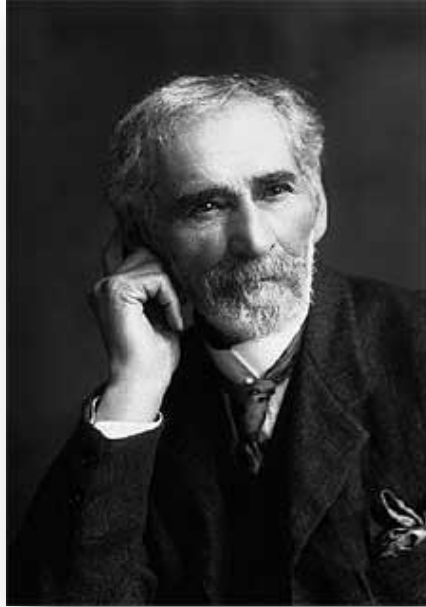


THOUGHTAUDIO



THE FAMOUS MISSIONS OF CALIFORNIA

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THE FAMOUS MISSIONS OF CALIFORNIA

On the 1st of July 1769, a day forever memorable in the annals of California - a small party of men, worn out by the fatigues and hardships of their long and perilous journey from San Fernandez de Villicatà, came in sight of the beautiful Bay of San Diego.

Among the members of the expedition team were Gaspar de Portolà, the colonial governor and military commander of the enterprise and, the now famous, Father Junipero Serra, whose name and achievements are the foundation of the early history of California.

They formed the last division of a tripartite expedition whose objective was the political and spiritual conquest of the great Northwest coast of the Pacific. Spain was determined to occupy and settle the upper provinces of California, or Alta California, as it was called, to effectively prevent the possible encroachments of the Russians and the English.

Fully aware of the necessity of immediate and decisive action, Carlos III initially sent Jose de Galvez to New Spain, giving him sweeping authoritative powers as general of the provinces. His orders were to establish military posts at San Diego and Monterey.

Galvez was a man of remarkable zeal, energy and organizing ability, and he undertook his mission as extremely important from both the political and religious perspective of his day. The twofold purpose of his expedition was, as he stated it, "first, to establish the Catholic faith among a numerous heathen people who are submerged in the obscure darkness of paganism, and second, to extend the dominion of the King, and protect this peninsula from the ambitious views of foreign nations."

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After consolidating his forces at Santa Ana, near La Paz, he sent an invitation to Junipero Serra to visit him in his camp. Father Junipero was recently appointed President of the California Missions, and anxious to start his life long dream of bearing the Catholic faith to the barbarian peoples within the Spanish empire. He traveled quickly to La Paz, and in the course of a long interview with Galvez not only promised his hearty co-operation, but also gave assistance in the arrangement of preliminary details of the expedition. Father Junipero saw this opportunity as a sign from God.

Father Junipero threw himself into the work with his characteristic passion and determination. Galvez soon realized that his own efforts were now to be ably seconded by a man who, due to his devotion, courage and personal magnetism, felt providentially designated for the task that had been put into his hands.

Miguel Joseph Serra, now was known only by his adopted name of Junipero, which he took out of reverence for the chosen companion of St. Francis. He was a native of the Island of Majorca, where he was born, of humble parents, in 1713. According to the testimony of his intimate friend and biographer, Father Francesco Palou, his desires, even during boyhood, focused on religious life. Before he was seventeen he entered the Franciscan Order, becoming a regular member of the order a year or so later

He studied fervently during his novitiate, and from these devout studies sprang an intense ambition to "imitate the holy and venerable men" who had given themselves up to the grand work of carrying the Gospel among gentiles and savages. The missionary idea became the dominant purpose of his life, and even though he had astonishing success as a lecturer as a professor of theology, his apostolic zeal was directed toward becoming a missionary. He was destined, however, to wait many years before his chance came.

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Finally, in 1749, after making numerous petitions for Foreign Service, he and Palou were offered positions in a body of priests who, at the urgent request of the College of San Fernando, in Mexico, were being sent out as recruits to various parts of the New World. The hour had come; and in a spirit of gratitude and joy too deep for words, Junipero Serra set his face towards the far lands which were from this point forward to be his home.

The voyage out was long and trying. In the first stage of their voyage from Majorca to Malaga, there were many dangers and difficulties. However, despite these difficulties, Junipero and his companions finally reached Malaga, whence they proceeded first to Cadiz, and then, after some delay, to Vera Cruz. The voyage across from Cadiz alone occupied ninety-nine days, though of these, fifteen were spent at Porto Rico, where Father Junipero established a mission. Hardships were not lacking; water and food ran short, and the vessel encountered terrific storms. But "remembering the end for which they had come," the father "felt no fear, and his buoyancy kept up the flagging spirits of those about him. Even when they reached Vera Cruz, the terrible journey was not over. They still had hundreds of miles to travel to Mexico City.

Too impatient to wait for the animals and wagons promised for transportation, but through some oversight or blunder, had not arrived in Vera Cruz, Junipero set out to cover the distance on foot. The strain brought on an ulcer in one of his legs, from which he suffered all the rest of his life.

