

In 1833 Padre Jose Real took charge of Carmel. Then in 1834 Carmel was secularized. The destruction of the mission life was complete by 1836. Padre Real moved his residence to Monterey, only occasionally holding services at Carmel and for safe keeping took with him the church ornaments, as the church was then without a caretaker.

Gradually the church and quadrangle went into decay and ruin. In the fifties the church and part of the quadrangle was used by the Dominicans as a house of studies. They left for Benicia and again the mission was left abandoned. It was not until 1884 that Father Casanova undertook the work to save this historic landmark. A roof was put on the mission which, although saving the structure, marred the beauty of the church.

In 1924 Father Raymond Mastres restored the first room of the old quadrangle, and in it had a beautiful memorial erected to Padre Serra and the other three Padres who are buried at Carmel Mission.

The mission was canonically erected a parish in the year 1933. Its first pastor was the Rev. M. D. O'Connell. Since that time much has been done to restore and to beautify the grounds. In the year 1936 the church was restored to its original lines, also the old Padres' Convento. Here many of the mission's valuable relics which were brought from Spain and Mexico during the Spanish era may be seen. These relics, displayed in their old setting, prove of great interest to the tourist and pilgrim who come to visit this historic shrine. It is the hope, desire, and prayer of the church to carry on the work of restoration, which work has depended in the past on the contribution of friends and visitors, and we hope will continue in the future; so that a suitable shrine and memorial will be erected and completed at the time of the canonization of the great Junipero Serra, Apostle of California.

HARRY DOWNIE.



Mission San Carlos
Borromeo del Rio
Carmelo

Founded June 3, 1770

Mission San Carlos
Borromeo del Rio Carmelo

FOUNDED JUNE 3, 1770

CARMEL MISSION stands today as a monument to the great conquistadore of the Cross who left his home and the comforts of a conventual life to come to our Western wilderness to preach the Gospel of Christ and to teach the better ways of life to a Pagan race. This man was Padre Junipero Serra.

Father Serra was born at Petra, Isla de Mallorca, Spain, on the 24th of November, 1713. At the age of 17 he received the Franciscan habit. In the year 1749 he embarked for the Missions of Mexico. He was nominated Presidente of the Missions of lower and upper California in the year 1767, set out afoot from Loretto in Lower California, came north to San Diego, founded the Mission there in 1769, arrived by vessel at Monterey June 3, 1770, and founded the Mission of San Carlos. For obvious reasons, lack of good soil and its proximity to the Presidio, he chose the present site near the river at Carmel.

On August 1st, 1771, Padre Serra took up his abode at Carmel. The first church and dwellings were of wood, enclosed by a palisade of poles. The first years were hard, with few provisions, depending mostly on the Indians for supplies. As time went on the temporary buildings were replaced with structures of adobe. The Indians lent themselves willingly to the Padres. Over 4,000 were baptized at Carmel from 1770 to 1836. As well as caring for Carmel, Father Serra founded nine missions. Having the faculties for Confirmation, he often made long journeys afoot to confer this Sacrament on the neophytes. On January 1, 1782,

Padre Juan Crespi, beloved friend and co-worker with Serra, passed to his reward. This was a great sorrow and loss to Padre Serra.

Padre Serra had now reached his 71st year, never being very strong. He summoned his life-long friend, Padre Palou, who prepared him for death. He departed this life August 28, 1784, and at his request was buried beside Padre Crespi.

Padre Lasuen was elected Presidente. It was he who in 1793 undertook to build the present stone church, which was Padre Serra's hope. It was built on the site of the first adobe church, being built of native sandstone quarried from the Santa Lucia Mountains nearby. The interior walls begin to curve inward as they rise. The ceiling follows the sweep of the walls forming a catenary arch, a most beautiful effect. The tower is of Moorish design, graced by four bells, which are reached by an outside staircase. The cross of wrought iron surmounting the tower is original and was made at the Mission. The walls are covered with a lime plaster made from burnt sea shells. The floor was covered originally with burnt tile. The church was four years in building and was dedicated in 1797. Padre Lopez died the same year and was buried near Father Crespi within the sanctuary.

Under Padre Lasuen the Mission reached the height of its prosperity. The year 1794 found the Indian population at 927 souls, and there were good crop reports. On June 28, 1803, Padre Lasuen died and was laid to rest beside Padre Serra. His successor was Padre Estaban Tapis.

In 1821 the side chapel was added, which was known as the Chapel of the Passion, and which was used as a mortuary for the Indians. Beside the church are buried over 3,000 Indians. Within the church are the graves of many, both Spanish and Indians, among them Governor Romeau and Comandante Sal.

In the year 1823 the population had dwindled to 381.