

# WELCOME...

...to the History of the Catholic Faith in the Americas Conference.



The first recorded baptisms in Alta California were performed at Los Cristianitos, “The Canyon of the Little Christians”, in what is now San Diego County, just south of Mission San Juan Capistrano. (Wikipedia)

The Response to the call for papers was most pleasing. Each abstract proposal raised interesting questions—some, surprisingly, about the working title for a possible conference. Stan’s historical novel triggered various ideas about expanding the conference’s themes and suggested ways to deepen or open more thoughtful discussions about the meanings of Priest Field—both in History and Faith. For example, could weaving the mysteries touched upon in the Wizard Clip story with the mix of realities that eventually led to this beautiful property now nestled within the heart of the Washington Family Home Land, teach us more about the Great American Experiment? Can the constructed and framed stages of World History, or the drama of the Faith granted all people offer new hope or unveil the curtains of modern times and space? Does this unique place of prayer offer a house for the beliefs that stream from within society’s many religions and civic structures?

The story behind Priest Field and its surrounding events focus on a time when the Washington Family and our founding band of brothers were just beginning to survey and struggle with complex issues such as: defining boundaries of states and nations; finding the common good in such notions as sovereignty, allegiances, and property ownership; transitioning inheritances and contracts civilly, and listening to the various roles that faith and religion play in the conservation of family traditions and key memories.

Because of these eternal questions and issues— which are ever present here and now—it seems appropriate to extend this warm welcome to include everyone who

participates in today’s interactive conference and deliberations. Hopefully, the questions and discussions generated through the presenters’ papers will educate our minds, impart holy wisdom, and fuel our passion for life and love.

The histories of peoples and places record tangible things that come and go—they are built up, and torn down. Yet, at the heart of the historic brick and mortar of civilization’s foundation are three real intangibles: Faith, Hope, and Love.

**THOSE WHO DO NOT  
REMEMBER  
THE PAST ARE  
CONDEMNED  
TO REPEAT IT**

—GEORGE SANTAYANA