For nearly nineteen years after his arrival in Mexico, Junipero was engaged in active missionary work, mainly among the Indians of the Sierra Gorda. He was then appointed President of the Missions of California. When the Jesuits were expelled from the Missions in 1768 the Franciscans were placed in charge of the California Mission. There

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were thirteen missions altogether all in Lower California. Now however, with his appointment to office of President, Father Junipero decided to change.

Junipero was now fifty-five years of age, and could look back upon a career of effort and accomplishment that to any less active man would have earned a well-deserved retirement. Yet, his determination to build Missions in Alta California, he forged a successful alliance with Jose de Galvez, who was planning a northwest expedition of Alta California.

As a result of the conference between Galvez and Father Junipero, it was decided that their joint expedition should be sent out in two portions - one by sea and one by land. The land party being again sub-divided into two, so that if one came to misfortune, the other might still be saved. It was decided that four missionaries would go with the ships, and one with the advance-detachment of the land-force, the second part of which was to include the president himself.

The immediate purpose of the missionaries was to establish three settlements - one at San Diego, a second at Monterey, and a third on a site to be selected, about midway between the two, which was to be called San Buenaventura. The two divisions of the land-force were under the leadership of Captain Fernando Rivera y Moncada and Governor Portolà respectively.

The ships were to carry all the heavier portions of the camp equipment, provisions, household goods, vestments and sacred vessels. The land-parties were to take herds and flocks from Loreto. The understanding was that whichever party first reached San Diego was to wait there twenty days for the rest, and in the event of their failure to arrive within that time, to push on to Monterey.

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The sea-detachment of the general expedition was composed of three ships - the San Carlos, the San Antonio, and the San Joseph. An inventory shows that the vessel was provisioned for eight months. The San Carlos left La Paz on the 9th of January; the San Antonio on the 15th of February; the San Joseph on the 16th of June. All the vessels met with heavy storms, and the San Carlos, being driven sadly out of her route, did not reach San Diego till twenty days after the San Antonio, though dispatched some five weeks earlier. Of her crew only one sailor and the cook were left alive; the rest, along with many of the soldiers, died from scurvy. The San Antonio also lost eight of her crew from the same disease. As for the San Joseph, she never reached her destination at all, though where and how she met her fate still remains a mystery.

The original plan had Father Junipero accompanying the governor in the second division of the land-expedition. However on the day of departure he was unable to depart due to the ulcerous sore on his leg, aggravated by his recent journey from Loreto to La Paz and back. Father Junipero postponed his start for several weeks.

Finally, on the 28th of March, in company with two soldiers and a servant, he mounted his mule and set out although he suffered terribly on the way. Although on reaching San Xavier, he was deeply encouraged to remain behind, and allow Palou to go forward in his place. However, Father Junipero would not hear of it. After three days devoted to business connected with the lower province missions, the indomitable father determined to continue his journey, notwithstanding the fact that, still totally unable to move his leg, he had to be lifted by two men into the saddle.

Junipero's courage never gave out. Partly for rest and partly for conference with those in charge, he lingered awhile at the missions along the way. Nevertheless, soon came up

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with Portolà and his detachment and proceeded to Villacatà. Here during a temporary stop, he founded a mission dedicated to San Fernando, King of Castile and Leon.

However, the worst experiences of the journey were still in store. Junipero's leg was in such an inflamed condition that he could not stand, sit or sleep. He persevered for a few miles, without complaining to any one, and then collapsed. Portolà urged him to return at once to San Fernando to rest and recovery. Junipero refused.

For forty-six days - from the 15th of May to the 1st of July - the party plodded on, following the track of the advance-division of the land-expedition under Rivera y Moncada. With joy and gratitude, they at last looked down upon the harbor of San Diego, and realized that the first object of their efforts had been achieved. Out in the bay lay the San Carlos and the San Antonio, and on the shore were the tents of the men who had preceded them.

To reach Monterey at all costs was Portolà's next duty; and on the 14th of July, with a small party which included Fathers Crespi and Gomez, he commenced his northwest march.

The fervent zeal that continually glowed and burned in the heart of Father Junipero, did not permit him to forget the principal object of his journey." As soon as Portolà had left the encampment, Junipero began to busy himself with the problem of the mission that should be founded on that spot. Ground was carefully chosen with an eye to the requirements, not only of the mission itself, but also of the pueblo, or village. On the 16th of July - anniversary of a great victory over the Moors in 1212, the Spanish church solemnly celebrated the creation of the first mission of Upper California. It was dedicated to San Diego de Alcalà, after whom the bay had been named by Sebastian Viscaino.

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The ceremonies were the same as in the founding of the Mission of San Fernando at Villicatà. The site was blessed and sprinkled with holy water; a great cross reared, facing the harbor and a mass celebrated..

The preliminary work of foundation thus accomplished, Father Junipero gathered about him the few healthy men who could be spared from the tending their sick comrades and routine duties, and with their help erected a few rude huts, one of which was immediately consecrated as a temporary chapel. So far as his own people were concerned, the padre's labors ravaged by that only twenty people survived.

Even in the midst of all the tragedy, the father's real work was the native Indians. They were not an attractive people, these "gentiles" of a country that to the newcomers seemed like an outer garden of Paradise it was so beautiful.

Still, Junipero's first attempts to gain their good will met with little success. During the ceremonies attendant upon the foundation and dedication of the mission, the native Indians stood in silent wonder, although they relished in the gifts they were offered. However, they flatly refused the missionaries food, apparently regarding it as the cause of the dire sickness of the troops.

