

January 2025

The Connection

A Publication from Mission San Luis Rey



Generations



As the new year begins, I've been reflecting on the many generations of families who have been part of the Mission's story. As I spend time in the church and admire the historic statues of the Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph that were just restored and returned to the altar, the artistry of the church walls that were restored with such meticulous care, I reflect on the generations of families who have come to the Mission church; the generations of families who were married here, had children baptized, and celebrated the lives of passed loved ones; the generations of families who have come to Mass year after year; and of course, the generations of families who helped build the Mission church and still come. I love to hear the generational stories that folks share with me; it reminds me of the impact our Mission has had and will continue to have on our community.

As we celebrated Christmas with our Mission staff and their families, it filled my heart with joy as their children ran around having fun, sharing laughs - children of staff members who also grew up at the Mission. I took a moment to realize this is the next generation of children that are growing up at the Mission. What a blessing and a gift to be a part of such a legacy!

My calling, and our staff's calling, is to ensure that Mission San Luis Rey is here for generations to come. And you are all a part of that calling as you support this Mission by attending Mass, retreats, events, and donating. I pray the next generation will hear the call and continue our legacy - I think we're in good hands.

Peace and all good,

Gwyn Grimes

Executive Director



Cem Franciscan CORNER

Meet Our Newest Friar on Staff at the Mission

Fr. Ed McKenzie, ofm



"I was drafted in 1968 and my first assignment was with NASA at Johnson Space Center. I was on the Apollo 11 team flying helicopter cover for all of the Apollo astronauts who were trying to learn how to fly the Lunar Landing Vehicle on the Moon - a very dangerous mission for the astronaut/pilots and the crew. The space race was an exciting time, and I had a small part to play in it!

In Vietnam, I was in helicopter combat rescue. "Pedro" was our call sign. Our motto was constantly drilled into us: "That others may live!" That is still the motto that rules my life today as a Catholic priest! I was a crew chief and hoist operator in the door.

Vietnam was as unpleasant time in my life that still haunts me today, but I am getting

some help in this area of my life and I'm taking a little medicine. I suffer from Post Traumatic Stress as many combat veterans do. But I am one of the lucky ones in that I have a support group that helps me through it all.

Today I am a Catholic priest at Mission San Luis Rey. I am on two retreat teams for combat veterans, and I find great satisfaction that God can use my experiences and brokenness to help others with a similar problem.

I facilitate a group of men and women who suffer from the effects of PTSD and other traumas every Monday at 3:30 on Zoom. It's a "safe" place where such people can talk to others about their issues, hopes and dreams. Like Ulysses, they are trying to find their way "home" from the traumas they have suffered in life and I try to help them with that quest.

I am researching the "military" side of St. Francis of Assisi and the likelihood that he had PTSD. It's only been a footnote in the many biographies that have been written about him.

I'm also a musician - mostly strings, guitar, banjo, fiddle, mandolin and some others that I don't remember right now!

I Love chess and baking bread!

I was married and have two sons who enjoy telling their friends what their Dad does for a living.

I guess you could say that I am a bit different than most

priests. I have an "insight" into family dynamics that many priests, perhaps do not. I love the sound of the babies when I celebrate Mass! I know that sound well!

All of this does not make me a better priest, but it does provide opportunities for ministry that have served me well so far.

I raised my family as a printer and still dream about those days. I loved my profession. Another profession I enjoyed was working as an aircraft mechanic, jet engines, in Michigan. I love things that "fly!" I built a kit plane in the early 80's.

That's the short story about "who" Fr. Ed was and is now! Feel free to ask me anything you might be curious about.

May God bless you and keep you well!"

Fr. Ed McKenzie, ofm

If you would like a brochure about "**Coming Home**" **A Veteran's Retreat**, please email me at FrEd@sanluisrey.org.

If you or someone you know would like to attend our retreat for Veterans and their families on March 30th, please register on our website. (*The retreat is free, but registration is requested.*)



Retreats & PROGRAMS

- **January 30 -31**
Liturgy Music Retreat
Tom Booth
- **February 7, March 7, April 4 | 10:00am - 11:30am**
First Friday Reflections
Br. Tito Garcia
- **January 31 - February 2**
Serenity Retreat
Fr. Tom Weston
- **February 8 | 9am - 4 pm**
Shaped by God
A Day of Creative Reflection
Glenda Campos
- **March 5 | 9am - 3pm**
Ash Wednesday Retreat
Fr. Mike Guinan, OFM
- **March 11 | 5pm - 8:30pm**
Lent Reflection: A Song in the Desert
Lupe Rios
- **March 14 - 16**
Spring into Serenity
A Weekend for Women in Al-Anon
- **March 30 | 8:30am - 5:30pm**
Veterans' Retreat
Free Event; please register
- **Quiet Days**
Spend a day away from it all at the Mission.
- **Private Retreats**
Spend time in solitude and personal spiritual reflection without participation in a formal program.

Visit our website for updates, more information and to make reservations.

www.sanluisrey.org

Restoration

After a very long absence, the statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph were returned after restoration. In these before and after photos you can see the amazing work that was done by Balboa Art Conservation Center. Their love of art and their gift of restoration comes out in the astounding work they do.

We are very blessed to have had the work completed with donations and a grant from the California Missions Foundation. Restoration is essential to the longevity of all of our artwork and artifacts.

We invited some of the people responsible for funding the restoration to the unveiling in November. We invite you to stop by to see the Mary and Joseph statues; they look amazing! Look for upcoming art lectures by our Museum Director, Helena Hazleton.

