



St. Josephs Apache Mission

Illustrated Progress Report for November 2001 through April 2002



Scaffold Bridge



View from the Bridge



Otero County Native Plant Society members look on as Mrs. Phillips draws plans and Mr. Anderson (forefront) offers suggestions.



Teresa Thompson with new window.



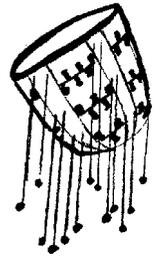
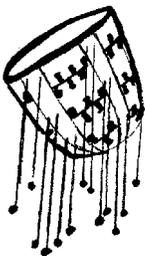
Brother David climbing scaffold ladder.



Tommy Spottedbird repointing north wall of sanctuary.



Present work crew: Br. David Paz, OFM Mary Serna, Br. Peter Boegel, OFM Tommy Spottedbird and Harry Vasile.





Before: Damage is evident.



After: Repointing complete.



Before: Lower half of window area in bad need of repair.



After: Rebuilding and repointing Completed.

Tommy Spottedbird and Harry Vasile showing the contrast of before and after their work.





St Joseph Apache Mission Restoration Project

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"The people of the St. Joseph Apache Mission Restoration Project are working to preserve this sacred architectural treasure that stands as a bridge between cultures, between the past and the future, between heaven and earth. It is through the process of preserving this landmark that we strive to honor our ancestors, empower our contemporaries and inspire our children."

Thanks to the kindness and generosity of so many, our work continues full-speed ahead. November was a very busy month for us, Territorial Scaffolding of Albuquerque set up a scaffold bridge 60 – 75 feet above the sanctuary floor. This bridge gave us access to the stonework of the arch about the sanctuary, an area in terrible condition. While the bridge was up we installed a new stained glass window donated by a parish family and made by Teresa Thompson of nearby Cloudcroft, NM. Originally we had planned to rent the scaffold bridge but it proved to be less expensive to purchase it. We believe that we will be able to put this scaffold bridge to use a few more times before selling it.

While working above the sanctuary we moved the altar and placed it in the center of the church and positioning the pews so that they surrounded the altar in an oval shape. We did this to avoid damage to the altar and for safety issues. This brought many comments from both the parishioners and visitors, mostly favorable to the new seating arrangement.

Sun Tours of New Mexico has put St. Josephs Apache Mission on one of their tours of the local area. We are happy for the exposure. Brother Peter usually guides the tours and we have found the visitors to be generous.

On December 6, 2001 medieval musical troupe *Crisol Bufons* performed a free concert inside St. Joseph Mission to help raise funds for the restoration project. It was a cold winter night and only 100 people attended, but it brought in \$775.00 and was a wonderful and enjoyable concert. Another profitable local fundraising effort has been the enchilada dinners conducted by our parishioners, these have raised an additional \$2,085.00.

Throughout the past six months we have been working in collaboration with the *Otero County Native Plant Society* (OCNPS) and with the Mescalero Apache Tribe on a project to landscape the hillside in front of the church. In January the OCNPS brought in Judith Phillips, author, educator and nursery owner specializing in native plants along with Wynn Anderson a native plant specialist and administrator at the University of El Paso, Texas. This planning session accomplished a great deal, Mrs. Phillips drew up a landscape design for the group to follow in the months and years ahead. It has been exciting to watch the progress on this project done entirely by volunteers and OCNPS grants. So far the hillside has been tilled and large boulders and rocks set in place. The next step will be planting. We are very excited to see all of the volunteers who have joined in this effort.

Throughout the last six months we have had a few volunteers and community service workers lend a hand with both the landscaping project and the restoration itself. We continue to hold our famous enchilada dinners, which also bring great response in volunteers, contributions and participation. All of our ingredients from paper goods to chili are donated so our sales are 100% profit.

We are still working on the Restoration Project Information Center. Gathering information, pictures and histories is slow going and we see now that it will be an ongoing process. We will have the displays finished and open to the public by the end of May. In the fall we are planning to send out announcements to invite all of the schools in the area including El Paso to consider our Mission and Information Center a place for history field trips.

Good publicity has helped spread the word about our effort to restore this cherished church and veterans memorial. In February this project was featured on two different television news programs, along with numerous news articles in area newspapers. In May our project will be featured in *Aqua Viva*, the Diocese of Las Cruces newspaper distributed nationally. Robert Krutz, a State Highway and Transportation Department Traffic Engineer has offered to place a new historical roadside marker on Highway 70 to inform travelers about this remarkable church. The last known historical marker for St. Joseph Apache Mission was removed in 1988 when the highway was widened.

Brother Peter was invited to give a presentation about the restoration project to the Joint Arizona-New Mexico Historical Society Convention in Las Cruces on April 12. Brother Peter used *PowerPoint* software to create a great slide and video show to accompany his talk. This will be a useful tool for other presentations as well.

Our work crew will be attending the International Seminar for the Conservation and Restoration of Earthen Architecture April 30 through March 3. This is a hands-on training workshop in preservation focused on lime mortar technology at the Acoma Pueblo here in New Mexico. This workshop is a joint effort between *Cornerstones Community Partnerships* and The National Institute of Anthropology and History of the State of Chihuahua, Mexico. This training was made possible through a grant from the Stockman Family Foundation.

As spring turns into summer we will focus our work on the exterior northeast wall where we left off at the end of last summer. When this repointing is finished it will give us an entire wall inside and out completed. This is a great milestone because it was the wall that was in most need of repair. The crew found many places that had poor quality mortar and we will be glad to have this section of work behind us.

It is one of our goals to totally eliminate the bats from inside the Mission. We have been in contact with Deanna Oberheu with the Caprock Canyon State Park in Texas. Ms. Oberheu has been giving us some direction on our continuing bat dilemma. It seems that the bats love our Mission as much as we do. Although we have blocked their access holes, a few have managed to sneak back in. This goes to show that we are correct in thinking that the entire church will need to be repointed inside and out before we manage to keep the bats out entirely. One of Ms. Oberhue suggestions we are planning to implement is the building of bat houses. To accomplish this we are inviting the high school shop classes in our area to get involved.

As of April 17th we have raised \$336,354.00, of that amount 38% comes from grants from private foundations, 52% from private donations and 10% from fundraisers. Currently we are being funded by grants from: The Stockman Family Foundation; The Frank J. Lewis Foundation; The William R. & Virginia Hayden Foundation; The Max & Victoria Dreyfus Foundation; The Robert E. & Evelyn McKee Foundation. Sizable private donations have been received from Sue Koepp, Cecil L. Russell, and the Franciscan Friars of St. Barbara. 68% of our expenses are used for labor and training. The balance in the restoration fund as of April 17th was \$72,577.01.

We are still looking at approximately twelve years to complete the restoration work at our present rate of progress. Currently there are four people on the restoration crew working with Brother Peter, three masons and a project administrator. We are working hard to obtain grants and other donations in order to continue this worthwhile work. This summer we plan to hire a trainee, either a graduate from the local Mescalero High School or the Rehabilitation Center.