Ignorance of the Indians' language, of course, added seriously to the father's difficulties in approaching them. Soon the native Indians began to steal cloths and other material goods, and this made them increasingly troublesome to the missionaries. Acts of violence became more and more common, and by-and-by, the Indians made a determined and organized attack upon the mission. The Indians greatly outnumbered the missionaries and in a pitched battle, led to the death of one of the Spanish servants.

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Ironically, the crisis seemed to clear the air. The kindness which the Spaniards treated their wounded foes evidently touched the savage heart. Little by little, a few Indians here and there began to frequent the mission. With the hearty welcome, they received their numbers soon increased.

Among them there happened to be a boy, of fifteen years of age, who showed himself more accommodating than his fellow Indians. Father Junipero determined to use the boy as a point of connection with the Indians. When the lad had picked up a smattering of Spanish, the padre sent him to his people with the promise that if he were allowed to bring back one of the children, the youngster would not only be baptized a Christian, but be fully clothed in the best of Spanish garments.

A few days later, a "gentile," followed by a large crowd, appeared with a child in his arms, and the padre, filled with unutterable joy, at once threw a piece of cloth over it, and called upon one of the soldiers to stand godfather to this first infant of Christ. But, just as he was preparing to sprinkle the holy water, the natives snatched the child from him, and ran off with the child ... and the cloth. The surrounding soldiers were furious at this insult, and, if the Father had not intervened, they would have inflicted summary punishment upon the offenders.

However, this first experience in convert-making was fortunately not prophetic, although many months elapsed before a single neophyte was gained for the mission, and though more serious troubles were still to come, in the course of the next few years a number of the Indians, both children and adults, were baptized.

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While Junipero and his companions were thus engaged in planting the faith among the Indians of San Diego, Portolà's expedition was meeting with unexpected trials and disappointments. The harbor of Monterey had been discovered and described by Viscaino at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and it did not seem a difficult matter to reach it by way of the coast.

But either the charts misled them, or their own calculations erred, or the appearance of the landscape was strangely deceptive – because, for whatever reason or combination of reasons, the exploring party passed the harbor without recognizing it. They were almost persuaded that some great catastrophe, since Viscaino's observations, must have obliterated the port altogether. They pressed northward another forty leagues, and without grasping the importance of their exploration, crossed the Coast range and looked down over the Santa Clara valley and the "immense arm" of San Francisco Bay.

By this time the rainy season had set in, and convinced as they now were that they must, through some oversight or bad luck, have missed Monterey Bay, they determined to retrace their steps, and institute another and more thorough search. On reaching the neighborhood of Monterey, they spent a full week in a systematic exploration of the area, but still, strangely enough, without discovering "any indication or landmark" of the harbor. Baffled and disheartened the leaders decided to abandon their search, although they erected two large wooden crosses as memorials of their visit. On the cross on the other side of Point Pinos was cut with a razor this legend: - "The land expedition returned to San Diego for want of provisions, this 9th day of December, 1769."

The party - or more correctly speaking - what was left of it, did not reach San Diego until the 25th of the following month, having suffered terribly from hunger, exposure, wet, fatigue and sickness. Depressed themselves, they found nothing to encourage them in the

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mission and camp, where death had played havoc among those they had left behind them six months before, and where the provisions were running low so fast that only the timely reappearance of the San Antonio, long overdue, would save the survivors from actual starvation.

Perhaps it is hardly surprising that, under these circumstances, Portolà's courage should have failed him, and that he should have decided upon a return to Mexico. He made an inventory of all available provisions to be taken, and calculating that, with strict economy, and setting aside what would be required for the journey back to San Fernando, they might last till somewhat beyond the middle of March. He knew that unless the San Antonio arrived by the 20th of that month, he would have to abandon San Diego, and start south.

But if the governor imagined for a moment that he could persuade the padre to fall in with this arrangement, he did not know his man. Junipero firmly believed, despite the failure of Portolà's expedition, that the harbor of Monterey still existed, and would eventually be found. He had made up his mind that, come what might, nothing could ever induce him to turn his back upon his work.

Then a wonderful thing happened. On the 19th of March - the day before the fixed departure date, the sail of a ship appeared far out at sea; and though the vessel disappeared towards the northwest, it returned four days later and proved to be none other than the San Antonio, bearing the much needed aid and relief. She had passed up towards Monterey in the expectation of finding the larger body of settlers there, and had only turned back to San Diego when unexpectedly, (and as it seemed, providentially), she had run short of water.

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It was inevitable that Father Junipero should see in this series of happenings the very hand of God - the more so as the day of relief happened to be the festival of St. Joseph, who, was the patron of the mission enterprise.

The arrival of the San Antonio put an entirely new complexion upon the situation and relieved every one of their immediate anxiety. Portolà now decided to take a second expedition to search for the Bay of Monterey.

Two divisions, one for sea, the other for land, were made ready; the former, which included Junipero, started in the San Antonio, on the 16th of April, the other, under the leadership of Portolà, a day later.

The land-party, following the coast, reached the more southern of the great wooden crosses on the 24th of May, and after some difficulty succeeded at last in identifying the harbor. Seven days later, steering by the fires lighted for her guidance along the shore, the San Antonio came safely into port; and formal possession of the bay and surrounding country was taken in the name of church and King.

