediating presence to that of the soldiers. Yes, mistakes were made, but most of the missionaries were there to help the natives. Today they would be considered guilty of paternalism (one of the politically correct "evils" of our day). Fr. Serra considered the Indians to be his spiritual children, and he felt a responsibility for their lives as Christians. Mistakes were likely made, but few saints have lived perfect lives.

# The Roamin' Catholic....

## The California Missions

*"Hear the word of the Lord, O Nations,  
proclaim it on distant coasts."*

**Jeremiah 31:10**

Nearly two and a half centuries went by after the discovery



of the New World by Columbus in 1492 before Spain saw the need to send soldiers and missionaries into what was known as Alta California ("upper" California as opposed to "lower" or "baja" California) in the last third of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This was the pattern for the expansion of the Spanish empire. First the explorers, then the soldiers and missionaries, paving the way for the women and children who would ultimately follow.

The mission system came about partly because of Spain's need to control its ever-growing lands in the New World. The colonies would need a literate population; establishing missions in this wild and pagan land was essential. Initially, many of the Indians were afraid of the Spaniards because they looked and dressed so differently. With their strange weapons, they didn't know if they were men or gods. However, eventually curiosity won out over fear, and the first natives approached the strange men. Ultimately, they not only taught the indigenous people about Christianity, they also taught them Spanish, attempting to help them become productive citizens for these Spanish outposts.

The Mission period lasted from 1769 until 1833. During that time 21 missions were established between San Diego and the San Francisco area, in Sonoma. In 1821, Mexico gained its independence from Spain, and California was now part of Mexico. The missions continued to grow until 1833 when the Mexican Secularization Act of 1833 took place. The missions began a gradual decline, and in 1834 the Mexican government began the process of closing the missions and taking over their lands.

This was the period of mission history known as the Rancho period, from 1834 until 1849. The priests would sometimes remain for a while as chief administrators, but the main authority belonged to the civil administrators appointed by the Mexican government. At the beginning, the government had said that the mission lands would go to the Indians; however the land was gradually parceled out to private landowners. The Indians were forced to leave the missions, and many of them tried to return to their native ways, but they found it difficult to adjust. Many ended up working for the new settlers as ranch hands or servants. The Padres also were forced to leave the Mission. Some of them went back to Mexico or became priests in the churches of the new towns of California.

The mission buildings, granaries, orchards, and gardens were allowed to decay. The herds of animals scattered. Mission property began to be sold to private interests.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, restoration efforts were begun. Native Sons of the Golden West, a fraternal service organization, was established in California in 1875. They were dedicated to historic preservation of historic structures and places throughout California, including the missions, during the years 1915 to 1950.

### El Camino Real....

A driving tour of the missions can be made by following what came to be known as the Camino Real, the "royal road." This was the road that linked the missions, pueblos, and presidios in early California. However, at that time, it was a crude road or trail, used mostly by wagons. Today the traveler can follow US Highway 101, which roughly followed the general route of the original trail. A plan was developed in 1902 by the General Federation of Women's Clubs in Los Angeles to mark the route, and in 1906 the decision was made to mark each mile of the route with a guidepost, a mission bell supported by a staff in the shape of a Franciscan walking stick.



Mission bells were vitally important in the daily life of the mission. The bells would ring at mealtime, would call residents to work or religious services, for births and funerals.

They would also ring to signal that a ship was approaching or a missionary returning.

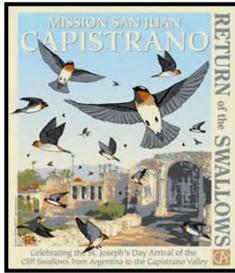
## Mission San Juan Capistrano...



The Mission San Juan Capistrano, established by Father Serra in 1776, is located in what is now Orange County in southern California. Just as villages and towns grew up around monasteries throughout Europe, towns also naturally

developed around the Spanish missions. Today the historic missions are often located in the oldest area of the cities.

For years San Juan Capistrano has been known for the swallows who return to the mission every spring, approximately on St. Joseph's feast day. However, in recent years, the birds migratory habits have changed. In addition, with increased construction in the area, there are fewer areas for the birds to roost.



## Mission San Luis de Obispo....



This fifth mission to be built and the first to be built in the land of the Chumash people, was located in a valley along the central coast. San Luis Obispo stands on its original site. Founded in 1772, the church was built about 20 years later. It was an active mission for 63 years.



