



St. Joseph Apache Mission Restoration Project

Illustrated Progress Report for May 2002 through October 2002



Most of the summer was spent repointing the exterior walls of the north transept. Each student was teamed up with an instructor for one-on-one training in stone building restoration.



The repointing work continues:

BEFORE



AFTER



Many places where bats gained access to the interior of the church are now closed.





The Otero Native Plant Society begins landscaping the hillside in front of St. Joseph's, with help from Holloman Air Force Base volunteers.



On August 9 and 10 we celebrated Sr. Juanita's 50th anniversary as a Franciscan Sister. Sister specified that any cash gifts be given to support our restoration project.



Lots of great food and fun.



Candy throw to celebrate!



In October the restoration crew received training in the art of dry stone wall construction. A stone retaining wall is being built at the bottom of the hillside in front of St. Joseph's.



Pete Mold, our instructor, standing in front of the stone donated for the wall.



The Mescalero Apache Tribe made this work possible by providing the heavy equipment and operators necessary for transporting and handling the stone.



Completed portion of the wall



St Joseph Apache Mission Restoration Project

www.geocities.com/missionrestoration
petrus@trailnet.com

Peter A. Boegel, OFM
Project Director
Mary M. Serna
Project Administrator
(505) 464-4539

Progress Report May 2002 - October 2002

“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.” (from the St. Joseph Apache Mission Restoration Project Mission Statement)

It seems hard to believe that this restoration project has continued now for two years and nine months. This is because of the wonderful generosity of all those who support the program. Despite the unstable economy, donations have increased by 10%. Currently we are funded by five foundations, thirty-two donors who have contributed over \$1,000.00, five Parishes (one from as far away as Belgium), two religious orders, and hundreds of individuals who donate as they are able.

This support permitted us to hire two Apache students for the summer. One of them, Arylis Chee, has stayed on this fall, working part-time as he finishes his senior year in high school. Arylis worked on the restoration project through the “School to Work” program a year ago. Both of the young men are good workers and we are excited to offer this training opportunity to them.

During the course of the summer the crew repointed the exterior walls of the north transept (“pointing” is the filling and refinishing of masonry joints). With the completion of this work, we have successfully repaired the Mission walls that were in the most severe state of deterioration. In this work we have not only been repointing the stonework, but have been replacing much of the decayed bedding mortar.

Our bat problem was not as bad this year, but we still have openings where they manage to find a way in. We will continue to work on this as we move the repointing work around the Mission.

All seven of the summer crew attended a safety workshop provided by the New Mexico Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Gene Ostmeyer, the OSHA instructor, was invited to inspect our worksite and consult with us on workplace safety issues. He was impressed with our scaffolding and took

several pictures to use in his workshops to show the correct way to erect scaffolding. He also confirmed what we knew, that the electrical wiring in the storeroom where we plug in our power tools and mortar mixer is below code and will need to be rewired within the next month.

Our landscaping collaboration with the *Otero Native Plant Society* (ONPS) and with the Mescalero Apache Tribe is literally blossoming. In April, the landscaping stones were brought to the hillside in front of the church and put into place. One of our volunteers, Henry Rue, helped us install a sprinkler system on the hillside to get the native plants off to a good start. The ONPS members planted over one hundred plants. We all have enjoyed the beautiful flowers of these native plants. On August 12, forty-five volunteers from nearby Holloman Air Force Base, along with the ONPS members, spent the entire day pulling weeds. It was a joint effort, with parish volunteers providing lunch and plenty of frybread. The Tribe provided both the heavy equipment and the operators to remove the old planters in front of the Mission and to spread new gravel in the parking lot.

On August 9 and 10, we all celebrated Sister Juanita Little's 50th jubilee as a Franciscan Sister. Sister Juanita came home to the reservation 29 years ago to serve her community here in Mescalero. For 20 years, Sister Juanita ministered to the people of the reservation as a member of the parish staff; and for the last 9 years, she has worked at the Tribal Human Services office as a Victim Advocate. Sister Juanita wanted to mark her jubilee with a traditional Apache blessing. So with the help of family, friends, and the staff here at the Mission we had two days of food, Apache prayer, song, dance, and fellowship. Around 300 people, from all over the country, joined in the festivities. Father Larry Gosselin, OFM, helped us celebrate Mass on Saturday, and Sister Juanita invited the women present to dance up the aisle, in the Apache way, and to stay beside her as she renewed her vows. It was a beautiful celebration for a special lady, everyone had an enjoyable and memorable time.