This was on the 3rd of June, the Feast of Pentecost; and on that day the second of the Upper California missions came into being. Palou has left us a full account of the ceremonies. Governor, soldiers and priests gathered together on the beach, on the spot where, in 1603, the Carmelite fathers who had accompanied Viscaïno, had celebrated the mass. An altar was improvised and bells rung; and then, in alb and stole, the father-president invoked the aid of the Holy Ghost, solemnly chanted the Venite Dios Spiritus; blessed and raised a great cross and sprinkled holy water on the beach and adjoining fields.

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Mass was then sung; Father Junipero preached a sermon; the roar of cannon and muskets took the place of instrumental music; and the function was concluded with the Te Deum. Though now commonly called Carmelo, or Carmel, from the river it looks across, in remembrance of the first Christian explorers on the spot, this mission is properly known by the name of San Carlos Borromeo, Cardinal-Archbishop of Milan. A few huts enclosed by a palisade, and forming the germ at once of the religious and of the military settlement, were hastily erected. But the actual building of the mission was not begun until the summer of 1771

News of the establishment of the missions and military posts at San Diego and Monterey was carried to the City of Mexico. The news so delighted the Marques de Croix, Viceroy of New Spain, and Jose de Galvez, that they not only set the church bells ringing, but immediately began to make arrangements for the founding of more missions in the upper province.

Additional priests were provided by the College of San Fernando. Funds were liberally allocated and the San Antonio made ready to sail from San Blas with the friars and supplies. On the 21st of May, 1771, the ship dropped anchor at Monterey, where, in the meantime, Junipero, though busy among the natives of the neighborhood, was suffering grievous disappointment because of the lack of priests and soldiers, he was unable to proceed at once with the proposed establishment of San Buenaventura.

The safe arrival of ten assistants brought the ability to rapidly extend his work. He was not the man to let time slip by him unimproved. Plans were immediately laid for carrying the cross still further into the wilderness, and six new missions - those of San Buenaventura, San Gabriel, San Louis Obispo, San Antonio, Santa Clara and San Francisco - were agreed upon. It was discovered later on, however, that these plans

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outran the resources at the president's disposal, and much to his regret, the design for settlements at Santa Clara and San Francisco had to be temporarily given up.

There was, none the less, plenty to engage the energies of even so tireless a worker as Junipero, for three of the new missions were successfully established between July, 1771, and the autumn of the following year. The first of these was the Mission of San Antonio de Padua, in a beautiful spot among the Santa Lucia mountains, some twenty-five leagues southeast of Monterey; the second, that of San Gabriel Arcángel, near what is now known as the San Gabriel river; and the third, the Mission of San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, for which a location was chosen near the coast, about twenty-five leagues southeast of San Antonio.

Though Father Junipero had ample reason to be encouraged over the progress of his enterprise, he still had various difficulties to contend with. The question of supplies often assumed formidable proportions, and the labors of the missionaries were not always as fruitful as had been hoped. Fortunately, however, the Indians were, as a rule, friendly, notwithstanding the fact that the behavior of the Spanish soldiers, especially towards their women, occasionally aroused their distrust and resentment.

Only at one establishment did serious disturbances actually threaten the continuance of the mission and its work. Junipero had lately returned from Mexico, with undiminished zeal and all sorts of fresh designs revolving in his brain, when a courier reached him at San Carlos bringing news of a terrible disaster at San Diego. Important affairs detained him for a time at Monterey, until he was able to get to the scene of the trouble. The first reports had not been exaggerated.

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On the night of the 4th of November, 1775, eight hundred Indians had made a ferocious assault upon the mission, fired the buildings, and brutally killed Father Jayme, one of the two priests in charge. After hearing the news and on reaching San Diego, Father Junipero with his customary energy, set about the task of re-establishing the mission. The buildings which presently arose from the ruins were a great improvement upon those which had been destroyed.

Before these alarming events at the mother-mission broke in upon his regular work, the president had resolved upon yet another settlement not included in the still uncompleted plan. He selected a point on the coast some twenty-six leagues north of San Diego, and which was to be dedicated to San Juan Capistrano. The start of the mission had already begun, not by Junipero in person, but by fathers he delegated for the purpose. But when news of the murder of Father Jayme reached them, they had hastily buried bells, chasubles and supplies, and hurried south. As soon as ever he felt it wise to leave San Diego Junipero himself left to the abandoned site. And there, on the 1st of November, 1776, the bells were dug up and hung, mass said, and the mission established.

Though the establishment of San Juan Capistrano is naturally mentioned here, partly because of the abortive start made there a year before, and partly because its actual foundation constituted the next noteworthy incident in Junipero's career, this mission is, in strict chronological order, not the sixth, but the seventh on our list. Some three weeks before its dedication, and without the knowledge of the president himself, though in full accordance with his designs, the cross had been planted at a point many leagues northward beyond San Carlos, and destined to be the most important on the coast.

