



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

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MISSION SAN LUIS HOLDS THIRD ANNUAL HOLIDAY MASS TO COMMEMORATE SPANISH MISSIONS OF LA FLORIDA

TALLAHASSEE- -The Friends of Mission San Luis and Executive Director Bonnie McEwan were joined by visitors from throughout the state at Mission San Luis's Third Annual Holiday Mass today in Tallahassee.

"The commemorative Mass at Mission San Luis is the perfect time to reflect on the important history of the Spaniards and Apalachee Indians," McEwan said. "Even though they were vastly different, they respected their differences and created a community based on tolerance and acceptance. What better message is there to send during the holiday season?"

The Mass which was open to the public was led by Bishop John H. Ricard. Bishop Ricard has been the Bishop of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee since March 13, 1997. He was appointed by Pope John Paul II. The Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee serves approximately 70,000 Catholics and encompasses the panhandle of Florida.

The Commemorative Mass honored the more than 100 Spanish missions that existed in La Florida during the 16th and 17th centuries. San Luis de Talimali was the western military, administrative and religious capital of Spanish Florida from 1656-1704. Spanish friars, soldiers and civilians established Mission San Luis at the request of the Apalachee Indians who voluntarily converted to Catholicism. Apalachees and Spaniards alike attended evening prayers, Sunday mass, holiday services, choir practice, baptisms and marriage and funeral services.

Today the Mission brings the 17th century to life through costumed interpreters, reconstructed buildings, exhibits and archaeological demonstrations. The site is a National Historic Landmark and recipient of a 2006 Preserve America Presidential Award. Mission San Luis is located at 2021 West Mission Road in Tallahassee, Fla. The site is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and admission is free. It is managed by the Florida Department of State's Bureau of Archaeological Research. For more information on Mission San Luis, call 850.487.3711 or visit www.missionsanluis.org.

(MORE)

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Attendees also enjoyed a public reception at the Apalachee Council House sponsored by Chez Pierre. Throughout the day, visitors explored Florida's past through living history, period music, self-guided site tours and exhibits.

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