

OLD MISSION SANTA BARBARA

2201 Laguna Street  
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*Fr. Junípero Serra*  
*iAmar a Dios!*

PRAYER FROM THE MASS  
FOR THE FEAST OF BLESSED  
JUNÍPERO SERRA, OFM  
JULY 1ST

O God, in your ineffable mercy, you chose Blessed Junípero Serra as a means of gathering many peoples of the Americas into your Church. Grant that through his intercession our hearts may be united to you in ever greater love so that at all times and in all places we may show forth the image of your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

AMEN.



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Commemorative Items

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Web Sites of Interest

JUNÍPERO SERRA (1713-1784): [home.earthlink.net/~foghorn1/serra.htm](http://home.earthlink.net/~foghorn1/serra.htm)  
JUNÍPERO SERRA: [www.catholic-church.org/serra-beth/serra-4.htm](http://www.catholic-church.org/serra-beth/serra-4.htm)  
PADRE JUNÍPERO SERRA: [serra.org/frserra.html](http://serra.org/frserra.html)  
MONTEREY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY SITE: [www.monterey.edu/history/juniperoserra.html](http://www.monterey.edu/history/juniperoserra.html)  
FATHER SERRA GARDENS: [www.frsergarden.com](http://www.frsergarden.com)  
SAN DIEGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY <http://sandiegohistory.org/bio/serra/serra.htm>  
SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM [www.sfmuseum.net/bio/jserra.html](http://www.sfmuseum.net/bio/jserra.html)  
CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA [www.newadvent.org/cathen/13730b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13730b.htm)

CONTACTS:

FR. JOHN VAUGHN, OFM  
Vice-Postulator for the Cause of Serra  
and Br. Timothy Arthur, OFM  
Director, Serra Cause  
Old Mission Santa Barbara  
2201 Laguna Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93105  
805.682.4713 [FriarTim@aol.com](mailto:FriarTim@aol.com)  
FR. WARREN ROUSE, OFM  
Serra Retreat Center  
Box 127, Malibu, CA 90265  
310.456.6631 [WarrenR480@aol.com](mailto:WarrenR480@aol.com)  
TERRY RUSCIN  
Editor, *iSiempre Adelante!*  
316 Sweet Briar Drive,  
Hendersonville, NC 28739  
828.698.8371 [truscin@earthlink.net](mailto:truscin@earthlink.net)  
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*"Always go forward and never turn back!"*

Spring/Summer 2006 THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE CAUSE OF BLESSED JUNÍPERO SERRA

# DIOCESAN TRIALS FOR THE CAUSE OF JUNÍPERO SERRA

by Sister Francisca, OCD

**T**he Diocesan Trials for the Canonization Cause of Junípero Serra began in 1948 and continued into 1949. Witnesses gave their testimony to an ecclesiastical court within the walls of Missions San Gabriel, San Buenaventura, Santa Barbara, Carmel and San Francisco. The judges were: The Vicar General of Monterey, Monsignor Sullivan and the Provincials of the California Jesuits,

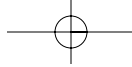
Fr. Joseph O'Brien, SJ and of the Redemptorists, and Fr. Gerald Bolger, CSSR. The Oaths taken by the witnesses were in Latin, and were recorded by a priest designated for that duty. There was also present a "Devil's Advocate," a priest whose duty it was to find exceptions to the virtues of Padre Serra—in this case, Fr. Lucien Arvin, JCD of the Paris Foreign Mission Society. Such was the background for some

very human and delightful testimony given to demonstrate the holiness of Fr. Junípero Serra, a hard-working Franciscan Missioner in the Lord's California vineyard.

The first hearing was a near-disaster. Archbishop James McIntyre and Bishop Timothy Manning were present to begin the hearings in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Fr. Eric O'Brien, OFM, had arranged this, some time before.



