



The missions are California's cultural treasures. Working together we can ensure their future.

California Missions Foundation

January 2011

Latest News from California Missions Foundation

Dear Friends,

In this, the second edition of our new electronic newsletter, we'll be profiling one of the "younger" missions among the state's 21 historic missions: Mission San Luis Rey de Francia, built just over 200 years ago.

We've also got news about recent grants, so read on for full details.

As always, please feel free to [share this email with a friend](#). (Or, if you would rather not receive future newsletters via email, you can click the unsubscribe button below.) If you missed our previous newsletter, you can [view it online](#).

Thank you for your ongoing interest and support. We're looking forward to making 2011 a fabulous year in our efforts to preserve California's historic missions!



-Knox

Dr. Knox Mellon
Executive Director
California Missions Foundation

Featured Mission: Mission San Luis Rey de Francia

This month, we're profiling Mission San Luis Rey de Francia, located in Oceanside, California. ([MAP](#))

HISTORY

Mission San Luis Rey was the 18th mission, founded in June 1798 by Friar Lasuén. The mission is named for King Louis IX of France. Louis was taught by the early Franciscans and is the patron of their 3rd order. He also was of Spanish blood on his mother's side and died fighting in the Crusades. He was canonized in 1297.

The inland site was chosen for the fertile valley and good source of fresh water for farming and raising livestock. Timbers for the church came from Mount Palomar and were transported to the site by way of the river.

At the time of its founding, the mission owned over 950,000 acres of land; today the grounds comprise a mere 56 acres.

This mission claimed the largest number of Native American converts of any mission. The local Native Americans were called "Luiseños" by the Spanish because they were associated with San Luis Rey. A branch of the southern Shoshone nation, they were also known as Payomkawichum, or "People of the West," by other tribes.

Original mission buildings include the church, cemetery wall, gardens, kilns, and a lavanderia (laundry and washing area featuring carved gargoyle spouts). Other parts of the mission complex were built in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

CURRENT PRESERVATION EFFORTS

To help ensure that this beautiful historic site survives into the future, Mission San Luis Rey (under the leadership of the mission's Executive Director, Friar David Gaa, O.F.M.) has undertaken a major seismic retrofitting project.



CMF board member Janet Bartel presents a check to Mission San Luis Rey's Fr. Gaa.

Last year, to support this vital work, the California Missions Foundation aided Mission San Luis Rey in securing a \$640,000 Save America's Treasures (SAT) grant from the National Parks Service. This is a challenge grant, requiring the mission to raise an equal sum in matching funds from other sources.

CMF's Executive Director, Knox Mellon, recently met with Fr. Gaa to discuss the work at the mission and matching the SAT grant. "I was very impressed with Friar David, his vision and his commitment to Old Mission San Luis Rey de Francia," Dr. Knox said following their meeting. "I had every confidence that he would raise the matching funds and ensure that the project work was done well and properly. So I was not surprised when he informed me that the matching dollars had been obtained."

A significant portion of that match was raised with the help of CMF. On January 26, CMF was proud to present the mission with \$55,000 in matching funds from the Linden Root Dickinson Foundation (\$20,000) and the Hearst Foundation (\$35,000).

"I am most grateful for the support offered by these two grants, which will help us to preserve Old Mission San Luis Rey," said Fr. Gaa. "The Mission is part of North County's cultural heritage, which we are hoping to maintain for future generations."



Mission San Luis Rey de Francia in the late 19th century (top) and today (bottom).

MORE

For more information on the past and present of this beautiful mission, you can [visit the Mission San Luis Rey website](#).



Images of the courtyard and sanctuary of Mission San Luis Rey de Francia.

More Grant News

Earlier this month, the Linden Root Dickinson Foundation -- acting through the California Missions Foundation -- presented a check for \$25,000 to Mission San Antonio de Padua. The LRD Foundation has shown great support for the state's missions: In 2003 they gave generously to Mission San Miguel of Arcangel, which had suffered severe earthquake damage, and just this month they donated to Mission San Luis Rey (see above). We would like to thank the good people at LRD for their ongoing support of these important preservation efforts.



(Left to right) CMF's Knox Mellon; Joan Steele, Administrator of Mission San Antonio de Padua; and Valerie and Derek Sanders of the LRD Foundation.

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How can you help to preserve California's historic missions?

Learn about ways you can donate!



About California Missions Foundation

Nothing defines California's heritage as significantly or emotionally as do the 21 missions that were founded along the coast from San Diego to Sonoma. Their beauty, stature and character underlie the formation of California. All 21 missions are California Historical Landmarks; many have also been designated National Historic Landmarks. The missions are among the most popular tourist destinations in the state, attracting millions of visitors each year.

Founded in 1998, the California Missions Foundation was established with the objective of preserving and protecting the missions. The Foundation is the only organization dedicated to the long-term preservation and restoration needs of all California missions and their associated historic and cultural resources for public benefit.

Visit us online at www.californiamissionsfoundation.org.

