



Past President / Historian

Born as Miguel Jose, Father Junipero Serra was only 15 years old when he decided to join the priesthood. He took the name "Junipero" after the friar companion of St. Francis when he joined the Order of St. Francis of Assisi. Father Junipero Serra became a major figure in California history when he brought his faith to the New World as a missionary. Serra's first nine missions were home to more than 4,600

converted Native Americans and more than 6,700 Native Americans had been baptized through the missions.

At the time of his death, on August 28, 1784, Serra was 70 years old and had traveled 24,000 miles. He is buried under the sanctuary floor of one of the missions he founded, Mission San Carlos. Serra was remembered for his dedication to his faith and for bringing Catholicism to California. Pope John Paul II beatified Serra in 1988.

In 2015, Pope Francis made Junipero Serra a saint during his first visit to the United States in a special mass that was held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. on September 23. This service marked the country's first canonization. Pope Francis told the thousands who attended the mass that Serra "sought to defend the dignity of the native community, to protect it from those who had mistreated and abused it.

Mistreatment and wrongs which today still trouble us, especially because of the hurt which they cause in the lives of many people."

While reading that, the Beatitude that came to mind was, "**Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.**" A continuous desire for justice and moral perfection will lead one to a fulfillment of that desire - a transition and conversion to holiness.

As past presidents, that is what we crave. Making sure that policies are followed and events are all properly documented. We are also given the distinguished honour of being the keepers of the history for our councils. In going through the files in the archives, I am in awe of all the many accomplishments of the provincial council over the years.

Like Saint Junipero Serra, past presidents are prepared to walk anywhere or go the extra mile to help our executive or mentor members. Sharing our history and tradition, then passing it on so that members can learn and appreciate all that was done by those that paved the way or us. To encourage the sense of pride and importance of belonging to the League. What we are doing right now at this very moment is becoming part of our history. Future generations will be looking at what we have done for their inspiration. That certainly makes our actions today quite profound. Past president/historians are keepers of the flame. A symbol of faith, devotion and passion for the League that burns within each member. By encouraging and mentoring members, along with maintaining the study and implementation of the Constitution and Bylaws, it fuels the flame making sure it doesn't burn out. Our faith ensures that the flame is eternal.

Saint Junipero understood about passing the flame that was fueled with the hardships he endured and remarkable determination to ensure that his purpose would be fulfilled being the conversion of Native Americans of California to Christianity. A journalist wrote that Saint Juniper Serra "stood just 5' 2" tall and certainly didn't look like the man who would one day be known as the Apostle of California." His nine missions grew to 21. Today, more than 60 percent of the state's nearly 26 million people live in areas surrounding the missions.
History and His Story.

"Know from whence you came. If you know whence you came, there are absolutely no limitations to where you can go."

Betty Colaneri,
Past President / Historian