*Though Junípero Serra went home to the Lord before its founding, it was at Mission Sta. Bárbara that—under the initiation of Fr. Eric O'Brien, OFM—the cause for his canonization unfolded.*



*Fr. Eric O'Brien, OFM with Emma Butler Ambrosia.*

The first witness was to be prominent Catholic layman Joseph Scott of the Los Angeles area. But he wasn't there. Calls to Scott's office revealed that his secretary had mixed the dates, and scheduled him to testify on the following day. Alas, he had made other commitments and could not attend the hearings.

## SAVING THE DAY

We were able to contact a relative of Eulalia, the only woman we knew of, who was Keeper of the Keys at a Mission. Eulalia lived to the ripe old age of 125, and often recounted stories about her life to her great-granddaughter Mrs. Peralta, who saved the day by telling the presiding prelates about early life at Mission San Gabriel.

In the weeks that followed, hearings were held at the Missions in San Buenaventura, Santa Barbara and Carmel. For the Carmel hearings, Bishop Aloysius



*Fr. Eric O'Brien with Juan Onesimo.*

Willinger, Bishop of Monterey-Fresno, came to listen to some of the witnesses—several of them being descendants of the Indians who were living in the area at the time of Serra.

Prominent among the witnesses at the Carmel hearings was 93-year-old Mr. Abel Espinosa, whose great-grandfather had been a soldier at the missions. He told me that he had prayed to live long enough to give witness to Serra's holy life, and God had granted him that grace. Among other witnesses was Juan Onesimo, a descendant of the Indians who had lived at Mission Carmel in the time of Padre Serra. There were also descendants of the soldiers who had been assigned to guard the mission compound. Emma Butler Ambrosia and Angela Serrano Cook were two of them. The women told interesting stories of daily life at the mission, which had been handed down by their great grandfathers.

Fr. Maynard Geiger, OFM, historian of the St. Barbara Province of Franciscans, was an important witness at these hearings. Fr. Maynard wrote extensively of Padre Serra's life, activities and day-to-day virtues.

An especially interesting witness at one of the final sessions was Dr. H.E. Bolton, well-known professor of history at Berkeley, California. Dr. Bolton, who was not a Catholic, was chairman of the committee assigned to examine the writings of Padre Serra. Dr. Bolton testified to the authenticity of the documents collected by the committee.

Evidence of miracles performed by Padre Serra was given which established the truth that he was, indeed, a very holy man. Other witnesses cited the oral traditions of holiness that had come down through their families' early association with Padre Serra.

## FINAL COURT HEARING

After the hearings at Carmel, the Cause officials moved on to San Francisco for a



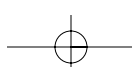
*Pope John Paul II at Serra's tomb at Mission San Carlos Borromeo, 1987.*

final court hearing at the old cathedral in San Francisco. The officials were welcomed by Archbishop Mitty and cordially invited to hold the Cause hearings there.

At the close of these hearings, the committee in charge of the documents convened at Fresno to pack all the evidence taken at the various missions and then place them in specially sealed boxes for transport to Rome. The hearings of the Serra Cause were officially ended, and the next move toward sainthood would begin: The examination of the evidence by competent scholars and officials of the Congregation in Rome. Cardinal Timothy Manning, by that time Archbishop of Los Angeles, had great devotion to Padre Serra and he personally moved things along in Rome to hasten the process of recognition of Serra's holiness. Although Manning was suffering greatly from cancer, he managed to be present on the day when Padre Serra was declared Blessed on Sept. 25, 1988. We should all offer special prayers of thanksgiving for these wonderful men and women who have been so helpful in gaining recognition for Blessed Junípero Serra on the long road to sainthood.



*Sr. Francisca, OCD*



# IN COMMEMORATION

## Bartomeu Font Obrador, Ph.D.

1932 – 2005



The Serra Cause has suffered the irreparable loss of one of its most ardent vindicators: Bartomeu Font Obrador, historian and distinguished son of Lluçmajor (Palma de Mallorca, España). Dr. Font went home to the Lord on 9 October 2005. His wife Francisca Ana Salvà Janer, children Bartolomé, Antonio and María Isabel and four grandchildren survive him.