In September, Pete Mold, a British specialist in earth and stone construction as well as in building restoration, returned to Mescalero. Pete has been instrumental in training and advising us from the beginning of our project. We are thrilled to have him here. On this trip, Pete will provide training in three different stone masonry skills:

- He is training us in the art of dry stone wall construction in a project to replace the rotted wooden retaining wall at the bottom of the hill, in front of the Mission.
- Our second training is in the art of lime plastering a stone wall. For this training, we are plastering the interior stone walls of the little parish hermitage on the Mission property. This is good training for us because there are some interior walls of the Mission sacristy and the storage room that will have to be re-plastered in the future. These two projects are giving the crew a welcome break from the repointing work that they have been doing for over 2 ½ years. As Pete says, "A change is as good as a rest."
- Lastly, Pete is here to lend his expertise and training to the crew's repointing work. Pete says, "This crew has been working longer and more consistently than any project crew that I have been exposed to. I am very impressed with the workmanship, and the fact that they are so dedicated to the project and the quality of their repointing work." He will be working with us to see if we can streamline the overall repointing process.

Our Third Annual Restoration Raffle was a big success, thanks to all those who supported us by donating prizes, buying and selling tickets, and helping with mailings. Our drawing was held on Oct. 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, after noon Mass. It was followed by a lunch in honor of the crew. The raffle raised \$6,248.00. Mailing and printing costs ran \$351.91, so the net proceeds from the raffle were \$5,896.09.

St. Joseph Apache Mission now has bells ringing from the bell tower! On October 23 a new bell system was installed, followed by a blessing and dedication. It is a thrill for the entire community to hear the sound of bells ringing across the countryside. Richard and Sue Mackey donated the bell system in honor of Katherine Miller Mackey, Richard's mother. Katherine was a long-time resident of Mescalero and Tularosa. She worked and traveled with Father Albert Braun, OFM, taking along her portable organ and faithful choir as he visited throughout the reservation. Katherine loved the people and church of Mescalero and was loved in return. When Richard and Sue discovered the church had no bell, Sue suggested that it would be a wonderful gift and a way to honor Katherine. Those in attendance at the dedication of the new bell system included Clarice Rocha and Mabel Blake, who used to sing with Katherine as members of the parish choir. The blessing was performed by Father Peter Verheggen, OFM, from Tularosa, and afterward all enjoyed a potluck dinner in the parish hall.

We received a donation to purchase office furniture, so our restoration office and information center is really looking nice and proving more functional. We have had some exciting additions to our old photos, and some new family history on Antonio Maria Leyva, the stonemason who helped Father Albert build the Mission.

As of October 30, 2002, we have raised \$426,520.00. Of that amount, 36% came from private foundation grants, 53% from private donations, and 11% from fundraising events. 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, and the Robert E. & Evelyn McKee Foundation. Sizable private donations have been received from: Cecil L. Russell, Paul & Carmen Brusuelas, the Franciscan Friars of St. Barbara, and the parish of Temse, Belgium. As of October 29, 2002, the balance in the restoration fund was \$74,891.71.

At our present rate of progress, we are still looking at approximately ten years to complete the restoration work. Currently, there are five people on the restoration crew working with Brother Peter: three masons, a student trainee, and a project administrator. (Labor and training, incidentally, account for 71% of our expenses.) We are working hard to obtain grants and other donations in order to sustain this worthwhile project.

St. Joseph Apache Mission endeavors to meet the historical and spiritual needs of our local community and visitors, and has served as a tribute to veterans since its beginning. Thank you for working with us to insure that this remarkable building will continue to serve and inspire so many. As our mission statement makes clear, *It is through the process of preserving this landmark that we strive to honor our ancestors, empower our contemporaries, and inspire our children.*