When Portolà's party made their first futile search for the harbor of Monterey, they had accidentally found their way as far as the Bay of San Francisco. The significance of their

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discovery was not appreciated at the time, either by themselves or by those at headquarters to whom it was reported; but later explorations so clearly established the value of the spot for settlement and fortification, that it was determined to build a presidio there. Some years previous to this, as we have seen, a mission on the northern bay had been part of Junipero's ambitious scheme; and though at the time he was forced by circumstances to hold his hand, the idea was constantly uppermost in his thoughts. At length, when, in the summer of 1776, an expedition was dispatched from Monterey for the founding of the proposed presidio, two missionaries were included in the party - one of these being none other than that Father Palou.

The buildings of the presidio - store house, commandant's dwelling, and huts for the soldiers and their families - were completed by the middle of September; and on the 17th of that month - the day of St. Francis, patron of the station and harbor - imposing ceremonies of foundation were performed. A wooden church was then built; and on the 9th of October, in the presence of many witnesses, Father Palou said mass, the image of St. Francis was carried around in procession, and the mission solemnly dedicated to his name

It was at San Luis Obispo on his way back from San Diego to Monterey, that Father Junipero learned of the foundation of the mission at San Francisco, and though he may doubtless have felt some little regret at not having himself been present on such an occasion, his heart overflowed with joy. For there was a special reason why the long delay in carrying out this portion of his plan had weighed heavily upon him. Years before, when the visitador general had told him that the first three missions in Alta California were to be named after San Diego, San Carlos and San Buenaventura (for such, we recollect, had been the original program), he had exclaimed: - "Then is our

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father, St. Francis, to have no mission?" And Galvez had made reply: - "If St. Francis desires a mission, let him show us his port, and he shall have one there."

To Junipero it had seemed that Portolà had providentially been led beyond Monterey to the Bay of San Francisco, and the founder of his order had thus been given an emphatic answer to the general's words.

This was not the only good work done in the north while Junipero was busy elsewhere; on the 12th of January, 1777, the Mission of Santa Clara was established in the wonderfully fertile and beautiful valley which is now known by that name.

The customary rites were performed by Father Tomas de la Peña, a rude chapel erected, and the work of constructing the necessary buildings of the settlement immediately begun. It should be noted in passing that before the end of the year the town of San Jose - or, to give it its full Spanish title, El Pueblo de San Jose de Guadalupe - was founded near by. This has historic interest as the first purely civil settlement in California.

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Though Junipero's subordinates had done without him in these important developments at San Francisco and Santa Clara, he still resolved to go north, both to visit the new foundations and to inspect for himself the marvelous country which he had heard much, but had not yet seen. As usual, he was detained by urgent affairs, and it was not till autumn that he succeeded in breaking away.

He made a short stay at Santa Clara, and then pushed on to San Francisco, which he reached in time to say mass on St. Francis' day. After a ten days' rest, he crossed to the presidio and feasted his eyes on the glorious vision of the Golden Gate - a sight that once seen is never forgotten. "Thanks be to God!" he cried, in rapture, "now our Father St.

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Francis, with the Holy Cross of the procession of missions, has reached the ultimate end of this continent of California. To go further ships will be required!"

Yet his joy was tempered with the thought that the eight missions already founded were very far apart, and that it would take a lot of effort to fill up gaps. The padre returned to his own special charge at San Carlos.

Various circumstances in combination caused the postponement, year after year, of that third mission, which, according to original intentions, was to have followed immediately upon the establishments at San Diego and Monterey. Three new settlements were now projected on the Santa Barbara Channel, and the first of these was to be the mission of San Buenaventura.

It was not until 1782, however, that the long-delayed purpose was at last accomplished. The site chosen was at the southeastern extremity of the channel, and close to an Indian village to which Portalà's expedition in 1769 had given the name of Ascencion de Nuestra Señora, or, briefly, Assumpta. A little later on, in pursuance of the same plan, the then governor, Filipe de Neve, took formal possession of a spot some ten leagues distant, and there began the construction of the presidio of Santa Barbara.

It was Junipero's earnest desire to proceed at once with the adjoining mission. But the governor, for reasons of his own, threw obstacles in the way, and in the end this fresh undertaking was left to other hands, but we have now come to the close of Father Junipero's long and strenuous career.

As we look back over the record of it, our wonder is, not that he should have died when he did, but rather that he had not killed himself many years before. His is surely one of those cases in which supreme spiritual power and sheer force of will triumph over an

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accumulation of bodily ills. Far from robust of constitution, he had never given himself thought or rest, forcing himself to exertions that it would have appeared utterly impossible that his frame could bear, and adding to the constant strain of his labors and travels the hardships of self-inflicted tortures of a severe ascetic régime.

He had always been troubled by the old ulcer on his leg, though this, no matter how painful, he never regarded except when it actually incapacitated him for work. For many years he had suffered from a serious affection of the heart, which had been greatly aggravated, even if it was not in the first instance caused, by his habit of beating himself violently on his chest with a huge stone, at the conclusion of his sermons.

Mental anxiety and sorrow added their weight to his burden - particularly disappointment at the slow progress of his enterprise, and grief over the death of his fellow-countryman and close friend, Father Crespi, who passed to his well-earned rest on New Year's Day, 1782. After this loss, he was never the same man again, though he held tenaciously to his duties, that only a year before the call came to him, being then over seventy, he limped from San Diego to Monterey, visiting his missions, and weeping over the outlying Indian villages, because he was powerless to help the unconverted dwellers in them.