The Spanish named the valley "La Canada de los Osos" (Valley of the Bears) because of the many grizzly bears discovered there. A fountain at the mission shows a mother grizzly bear and her cubs.

## Mission San Antonio de Pala....

This mission was founded in 1816 by Padre Antonio Peyria as a sub-mission for the much larger Mission de San Luis de Obispo. Chosen because it served as a natural gathering place for the native population, it is unique among the missions because it is still ministering to a Native American population today. It's construction was simple; however, it has a freestanding bell tower, modeled after a bell tower in Juarez, Mexico. Behind the bell tower is a very old cemetery with the graves of many of the early settlers, including many Native American converts.



## Mission San Jose....

Established in 1797, this was the 14<sup>th</sup> mission to be built in California. It was built in a location that was part of a natural highway that went through the Livermore Valley to San Joaquin Valley. This was the only mission located on



the east side of San Francisco Bay, and the Ohlone Indians had lived there for countless generations.



# What's happening in September....

## Tuesday, September 8: Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary



The celebration of the birth of the Mother of Christ was introduced in the 7<sup>th</sup> century by Pope Sergius I. By doing so, he introduced into the Western church a tradition that was already being practiced in the Eastern Church, where her birthday was celebrated on September 8.

Nothing is written about Mary's birth in the Gospels, but the story about her parents, Saint Anna and Saint Joachim has been handed down through apocryphal texts, such as Protoevangelium of James, along with the *Golden Legend*, which has inspired much of the iconographic tradition.

**ANTIPHON:** Let us celebrate with joy the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for from her arose the sun of justice, Christ our Lord.

## Wednesday, September 9: Memorial of Saint Peter Claver

Peter Claver was born in Spain in 1580. He joined the Jesuits and studied at Majorca. He was encouraged to apply for the missions in South America.



Before being ordained, he went to Columbia, where he hoped to help the native people. However, once he arrived, he realized that his true mission was to evangelize and help the many African slaves who had been brought to work on the farms and in the mines. He could not physically free their bodies, but he could help to free their souls. Tireless in his work of evangelizing all, when he was older, he began to give an annual retreat to the rough seamen who came to Cartagena. He died in 1654 at the age of 74.

**ANTIPHON:** Your priests, O Lord, shall be clothed with justice; your holy ones shall ring out their joy.

## Tuesday, September 15: Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows

This devotion originated in the 13<sup>th</sup> century when devotion to the Passion of Christ was popular. The Middle

Ages were a time of war and suffering; between the years 1348 – 1377, almost 40% of the population of Europe died from the bubonic plague. Many people turned to the crucified Jesus and his sorrowful mother to help them understand their sufferings. A special rosary is prayed by meditating on the Seven Sorrows of Mary.

**THE FIRST SORROW:** The Prophecy of Simeon. "Thy own soul a sword will pierce."

**THE SECOND SORROW:** The Flight into Egypt.

**THE THIRD SORROW:** The Loss of Jesus in the Temple.

**THE FOURTH SORROW:** Mary meets Jesus on the way to His Crucifixion.

**THE FIFTH SORROW:** Jesus dies on the cross.

**THE SIXTH SORROW:** Mary receives the dead body of Jesus in her arms.

**THE SEVENTH SORROW:** Jesus is placed in the tomb.

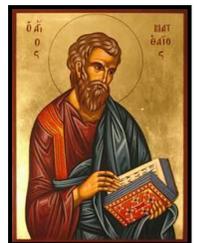


Seen here are photos of a statue of Mary found in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, next to the site of the Crucifixion of Jesus.

**ANTIPHON:** Simeon said to Mary: Behold, this child is destined for the ruin and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign of contradiction; and your own soul a sword will pierce.

## Monday, September 21: Feast of Saint Matthew

One of the twelve disciples, Matthew (called Levi by Mark and Luke) was a Jew who worked as a tax collector for the Romans, a position that made him disliked by many.



When Jesus saw him at work at the customs house in Capernaum, He said to Matthew, "Follow me." Matthew then invited Jesus to his home for a banquet. His guests were, of course, other tax collectors. This was most likely his farewell to his old life because he would give up everything to follow Jesus. He wrote his Gospel during the second half of the first century, probably while he was in Syria. According to apocryphal sources, he died a martyr in Ethiopia.

**ANTIPHON:** Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, says the Lord.