

# KING

*of the missions*



MISSION SAN LUIS REY DE FRANCIA  
FOUNDED 1798



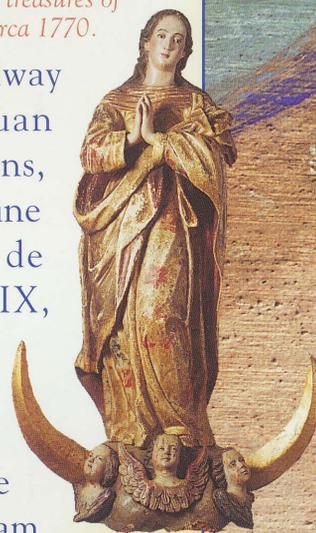
*The only California mission with a wooden cupola and dome of its type and design, the cupola was built of pine brought down from Palomar Mountain.*

Tucked away in a quiet North County valley, just a few miles from the Pacific coast, lies a majestic jewel of early California history called Mission San Luis Rey. 🌸 Walking through the Sunken Gardens or along the arched colonnade, it is easy to imagine the everyday life of the padres and Indians who inhabited the Mission more than a century ago. Mission San Luis Rey truly lives up to its title as King of the Missions. 🌸 Visitors are welcome to stroll through the Mission, surrounding picnic grounds, museum, gift shop, and to attend Saturday evening Mass. A retreat center is available on site for group or private stays. 🌸

**A BRIEF HISTORY:** Mission San Luis Rey (properly known as Mission San Luis Rey de Francia), 18th of the 21 California Missions, was strategically located in a fertile valley midway between the already existing San Diego and San Juan Capistrano Missions. Founded by the Spanish Franciscans, Mission San Luis Rey was established on June 13th, 1798 by Father Fermin Francisco de Lasuen, and was named after St. Louis IX, King of France, patron of the Secular Franciscan Order.

🌸 Father Antonio Peyri served as the administrator, overseeing the Mission for the next 34 years. During this period, a massive construction program was implemented that eventually housed and served the largest Indian

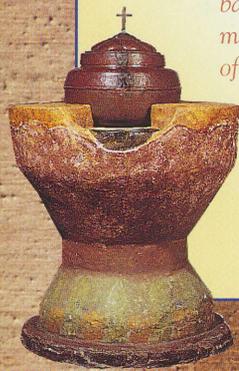
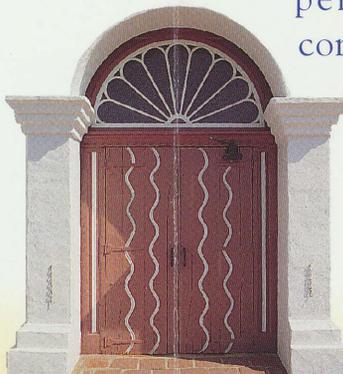
*The well-preserved statue of the Immaculate Conception is one of the oldest treasures of the museum. Circa 1770.*



*The pulpit, based on elements of Moorish design, is completely original, except for the "top" which was added later.*



*The original baptismal font, made by the Indians of hand-hammered copper, is on display in the Mission church.*



*Strolling through the extensive collection of early mission artifacts at the museum, it is easy to imagine life at the Mission in the 19th century. Open daily for self-guided tours.*

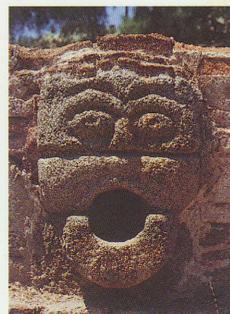
population (over two thousand) of any other Mission. ☼ Life at the Mission flourished until secularization came in 1833 when it was reluctantly turned over to the Mexican government who, in turn, sold it to private land owners in 1846. By then Mission San Luis Rey could barely feed or clothe the 400 Indians remaining, and the Mission quickly deteriorated.

☼ The years to follow were politically turbulent until the Mexican government retreated and the United States took control of the California Territory. Finally, in 1850, California entered the Union as the 31st state. Little did Mission San Luis Rey know this would be a saving grace. In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln,

just a month before his assassination, returned the Mission to the Church. Mission San Luis Rey would slowly pick up the pieces and start again. ☼ In 1892,

Father Joseph Jeremiah O'Keefe, O.F.M. arrived with a dream of transforming the Mission into a Franciscan missionary college. From his tenure to the present, improvements and reconstruction of ruined buildings have almost completely restored Mission San Luis Rey to its original grandeur. ☼ Today, Mission San Luis Rey is once again administered by the Franciscans and stands proud as a National Historic Landmark.

*The Carriage Arch was the original entrance to the inner buildings of the Mission. Through the arch stands the first pepper tree in California which was brought by ship from Peru and planted here in 1830.*



*A contented statue serves as a spout to channel water into the Lavanderia where the Indians washed their clothes as well as bathed.*



*The Mission church is an impressive setting for the many concerts held throughout the year.*



*Largest of the California Missions, the property once covered a 15-mile radius and livestock numbered over 56,000. Until the mid-1800s, the Mission church was the largest structure in California.*

## FUNCTIONS AND EVENTS



The RETREAT CENTER provides an environment away from stress and pressures. The Franciscan Retreat team offers a calendar of scheduled retreats year-round. Facilities include meeting rooms, living quarters, and meal services. The Retreat Center is available to all organizations for both day and overnight conferences. Call (760) 757-3659 for information. ☼ The MUSEUM houses exhibits relating to the colorful history of San Luis Rey. Its collections include artifacts from Native American, Spanish Mission, Mexican Secularization, and American Military periods. Group tours are available with advance

*The museum houses the largest collection of 18th and 19th century Spanish vestments in the United States.*

reservations. Open daily. ☼ The GIFT SHOP offers a fine variety of mission and religious articles including

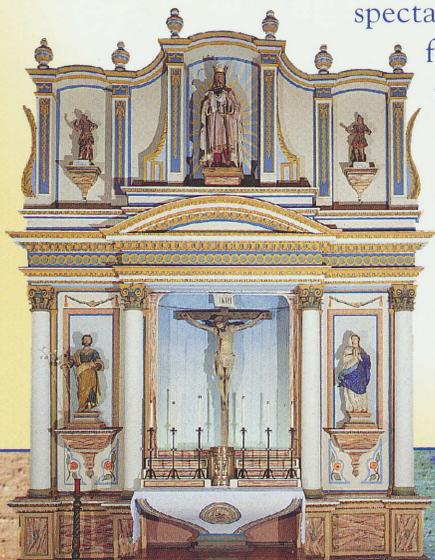
books, art, and educational material. Open daily. ☼ The Mission San Luis Rey CEMETERY is the oldest community burial ground in North San Diego County, dating back to 1798. It contains early grave markers, mausoleums, and a monument built in 1830 in memory of the Luiseño Indians. The cemetery has undergone recent expansion and may be utilized by members of all faiths and parishes. ☼ The annual HERITAGE BALL, a



*Mission San Luis Rey cemetery*

spectacular gala event and fundraiser, is held late in the summer, boasting an elegantly catered dinner with dancing afterward to live music. ☼ Year-round events such as changing art exhibitions, living history re-enactments, and concerts are a part of the Mission experience. For further information, please call (760) 757-3651.

*The "reredos" and the altar are part original and part reconstruction. Its Classical and Baroque flare are typical of the California mission style.*





Graphic design/copy by Lynn Karpinski. Photography generously donated by Tom Meringolo.

*As a National Historic Landmark, Mission San Luis Rey receives no Federal, State, or local funding for restoration and is entirely dependent upon donations, gifts, and fundraisers.*

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