He died at San Carlos, tenderly nursed to the end by the faithful Palou, on the 28th August, 1784; and his passing was so peaceful that those watching thought he was asleep. On hearing the mission bells toll for his death, the whole population, knowing what had occurred, burst into tears. When, clothed in the simple habit of his order, his body was laid out in his cell, the native Indians crowded in with flowers, while the Spanish soldiers and sailors pressed around him in the hope of being blessed by momentary contact with his corpse.

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He was laid beneath the mission altar beside his beloved friend Crespi; but when, in after years, a new church was built, the remains of both were removed and placed within it. It is not altogether easy to measure such a man as Junipero Serra by our ordinary modern standards of character and conduct. He was essentially a religious enthusiast, and as a religious enthusiast, he must be judged. To us who read his story from a distance, who breathe an atmosphere totally different from his, and whose lives are governed by quite other passions and ideals, he may often appear one-sided, extravagant, deficient in tact and forethought. In the excess of his zeal, too ready to sacrifice everything to the purposes he never for an instant allowed to drop out of his sight. We may even, with some of his critics, protest that he was not a man of powerful intellect; that his views of people and things were distressingly narrow; that, after his kind, he was extremely superstitious; that he was despotic in his dealings with his converts, and stiffnecked in his relations with the civil and military authorities.

For all this is doubtless true. But all this must not prevent us from seeing him as he actually was - charitable, large-hearted, energetic, indomitable; in all respects a remarkable, in many ways, a really wise and great man. At whatever points he may fall short of our criteria, this much must be said of him, that he was fired throughout with the high spirit of his vocation, that he was punctual in the performance of duty as he understood it, that he was obedient to the most rigorous dictates of that Gospel which he had set himself to preach.

In absolute, single-hearted, unflinching, and tireless devotion to the task of his life - the salvation of heathen souls - he spent himself freely and cheerfully, a true follower of that noblest and most engaging of the mediaeval saints, whose law he had laid upon himself, and whom he looked up to as his guide and exemplar. Let us place him where he belongs - among the transcendent apostolic figures of his own church; for in this way alone shall

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we do justice to his personality, his objects, his career. The memory of such a man will survive all changes in creeds and ideals; and the great state, of which he was the first pioneer, will do honor to herself in honoring him.



After Junipero's death the supervision of the missions passed to for a time upon Palou, under whose management, owing to difficulties with the civil powers, no new missions were undertaken, though satisfactory progress was made in those already existing. In 1786, Palou was appointed head of the College of San Fernando, and his place as mission president was filled by Father Firmin Francisco de Lasuen, by whom the mission of Santa Barbara was dedicated, on the festival day of that virgin-martyr, before the close of the year.

Earthquakes injured the original adobe church in 1806 and 1812. The present edifice was begun in 1815 and finished in 1820.

Just twelve months later, the third channel settlement was started, with the performance of the usual rites, on the spot fixed for the Mission of La Purisima Concepcion, at the western extremity of the bay; though some months passed before real work there was begun.

Finally, the proposed scheme, elaborated before Junipero's death, for the occupation of that portion of the coast, was successfully carried out. Hardly had this been accomplished before the viceroy and governor, having resolved upon a further extension of the mission system, sent orders to Father Lasuen to proceed with two fresh settlements, one of which was to be dedicated to the Holy Cross, the other to Our Lady of Solitude. Time was, as

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usual, consumed in making the necessary preparations, and the two missions were finally founded within a few weeks of each other - on the 28th of August and the 9th of October, 1791, respectively. The site selected for the Mission of Santa Cruz was in the neighborhood already known by that name, and near the San Lorenzo River; that of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad, on the west side of the Salinas River, in the vicinity of the present town of Soledad, and about thirty miles from Monterey.

A glance at the map of California will help us to understand the policy that had dictated the creation of the four missions founded since Junipero's death. The enormous stretch of country between San Francisco and San Diego, the northern and southern extremes of evangelical enterprise, was as yet quite insufficiently occupied, and these new settlements had been started with the object of to some extent filling up the vast vacant spaces still left among those already existing. For the efficient performance of missionary work, something more was needed than a number of separate establishments, no matter how well managed and successful these in themselves might be.

Systematic organization was essential; for this it was required that the various missions should be brought, by proximity, into vital relations with one another, that communication might be kept up, companionship enjoyed, and, in case of need, advice given and assistance rendered. The foundations of Santa Barbara, La Purisima, Santa Cruz and Soledad, had done something, as will be seen, towards the ultimate drawing together of the scattered outposts of church and civilization. But with them a beginning had only been made.

Further developments of the same general plan that aimed, not only at the spiritual conquest, but also at the proper control of the new kingdom - were now taken under consideration. As a result, five fresh missions were planned. One of these was to be

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situated between San Francisco and Santa Clara; the second, between Santa Clara and Monterey; the third, between San Antonio and San Luis Obispo; the fourth, between San Buenaventura and San Gabriel; and the fifth, between San Juan Capistrano and San Diego. The importance of these proposed settlements as connecting links will be at once apparent, if we observe that by reason of their carefully chosen locations they served, as it were, to put the older missions into actual touch. When at length the preliminary arrangements had been made, no time was wasted in the carrying out of the programme, and in a little over a year, all five missions were in operation.

