

# La Purísima Concepción



## Eleventh Mission

**Founded:** December 8, 1787 by Father Fermin Lasuen

**Named for:** "The Immaculate Concepción of Mary the Most Pure"

**Location:** in a wide valley a few miles northeast of the town of Lompoc

Mission La Purísima was located in a fertile valley many miles off the beaten path of the El Camino Real. Much of its prosperity is the result of the tireless work of Father Mariano Payeras who served at Mission La Purísima for nineteen years. For four of these years he served as Father-President of the California mission chain, making La Purísima his headquarters.

In the early hours of December 21, 1812, a severe earthquake shook the ground for four minutes causing considerable damage to the mission buildings. Then a half hour later the earth shook again, finishing the destruction of the Mission La Purísima buildings. Shortly after that heavy rains flooded the site, sweeping everything away.

But the padres would not be driven out. They gathered the then homeless neophytes (Christianized Native Americans) and found a new site four miles to the northeast on the other side of the river.

Work soon began on an even grander mission. These new buildings - Mission La Purísima is the only mission complex not built in a quadrangle - were constructed to be resistant to future earthquakes. The southwest wall (facing the direction of the earlier earthquakes) was reinforced with stones and the adobe walls were four and a half feet thick in order to withstand any future shaking.

A large irrigation system was built to bring water from the springs in the hills three miles away. Aqueducts, clay pipes, reservoirs, and dams were used to provide water throughout the mission complex and lands.

In 1824, when word reached the La Purísima neophytes of one of their brother natives having been flogged at Mission Santa Ines, and the ensuing skirmish resulting in the death of two Native Americans, they revolted. Aided by rebels from Mission Santa Ines, they took control of Mission La Purísima and held it for almost a month.

When the Governor heard what was happening he sent soldiers from Monterey. After a battle of three hours the Native Americans surrendered. Sixteen Native Americans had died and many more were injured. In order to prevent any future uprising the Governor ordered severe punishments for the natives. Seven Native Americans were condemned to death and eighteen others were sentenced to prison.

Ten years later secularization came. Mission La Purísima was left to fall into ruin. In 1845 the mission and all its lands were sold for only \$1,100.

In 1933 the Union Oil Company donated the mission property and the surrounding area to the public. This area is now a 966 acre state historic park. In 1951 the most complete restoration of all the California missions was begun. Ten fully restored buildings, with 37 furnished rooms, can now be seen as they originally appeared.

Who founded this Mission? \_\_\_\_\_

What caused damage to the Mission? \_\_\_\_\_

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Explain the events that caused the Mission to be taken over. \_\_\_\_\_

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Research the origin of the word "padre". \_\_\_\_\_

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