

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 29, 1960

### **Padre Junipero Serra**

The pilgrimage Sunday to Mission San Carlos Borromeo at Carmel, reminds us that on that date 176 years ago Father Junipero Serra died there and lies buried in a tomb before the high altar within the church. This revered padre was the builder of the Mission and according to history it was his favorite mission of the Chain of missions which he had planned to construct along the California coast.

Father Serra was born in Petra, on the island of Mallorca, Spain, on November 24, 1713, He took the Franciscan habit at Palma, Mallorca, September 14, 1730 and made his profession September 15, 1731, when he took the name "Junipero" after a noted companion of Saint Francis. He taught in the convent of Palma and the Lucilian University and on March 30, 1749, was assigned to the college of San Fernando in Mexico. He served in the Sierra Gorda missions from 1750 to 1759, then was assigned to the Apache missions on the Rio San Saba in Texas.

With the expulsion of the Jesuits from Mexico in 1767, the Franciscans were given Jurisdiction over their former missions in Baja California, Serra becoming president July 14, 1767. He labored there for two years, leaving two years later to found the missions of Alta California. To him is credited the establishment of six of these -San Diego de Alcalá, San Carlos Borromeo, San Antonio de Padua, San Luis Obispo, San Juan Capistrano and San Buenaventura.

"His laborious and exemplary life," his friend and biographer, Father Francisco Palou, remarks, "is nothing but a beautiful field decked with every class of flowers of excellent virtues."

Another important religious event will be held early next month with the blessing of the fishing fleet and the fisherfolk fiesta in honor of Santa Rosalia, the patroness of Sicilian fishermen, whose feast-day is September 4th.

This saint of royal lineage, to escape an unwelcome marriage, was carried by angels to a cave in Mount Pellegrino, a mountain west of Palermo, where she lived as a hermitess for many years. A rock worn smooth by the hours she spent kneeling upon it, may still be seen. The townspeople have erected a shrine at the cave, containing a marble statue of the saint's life of contemplative prayer there. In Christian art Santa

Rosalia is represented holding a cross and skull or is depicted as she received a rosary from 'the Blessed Virgin.' Her body according to tradition, was found to be incorrupt when discovered many years after her death. - Academy Scrapbook published by the Academy Library. Guild in Fresno.

The story of the fiesta in Palermo as told by Pietro Ferrante to Frank A. Schilling several years ago and published in the Academy Scrapbook, relates that the celebration of the Blessing of the Fleet in Monterey lasts but one day and in Palermo the fiesta went on for three days.

In Monterey a temporary altar is erected especially for this occasion on the school plaza, across Church street, in front of the Royal Presidio Chapel. A solemn High Mass is celebrated. After lunch, the people form a procession, in which are included the regular parishioners as well as members of the fishing industry. The procession is a colorful one, one little girl is dressed to represent Santa Rosalia, the statue of the Saint herself, taken from the epistle side of the sanctuary of the parish church and placed on a beautifully decorated float or carried by men of the parish; a glittering uniformed band, playing fitting Italian music, which also includes in its repertoire the hymn "Noi Vogliam Dio" (We Want God). The priests and their acolytes, all vested in their traditional robes, follow at the end. The procession winds its way through the streets of the city to the wharf where the boats rest at anchor. The boats are blessed and garlands of flowers are thrown upon the waters, accompanied by appropriate prayers and a requiem for the repose of the souls of those whose mortal remains rest in the sea.