



Is This A Mission?

No. Although Father Serra did establish Mission San Carlos Borromeo on this site in 1770, he moved it to its current Carmel River site in 1771. The chapel in Monterey was called the "Royal" Presidio Chapel because it was the church of the Spanish governors representing King Carlos III and his successors. Later, it was the church of the Mexican governors. In the mid-1800s it became the parish church of Monterey. Inside the church, the Franciscan Coat of Arms honors Father Serra. The Coat of Arms of Castile and Leon is a portion of the Coat of Arms of King Carlos III of Spain.

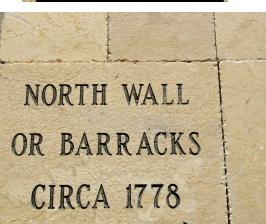
Portada Sculptures



The sculptures decorating the doors were moved from the church interior to the new transept portadas when the original baptistry and sacristy were torn down circa 1858.

Pavers

Pavers around the church identify locations found during the archaeological dig conducted prior to and during the conservation.



Late 19th Century



Father Mestres donated this plaster statue of the Sacred Heart circa 1890.



Each immigrant group contributed to the growing parish. The Portuguese whalers and dairymen provided this wooden statue of St. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal in 1890.



They also provided a whalebone sidewalk in front of the church. The design included the Star of Portugal. Remnants of it are in the Heritage Center.

Early 20th Century



Sicilian fishermen came to Monterey in the early 20th century. They introduced the Santa Rosalia festivals which are celebrated in Palermo and throughout Sicily. Every September this 20th century plaster on wood statue is carried in a procession through Monterey to the harbor for the blessing of the fishing fleet. The fishermen also are credited with saving the Vizcaíno-Serra Oak in 1905 when they salvaged it from the Monterey Bay.



Parishioners built the replica grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in 1921.

Heritage Center



The Royal Presidio Chapel Heritage Center is located in the administrative building adjacent to the cathedral. It contains early drawings and photos, a piece of the Vizcaíno-Serra Oak, artifacts such as pottery shards and this 1779 Spanish half-reál, and other memorabilia. Docents are available to provide tours during the hours posted on the door.



Replica of a Mexican Militia uniform on loan from Dr. Ruben Mendoza. Governors represented the Mexican government in Monterey from 1822-1846.

Heritage Center



Vizcaíno-Serra Oak



Drawing of chapel prior to addition of transepts



Green abalone and roofing tile

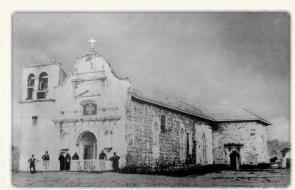
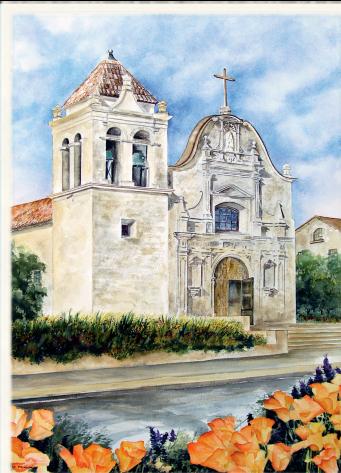


Photo circa 1859 after completion of transepts



The Royal Presidio Chapel

The Royal Presidio Chapel of San Carlos Borromeo, also known as San Carlos Cathedral, is the oldest building in Monterey and the only remaining original chapel of the four Spanish Presidios that once existed in California. It is the longest continuously active church in California, established on June 3, 1770 when Father Junípero Serra said the first Mass under what became known as the Vizcaíno-Serra Oak. Father Serra was part of the Portolá Expedition sent by King Carlos III to establish his capitol of Alta California in Monterey on the bay that Vizcaíno discovered in 1602. Mass was celebrated in temporary structures at the newly established Presidio of Monterey until an adobe chapel was completed circa 1772. The current building was completed in 1794 and the transepts were

added in 1858. It is unique in being the first building constructed of cut-stone in California and the first designed by an architect. It became California's first cathedral when the Holy See erected the first Diocese of Monterey which lasted from 1849-1859. It again became the Cathedral of the Diocese of Monterey in 1967 when the diocese was re-established. The smallest cathedral in the continental United States, it was named a National Historic Landmark in 1961. During a recent seismic retrofit that included an archeological dig, many historic discoveries were made, including finding original wall decorations and windows, the foundations of the adobe chapel, locations of original Presidio buildings, and artifacts such as pottery shards, tools, shells, animal remains and a 1779 Spanish coin. Examples may be seen in the small Heritage Center Museum in the administrative building adjacent to the church.



Our Lady of Guadalupe



Original Holy Water Font



Grape Lattice Pattern



Columns and Arches



Stations of the Cross

Completed in 1794, this bas-relief is the oldest non-native sculpture in California. Manuel Ruiz, the master stonemason in charge of the construction of The Royal Presidio Chapel is the probable sculptor.

Two original Holy Water Fonts were found during the seismic retrofit. Both can be seen in "Windows of History" as you enter the cathedral. All of the original patterns have been dated to the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

One original decorative pattern consisted of grape clusters inside a lattice. In replicating this pattern, local artists hand-painted each grape unique cluster. The lattice pattern also was reproduced in the retelos glass.

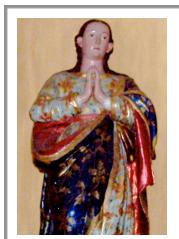
Columns and arches decorated the nave walls, highlighting the sculptures over the interior entrances to the original baptistry and sacristy. In 1858 the sculptures were moved to the new transept doors.

The Stations of the Cross were painted in Rome in the late 19th century for Holy Cross Church in Santa Cruz. The pastor's mother is the lady in white in the 8th station. They were donated to San Carlos in 1953.



St. Anthony and the Child

The unusual robe of this wooden statue has silver threads. The artist may have meant to portray St. Anthony as he appears in heaven. It is thought to have been in the church since the late 18th century.



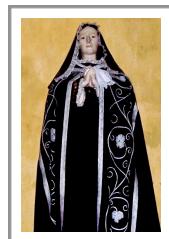
The Immaculate Conception

This wooden statue circa 1750 contains fine *scrifito* work of gold, typical of Spanish art of this era. Earrings used to be placed in the statue's pierced ears on special occasions.



St. Joseph and Baby Jesus

This is an 18th-century wooden statue. The child Jesus is not original to the statue but is of the same period. Although named for St. Charles Borromeo, the chapel was initially dedicated to St. Joseph.



Mater Dolorosa

The statue of the Mater Dolorosa, also known as Our Lady of Sorrows, has been at San Carlos since the mid-1800s. It depicts the Blessed Virgin as she would have appeared at the foot of her Son's cross.



Crucifix

Father Angelo Casanova purchased this crucifix in Barcelona in 1880. When it was hung near the entrance, parishioners often touched or kissed the foot, almost wearing it away.