

Monsignor Micheal D O'Connell (1899 - 1976)



Monsignor Micheal D O'Connell (1899 - 1976) who is buried in the ground of our church is one of the direct descendant of Daniel O'Connell. Monsignor Micheal D O'Connell retired back to his home to Cahersiveen in 1970's where he gladly helped out when call upon until he died in 1976. He was honoured with the Civil Order Of Isabella The Catholic that he was awarded for his work with the Spanish mission 1933 - 1958. Also there is a Memorial plaque in his honour in the Carmel Mission Basilica, California to honor his development of the Mission Parish, Restoration of the Mission, Establishing the Junipero Serra School, are some of the legacies his Irish vision and love bequeath to their parish. e.g. Turning a ruin into a basilica. From 1958 to his retirement Monsignor Micheal severed in Watsonville, California. He also fund raised money in America which was donated to the restoration of Derrynane House, Caherdaniel which now displays many relics of O'Connell's life and career. May he now intercede for our benefactors who help us restore our beautiful Church.

Monsignor Michael is pictured below with the Civil Order Of Isabella The Catholic "***Orden de Isabel la Católica***" that he received from Spain in honour for his work with the Spanish mission in California.



[*The Spain Order Of Isabella The Catholic is a Spanish civil order granted in recognition of services that benefit the country. The Order is not exclusive to Spaniards, and it has been awarded to many foreigners. The Order was created on 14 March 1815 by King Ferdinand VII of Spain in honor of Queen Isabella I of Castile with the name of "Royal and American Order of Isabella the Catholic" with the intent of "rewarding the firm allegiance to Spain and the merits of Spanish citizens and foreigners in good standing with the Nation and especially in those exceptional services provided in pursuit of territories in America and overseas." The Order was reorganized by royal decree on 26 July 1847, as the modern "Royal Order of Isabella the Catholic" with a broader focus than the Americas.*]

Here is just two stories below.



Monsignor Micheal D O'Connell also has been honoured by the Spanish Mission for his tiresome work that he did as Paster. The Memorial plaque reads: "*In Memory of Right Reverend Monsignor Michael D. O'Connell, First Pastor of Carmel Mission 1933 - 1958. Development of the Mission Parish, Restoration of the Mission, Establishing the Junipero Serra School, are some of the legacies his Irish vision and love bequeath to this parish. Slainte*"

Father Michael O'Connell, working with a San Francisco cabinetmaker Harry Downie, began planning the project. Downie, through exhaustive research, made every effort to duplicate the original mission buildings with as much detail as possible. He built the museum which houses the Serra Sarcophagus and a reproduction of Serra's living quarters, which remains to this day. Downie also replaced Casanova's functional peaked roof with a simile of the original arched stone roof, this time made with wood and plaster carefully painted to look like real stone.

The mission became a parish church in 1933 and since that time the property has been undergoing a series of restorations. Today it is one of the outstanding historical landmarks on the California coast. The work is largely the result of two men, Father Michael D. O'Connell, pastor of the church after 1933, and Harry W. Downie, one of the leading authorities on mission architecture and reconstruction." The Carmel

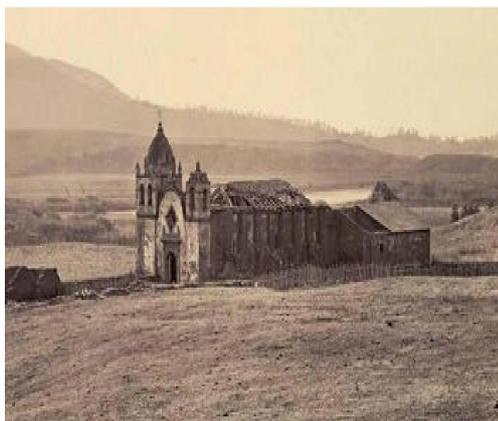
Mission Basilica is one of the most authentically restored of all the mission churches in California. The Basilica is one of the most authentically restored of all mission churches. The work included putting a new roof on the Basilica in 1937, returning the roof line to its original look.

Money was in short supply during the great American depression in the 1930's, forcing Downie to innovate as he renovated, but he regularly approached the pastor, the Rev. Michael O'Connell, seeking funds for the supplies he needed. "Every few weeks he'd go talk to Father O'Connell about more money, and he'd usually get shut down," Morton says. "Don and I would be out there working, and we'd look up and see Harry stomping toward us, yelling, 'Pack up the tools! Pack up the tools! We're done here!' So we'd start packing up all the tools, and Father O'Connell would come out and get Harry, and a little while later Harry would come back out, and he'd sigh, and he'd say, 'I wish I could ask for something besides money.' And we'd unpack and start working again. That happened three or four times." said Robert Morton who was one of the men who helped renovate.

In 1960, the Mission was honored and designated by the Pope John XXIII by elevated the Carmel Mission to Basilica status. Basilicas are considered second in importance only to Cathedrals, and there are only 12 Basilicas in the United States. In 1961 the chapel is entered as a National Historic Landmark.

In 1966 the property listed on The National Register of Historic Places.

In 1987, Pope John Paul II visited the Carmel Mission Basilica, arriving by helicopter at the adjacent ballfield.



The abandoned Mission Carmel in 1876; the stripped interior and collapsed roof



Stage 2 Renovation 1933



The Nave of the Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo today.

Not satisfied with turning a ruins into a Basilia and setting up school for the children, Monsignor Michael D O'Connell could always be relied on to do God work were it was needed. Another Restoration project Monsignor Michael O'Connell work on was Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church Carmel Valley, California.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church began in the heart of Carmel Valley Village in a local barn. Until 1947, Catholics from the area went to Carmel Mission or other nearby churches to worship and celebrate Eucharist. Some dedicated Catholics, including Charlie Allaire, Leo Weber and Mary Lou Berta asked Monsignor Michael D O'Connell, the pastor of Carmel Mission to send a priest here to celebrate Mass.

When the Monsignor Michael D O'Connell heard how many Catholics lived there, Monsignor Michael O'Connell decided to a have a priest each weekend celebrate Mass. But there was no church. and so the first Mass was celebrated at the De Amaral barn. In the same year, under the leadership of Monsignor Michael D O'Connell and his Associate-Pastor, Fr. Kelly, efforts were made to find some property and to raise funds for a church. The three-acre site on El Caminito was purchased for a permanent church and included an old stable which was known as the Lang dairy farm. The barn was transformed into a church using only volunteer labor supervised by Harry Downie, the Curator of Carmel Mission. Part of the barn was also used as a temporary rectory. At that time, part of the interior feature dan elongated trough where cows drank their well-water. The church was fairly small and could accommodate fewer than a hundred worshippers. The first Mass in this newly transformed barn/church was celebrated on Pentecost Sunday, 1947. To learn about Monsignor Michael O'Connell work with Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church Carmel Valley, California visit <http://www.ourladycarmelvalley.org/docs/parish-history.pdf>

