

ST. ANTHONY'S EXHIBIT FACT SHEET

When the El Toro community had outgrown the original one-room schoolhouse a new two-room brick school was built to take its place. Antoinette and John Gless purchased the old schoolhouse and had it moved to El Toro Road in 1915, to be used by the newly formed El Toro Catholic Parish. St. Anthony Catholic Church opened in this building in 1916. An altar was installed with statues of St. Anthony, St. Joseph and Virgin Mary. The old school desks were used for seating until 1920, when pews were purchased. In 1952 painted glass windows were donated to St. Anthony's from a church being razed in La Puente, the Guadalupe Chapel. St. Anthony's did not have enough parishioners to support a full-time priest; therefore, Sunday mass was led by a priest from the Mission San Juan Capistrano. The Catholic parishioners continued to meet in the old schoolhouse until 1968, when St. Nicholas Church opened near Leisure World. Most people today remember the old schoolhouse as St. Anthony Catholic Church with a cross atop the steeple where the flagpole was originally located. A flagpole was located on the top where the cross now sits atop the steeple.

Description of Artifacts (Interior)

The cross in the corner is the original cross which was placed atop the belfry in 1916 when the schoolhouse was converted to St. Anthony Catholic Church.

The window is one of the original windows which was donated to the church in 1952. The figure on the window is St. Anthony. (Note: the design is actually painted on the glass, rather than being imbedded in the glass itself - that is the reason it is turned backwards; to prevent irreparable damage to the design). Note the placement of the window in the photos on the wall.

The statue of Virgin Mary is the original which was purchased for the altar in 1916. Note the location of the statue in the photos on the wall. The display case containing the statue was patterned after the pedestal that originally held the statue, except for the Plexiglas which was added for protection. The monogram on the base (BVM) represents Blessed Virgin Mary.

The pew along the entry wall is believed to be one of the original pews purchased in 1920 for St. Anthony's. Additional pews were added in 1952; also a donation from the Guadalupe Chapel.

Religious articles in the long display case as you enter the exhibit room were removed from one of the Serrano Adobes when the family no longer occupied the home. It was the custom in early days for families to loan items such as these for use in the church.

Note - Items include: Vase, Statue of Jesus with Sacred Heart, Crucifix, Rosary,
Holy Water Receptacle.

The tall display case contains a candle sconce from the Serrano family. The missal is a guide to the mass for the congregation; often both the Latin and English text is included. The missal, rosary, prayer and memorial cards are on loan for this exhibit from Rose Noutary, who attended St. Anthony's Church for many years.

A Brief Background on Saint Anthony

Anthony of Padua was born of a Portuguese noble family in Lisbon, Portugal. He studied in Padua, Italy under the Franciscan Order for the priesthood. He is often pictured holding a book because he was noted for his memory as a teacher and his persuasive lessons convinced many to change their ways. He is also pictured holding Jesus as a young child because he had visions of Jesus as a child.

He died at the age of 36 years and was declared a saint by the Catholic Church a year later, unusually soon. There are many churches in the American southwest named for him because the Franciscans were much involved in this area.