



Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Costanoan/Ohlone Indians

*Historically known as "San Juan Bautista Band and San Juan Band" Indians of California*

PO Box 5272 | Galt, CA 95622

February 12, 2016

California Mission Foundation Conference - Mission San Juan Bautista

Introductory remarks prepared by Chairman Lopez

Chairman Lopez participated on panel titled: Interpreting California Indian Experiences at the Missions: Best Practices, Resources, and Methods

We are here to ask that the California Mission Foundation and everyone in attendance today carefully study for themselves the true history of California Missions. The history of California missions did not begin in 1769 with the first mission in San Diego. The history of the California mission began with the Papal Bulls of 1453 and 1493; these Bulls are referred to as the Doctrine of Discovery. These and several other Papal Bulls stated that all non Christian indigenous peoples were the enemies of Christ. It also said we had no soul, that we were to be caste into perpetual slavery and that our property and possessions were to be taken from us. These Papal Bulls continue to be active church doctrine to this day despite many, many organizations including the Sister of Charities who wrote a letter to Pope Francis asking that he rescind and reject these Papal Bulls. Everyone who visits the California mission must be told of these Papal Bulls.

It was the Papal Bulls that gave Father Junipero Serra the moral and legal authority to create the mission system that resulted in the brutal capture, forced labor, involuntary confinement (slavery), severe whippings, use of shackles and stocks which is recognized as torture, separation of families, and loss of land, culture, environment, language, spiritual beliefs, and the death of over 150,000 California Indians, per Kevin Starr, California Librarian and eminent researcher on California history.

On February 20, 1820, Fr. Mariano Payeras, wrote to his superiors in Mexico City and said "I fear that a few years hence on seeing Alta California deserted and depopulated of Indians within a century of its discovery and conquest by the Spaniards it will be asked where is the numerous heathendom that used to populate it?" He continued, "The Missionary priests baptized them, administered the sacraments to them and buried them" He then said that measures must be taken "which would free us for all time from undeserved reproach... and censures, and would shelter us from slander and sarcasm." Based on this the Franciscans created alibis and lies about the history of the California missions. These lies included that the Indians came voluntarily to the California missions, the priests treated the Indians as children and the Indians came to California missions to find a better life, to learn agriculture and to find god. None of this is true. In the territory known as Ohlone, there were over 30,000 Ohlone taken to the missions. At the end of the mission period, according to Dr. Alan Leventhal, anthropologist of San Jose State, less than 100 of these Ohlone's survived to see the close of

the six missions within these territories. Nine out of 10 children born at the mission died before the age of 5, all boys over the age of 10 had hernias from hard labor, all families were separated; men, women and children. Women were frequently and repeatedly raped by Spanish soldiers. Many, many birth records record the father as unknown, that's because these women were raped. When women miscarried the priests said it was because the woman had demons in her and the punishment was daily whippings for thirty days. The priests believed they were whipping the demons out of the women. How is this treating the Indians as children, how was this a better life, how was this teaching the Indians Christian values? How is the death of 150,000 California Indians holy and saintly?

On September 23 Pope Francis canonized Junipero Serra. The canonization of Serra was based on Serra following the directives of the Papal Bulls, not because he followed the steps of Jesus Christ. I've talked extensively to retired Bishop Francis Quinn on this topic and he said the Bible teaches us how to evangelize in the story of the Good Samaritan. He said Jesus taught to evangelize with love, patience and deeds; Bishop Quinn said Serra should have learned how to evangelize from the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Last year in Bolivia, Pope Francis apologized to all the indigenous peoples of the Americas for the sins, crimes and offenses of the church. The very sins, crimes and offenses that he apologized for occurred in every California mission. Last year Pope Francis issues an Encyclical letter on the environment; in his letter he said it is a sin to destroy indigenous people, indigenous cultures and indigenous environments. All three of those sins occurred in every California mission. How come none of these issues are presented in any mission. The Amah Mutsun ask why was Serra canonized, why aren't California Missions presented as memorials to the death of over 150,000 California Indians and the destruction of the indigenous cultures and environments. Why does the Church consider the slavery, torture and death of 150,000 California Indians as a history worthy of instilling Church honor, pride and respect.

The California missions should be recognized in the same way Auschwitz is recognized for the holocaust of the Jewish People. I've been told many times that we should just get over it, get over what happened to our ancestors at the missions. Why doesn't anyone ever tell the Jewish people they should just get over it?

This is what we should be talking about today.