In 1959, Bartomeu Font received his master's degree in Philosophy from the University of Barcelona. Originally immersed in the field of archaeology, Font participated from 1957 to 1960 in various excavations in Mallorca and California. His lifelong research included that of Mallorcan participation in the colonization of North America.

Dr. Font, recipient of The Cross of Isabel the Catholic and the Golden Shield of Palma, was named Official Chronicler of the Ciutat (City of Palma de Mallorca) in 1966. In 1999, under the mandate of Palma's Gaspàr Mut, Font was named Illustrious Son of the Ciutat in gratitude for his dedication for and literary works about the municipality. Author of numerous papers and books—including a nine-volume history of Palma de Mallorca, and works on Blessed Junípero Serra, the Convent of St. Bonaventure, Pare Gerónimo Boscana and Californiana—Font was for his entire life dedicated to history and archaeology.

Since 1968, Font maintained that Junípero Serra's work in California contributed heavily to the development of the popular state. Font went on to earn his doctorate with the thesis "Majorcan Contributions to the Knowledge of the Natives of California," a work that remains unpublished.

Font, co-owner of a travel agency, was a member of the Real Academy of History, the Real Academy of Bones Lletres de Barcelona and the Real Academy of the History of Mexico, and an honorary citizen of San Gabriel, California. Moreover, he was director of the Museu Fra Juníper Serra de Petra.

Serra advocates, when visiting Mallorca, found in Dr. Font an hospitable tour guide. Font, in turn, toured California on several occasions, making pilgrimages to all of the historic Franciscan missions—his favorite, Mission Basilica San Carlos Borromeo, where Blessed Serra is buried.

The two days following Font's death, Palma's City Council decreed two days of official mourning. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered for the repose of the soul of Dr. Font on January 29th in the Basilica San Carlos Borromeo at Carmel, California.

*Descanse en paz, amigo.*

## PLEASE HELP

Paper, ink, printing and postage are costly, and getting more expensive with the passing of time. We humbly beseech you for donations to assist us in defraying the price of sharing the good works of Blessed Serra. All contributions are welcome, and we will remember you in our prayers. You can further help by sending your email address, agreeing to receive *iSiempre Adelante!* online, to: Alexis Packard, [ofmcadev@att.net](mailto:ofmcadev@att.net).

Thank you,  
The Corporate Officers of the  
Cause of Blessed Junípero Serra

### Prayer Requests

*Let us pray, that through the intercession of Blessed Junípero Serra, the Lord may grant the petitions of:*

Br. Timothy Arthur, OFM—continued health and recovery  
Mary Coleman—cancer  
Br. Wenceslaus Farlow, OFM—arthritis  
Kadin Ferretti—internal organs  
Mr. & Mrs. L. Ferretti—health  
Ernest Halewijn—cancer  
Liam Hearne—cystic fibrosis  
Charles Herrmann—knee replacements  
Br. Nevin Janicki, OFM—healing  
Frank Legas—cancer  
Beatrice Delfina Ornelas—blood count  
Josephine C. Page—healing  
Bryan Paquero—head trauma  
Richard Rose—cancer  
Peter Rugel—healing  
Fabian Walker—cancer

### Favors Received

*Let us pray in thanksgiving for favors received:*

Br. Timothy Arthur, OFM  
Margaret N. Drago  
Jim Page

### Deceased

*Let us also remember the dead who are at peace with Christ:*

Richard Blum  
Bartomeu Font Obrador, Ph.D.  
Hattie Freeman  
Br. Fabian Walker, OFM

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*Let us pray in thanksgiving for the special generosity of all our donors. To all those who contributed anonymously to help the Serra Cause, we also say THANK YOU!*