The mission San Jose (a rather tardy recognition to the patron-saint of the whole undertaking), was founded on the 11th June, 1797; San Juan Bautista thirteen days later; San Miguel Arcángel on the 25th July, and San Fernando Rey de España on the 8th September of the same year; and San Luis Rey de Francia (commonly called San Luis Rey to distinguish it from San Luis Obispo), on the 13th of the July following. The delay which had not at all been anticipated in the establishment of this last-named mission, was due to some difficulties in regard to site. With this ended - so far as new missions were concerned – so were the pious labors of Lasuen as padre-presidente.

He now returned to San Carlos to devote himself during the remainder of his life to the arduous duties of supervision and administration. There he died, in 1803, aged eighty-three years. His successor, Father Estevan Tapis, fourth president of the Upper California missions, signaled his elevation to office by adding a nineteenth to the establishments under his control. Founded on the 17th September, 1804, on a spot, eighteen miles from La Purisima and twenty-two from Santa Barbara, to which Lasuen had already directed attention, this was dedicated to the virgin-martyr, Santa Inez.

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It was felt that a settlement somewhere in this region was still needed for the completion of the mission system, since without it, a gap was left in the line between the two missions first-named, which were some forty miles apart. With the planting of Santa Inez thorough spiritual occupation may be said to have been accomplished over the entire area between San Francisco and San Diego, and from the Coast Range to the ocean. The nineteen missions had been so distributed over the vast country, that the Indians scattered through it could everywhere be reached; while the distance from mission to mission had, at the same time, been so reduced that it was in no case too great to be easily covered in a single day's journey. The fathers of each establishment could thus hold frequent intercourse with their next neighbors, and occasional travelers moving to and fro on business could from day to day be certain of finding a place for refreshment and repose

Santa Inez carries us for the first time over into the nineteenth century, and its establishment may in a sense be regarded as marking the term of the period of expansion in California mission history. A pause of more than a decade ensued, during which no effort was made towards the further spread of the general system; and then, with the planting of two relatively unimportant settlements in a district until that time unoccupied the number of new settlements was brought to a close.

The missions that made a slight and temporary revival of the old spirit of enterprise, were those of San Rafael Arcángel and San Francisco Solano.

The former, located near Mount Tamalpais, between San Francisco de Assis and the Russian military station at Fort Ross, dates from the 17th December, 1817; the latter, situated still further north, in the Sonoma Valley, from the 4th July, 1823. Some uncertainty exists as to the true reasons and purposes of their creation. The commonly

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accepted version of the story connects them directly with problems that arose out of the course of affairs at San Francisco.

In 1817, a serious epidemic caused a great number of deaths among the Indians there; a panic seemed inevitable; and on the advice of Lieutenant Sola, a number of the sick Indians were removed by the padres to the other side of the bay. The change of climate proved highly beneficial; the region of Mount Tamalpais was found singularly attractive; and a decision to start a branch establishment, or asistencia, of the mission at San Francisco was a natural result. The patronage of San Rafael was selected in the hope that, as the name itself expresses the "healing of God," that "most glorious prince" might be induced to care "for bodies as well as souls."

While considerable success attended this new venture, the condition of things at San Francisco, on the other hand, continued to worsen. A proposal based on these two facts was made, that the old mission should be removed entirely from the peninsula, and refounded in a more favorable locality somewhere in the healthy and fertile country beyond San Rafael. This is how the name of San Francisco got attached from the outset to the new settlement at Sonoma; and when later on (the old mission being left in its place) this was made into an independent mission. The name was retained, though the dedication was transferred, appropriately enough, from St. Francis of Assisi to that other St. Francis who figures in the records as "the great apostle of the Indies."

One of the original objectives of building the missions was the threatened encroachments of the of Alta California, although up to this point there had been no attempt to meet their possible advances in the very regions where they were most to be expected - that is, in the country north of San Francisco.

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However, over time and always with the ostensible purpose of hunting the seal and the otter, the Russians were found to be creeping further and further south. Finally, under instructions from St. Petersburg, they took possession of the region of Bodega Bay, establishing there a trading post of their Fur Company, and a strong military station which they called Fort Ross. Since this settlement was on the coast, and only sixty-five miles, as the crow flies, from San Francisco, the Spanish authorities had some genuine cause for alarm. As a result the mission movement north of San Francisco is considered to have been initiated, less from spiritual motives, than from the dread of continuing Russian aggression, and the hope of raising at least a slight barrier against it. However this may be, the two missions were never employed for defensive purposes; nor is it very clear that they could have been made of much practical service in case of actual need.

Such, in briefest outline, is the story of the planting of the twenty-one missions of Alta California. This story, as we have seen, brings us down to the year 1823. But by this time, as we follow the chronicles, our attention has already begun to be diverted from the forces which still made for growth and success to those that were to co-operate for the complete undoing of the mission system and the ruin of all its work. Perhaps it was in the nature of things that the undertaking, which year by year had been carried forward with so much energy and success, should after a while come to a standstill. The most common observation of life will remind us that when progress ceases, retrogression is almost certain to set in.

The immense zeal and unflagging enthusiasm of Junipero Serra and his immediate followers could not be transmitted by any rite or formula to the men upon whose shoulders their responsibilities came to rest. They were men of widely varying characters and capabilities - some, unfortunately, altogether unworthy both morally and mentally, of

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their high calling. Although many were, on the contrary, genuine embodiments of the great principles of their order - humane, benevolent, faithful in the discharge of daily duty, patient alike in labor and trial, and careful administrators of the practical affairs that lay within their charge.

But without injustice it can easily be said, that for the most part they possessed little of the tremendous personal force of their predecessors, and a generous endowment of such personal force was as needful now as it ever had been. . The closing chapter of their history, is mainly concerned, not with their spiritual management, or with their success or failure in the work they had been given to do, but with the general movement of political events, and the upheavals which preceded the final conquest of California by the United States. In considering the attitude of the civil authorities towards the mission system, and their dealings with it, we must remember that the Spanish government had from the first, anticipated the gradual transformation of the missions into pueblos and parishes, and with this, the substitution of the regular clergy for the Franciscan padres. This was part of the general plan of colonization, of which the mission settlements were regarded as forming only the beginning. Their work was to bring the heathen into the fold of the church, to subdue them to the conditions of civilization, to instruct them in the arts of peace, and to prepare them for citizenship.

After this was done, it was purposed that they should be removed from the charge of the fathers and placed under civil jurisdiction. No decisive step towards the accomplishment of this design was, however, taken for many years.

Meanwhile, the fathers jealously resisted every effort of the government to interfere with their prerogatives.

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After a while, with little comprehension of the nature of the materials out of which citizens were to be manufactured, and with quite as little realization of the fact that the paternal methods of education adopted by the padres were calculated, not to train their neophytes to self-government, but to keep them in a state of perpetual tutelage, the Spanish Cortes decreed that all missions which had then been in existence ten years should at once be turned over to bishops, and the Indians attached to them made subject to civil authority.

Though promulgated in 1813, this decree was not published in California until 1820, and even then was practically a dead letter. Two years later, California became a province of the Mexican Empire, and in due course, the new government turned its attention to the missions, in 1833 ordering their complete secularization. The atrocious mishandling by both Spain and Mexico of the funds by which they had been kept up, and the large demands made later upon them for provisions and money, had by this time made serious inroads upon their resources; notwithstanding which they had faithfully persisted in their work. The new law now dealt them a crushing blow. Ten years of great confusion followed, and then an effort was made to save them from the complete ruin by which they were threatened by a proclamation ordering that the more important of them, twelve in number, should be restored to the padres. Nothing came of this, however; the collapse continued; and in 1846, the sale of the mission buildings was decreed by the Departmental Assembly. When in the August of that year, the American flag was unfurled at Monterey, everything connected with the missions - their lands, their priests, their neophytes, their management - was in a state of seemingly hopeless chaos.

Finally General Kearney issued a declaration to the effect that "the missions and their property should remain under the charge of the Catholic priests . . . until the titles to the

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lands should be decided by proper authority." But of whatever temporary service this measure may have been, it was of course altogether powerless to breathe fresh life into a system already in the last stages of decay. The mission-buildings were crumbling into ruins. Their lands were neglected; their converts for the most part dead or scattered. The rule of the padres was over. The Spanish missions in Alta California were things of the past.

In these late days of a civilization so different in all its essential elements from that which the Franciscans labored so strenuously to establish on the Pacific Coast, we may think of the fathers as we will, and pass what judgment we see fit upon their work. But be that what it may, our hearts cannot fail to be touched and stirred by the pitiful story of those true servants of God who, in the hour of ultimate disaster, firmly refused to be separated from their flocks.

Among the ruins of San Luis Obispo, in 1842, De Mofras found the oldest Spanish priest then left in California, who, after sixty years of unremitting toil, was then reduced to such abject poverty that he was forced to sleep on a hide, drink from a horn, and feed upon strips of meat dried in the sun. Yet this faithful creature still continued to share the little he possessed with the children of the few Indians who lingered in the huts about the deserted church; and when efforts were made to induce him to seek some other spot where he might find refuge and rest, his answer was that he meant to die at his post.

Long after the settlement there had been abandoned, and when the buildings were falling to pieces, an old priest, Father Sarría, still remained to minister to the bodily and physical wants of a handful of wretched natives who yet haunted the neighborhood, and whom he absolutely refused to forsake.

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The California missions, though greatly varying of course in regard to size and economy, were constructed upon the same general plan, in the striking and beautiful style of architecture, roughly known as Moorish, which the fathers transplanted from Spain, but which rather seems by reason of its singular appropriateness, a native growth of the new soil. The edifices which now, whether in ruins or in restoration, still testify to the skill and energy of their pious designers, were in all cases later, in most cases much later, than the settlements themselves. At the outset, a few rude buildings of wood or adobe were deemed sufficient for the temporary accommodation of priests and converts, and the celebration of religious services. Then, little by little, substantial structures in brick or stone took the place of these, and what we now think of as the mission came into being.

The mission padres bore the cross from point to point along the far-off Pacific coast; they built churches, they founded settlements, they gave their strength to the uplifting of the heathen. The history of the missions reminds us how far we have come in a golden state that embodies all the richness of culture, business and diversity of today's modern world. Yet at the same time they smile at us, reminding us of a not so distant past, where the land was new and undiscovered, and when life was innocent in modern terms. The missions of California stand as a monument to the spirit embedded deep in the human spirit.

THE END