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VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF JUNÍPERO SERRA ACROSS THE CENTURIES

REPRESENTACIONES VISUALES DE JUNÍPERO SERRA A TRAVÉS DE LOS SIGLOS

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Resumen: A lo largo de las centurias las representaciones de fray Junípero Serra, se han venido reproduciendo tanto en Estados Unidos, como en México y Mallorca. Por ello, se plantea analizar algunas de esas representaciones, así como las descripciones que las primeras biografías realizaron de Serra.

Paraules clau: Junípero Serra, México, California, misiones, colonización.

Abstract: Throughout the centuries, depictions of Father Junípero Serra have been reproduced in the United States, Mexico and Majorca. For this reason, in addition to the descriptions of Serra in early biographies, some of these representations will be analyzed.

Keywords: Junípero Serra, Mexico, California, missions, colonization.

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Today, Junípero Serra is among the most widely recognized figures in California history and second to none for the period before 1850. Representations of Serra appear in astounding places: comic books and coins, postcards and postage stamps, highways and high schools, and spirits—namely, wine, gin, tequila and whiskey. His name is also attached to a mountain peak, and even, for a while, to a municipal landfill on the San Francisco Peninsula. Landfills and whiskey may be ephemeral but other representations, such as in sculpture and paintings, are meant to endure and for more than two centuries, Serra has been represented and remembered in stone, bronze and on canvas. Curiously though, while historians know a lot about Serra's life, we know very little about what he looked like. The only precise description of Serra's actual physical appearance comes from the documents approving his travel to Mexico from Spain in 1749. At that time he was described as «thirty-five years old, of medium height, dark complexion, scant beard, and dark eyes and dark hair».[1] There is no evidence that he ever sat for a portrait or that upon his death, anyone created a mask of his face or a sketch of his features, even though some have speculated that that was the case. Thus, as far as we are aware, no existing «portraits» of Serra can be said to represent a true likeness of the physical features of the man. Nevertheless, key examples from the last 230 years of art that depict Serra indicate changing notions of him over time with successive generations of Serra sculptures and paintings presenting vastly different ideals to very different audiences. As will be suggested, there is an enormous and mounting difference between the images of Serra created in his day, those of the last century and those of today. Put simply, the Serra that we see today in sculpture and on canvas is not how his contemporaries saw him in real life and depicted him for posterity. More importantly, the more recent the representations of Serra are, the further removed they become from the actual man they seek to memorialize.

The basic chronology of Serra's life is clear and has been the subject of numerous biographies.[2] Miquel Joseph Serra was born in Mallorca on November 24, 1713. At an early age, Serra moved to Palma and began studying for the priesthood. When he joined the Franciscans as a young man he took the name Junípero in honor of one of the great followers of Saint Francis of Assisi. Serra rose quickly through the ranks of the Franciscans in Mallorca and before long held an important professorship at the Lullian University in Palma. However, in 1749 Serra felt called to the life of an apostolic missionary, and he soon left Spain for Mexico city, where he arrived on January 1, 1750. He spent nearly a decade in New Spain's Serra Gorda mountains evangelizing and building missions. In 1768 he was posted in Baja California, where the Franciscans took over missions after the Jesuit expulsion. He soon had his eyes set on lands further north and in the summer of 1769, he was at the head of a colonizing party that sought to claim Alta California for Spain. Before his death in 1784, he oversaw the establishment of nine missions in Alta California and generated the momentum for the eventual creation of a dozen more. Under his supervision, missionaries baptized thousands of Indians although a huge number died of diseases, setting off a catastrophic population decline among California natives. Serra was canonized by the Pope in September of 2015 for his evangelical work.

The first painting of Serra, *Fray Junípero Serra recibe el viático*, was created in 1785, just one year after his death. Two weeks after Serra died in late August 1784, his devoted follower, friend, and

[1] AGI Contratación, 5546, fols. 13a-b.

[2] On Serra's life, see Steven W. Hackel. *Junípero Serra: California's Founding Father*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2013; Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz. *Junípero Serra: California, Indians, and the Transformation of a Missionary*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 2015; Francisco Palou. *Relación histórica de la vida y apostólicas tareas del venerable padre fray Junípero Serra*. Mexico, 1787; and Maynard Geiger. *The Life and Times of Fray Junípero Serra, O.F.M; or, The Man Who Never Turned Back (1713-1784)*. Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1959). See also, Hackel ed., *The Worlds of Junípero Serra: Historical Contexts and Cultural Representations*. Oakland, Cal.: University of California Press, 2018.

fellow Majorcan and Franciscan, Francisco Palou, who was with Serra when he died, wrote to Fray Juan Sancho, a Majorcan and the Guardian of the College of San Fernando. Palou proposed to Sancho that a painting be done of Serra, being quite specific about what it should contain: «The most edifying scene would be to have him wearing his stole and kneeling before the altar of Our Lady, with the Child in her arms, and a priest vested with a cape before the altar, with a small host for giving him the viaticum, and coming from the lips of the dead father in verse *Tantum Ergo*, with many Indians and Leather-jackets with their candles in their hands».[3] Sancho looked favorably on the project and enlisted another Majorcan, Rafael Verger, who at that time was Bishop of Nuevo León, to pay for the painting. The artist was Mariano Guerrero, about whom little is known today. The painting currently hangs in Mexico City, in the country's Museo Nacional de Historia.

In this image, Serra is depicted as he was in his later years: small, sickly, anticipating death. The painting shows Serra as he no doubt wished to be remembered, and how Palou commemorated him in his hagiographical account: publicly acting out what Franciscans and devout Catholics of the day would have considered a good death. According to those with him when he died at Mission San Carlos, after his final confession Serra rose from his death bed, walked to the mission chapel and, as we see, in a final act of public devotion received Final Communion. This representation of his final days before death is both heroic and didactic: it is an image that would have been intelligible and acceptable to his contemporaries and to a wide

Image 1: Fray Junípero Serra recibe el viático by Mariano Guerrero, 1785.

range of Spanish and Mexican Catholics.

The second image that captures Serra's life as he lived it appeared in 1787. It is an engraving that served as the frontispiece for the seminal

[3] Palou quoted in Maynard Geiger, O.F.M. *Representations of Father Junípero Serra in Painting and Woodcut: Their History and Evaluation. Old Mission Santa Barbara*, California: The Franciscan Fathers, 1958, p. 7.

hagiography of Serra written by his devoted Majorcan colleague, Francisco Palou.[4] Of the visual representations of Serra that survive from the 18th century, this one is by far the grittiest, the most accurate, and the most complicated. Before discussing it in detail, some context is in order. These sorts of engravings were typically included in chronicles of the lives of missionaries published in Spain and Mexico in the 17th and 18th centuries. There are numerous examples of this genre and among the most iconic is the representation of Fray Antonio Margil de Jesús, a Spanish missionary who was among the first Franciscans to establish missions in Texas and other frontier regions of New Spain.[5] In this engraving, Margil de Jesús brandishes a crucifix in his right hand and gestures with his left towards the Indians who surround him; the Indians clutch their own breasts, spiritually moved and awakened, it seems, by the padre's words and gestures. Other leading figures of the evangelization of New Spain, such as María de Jesús de Ágreda and Saint Francis Solano were represented in a very similar manner, with a crucifix in one hand and gesturing towards

Image Two: Woodcut of Junípero Serra. Francisco Palou, *Relación histórica de la vida y apostólicas tareas del venerable padre fray Junípero Serra*. (Mexico City, 1787).

[4] Francisco Palou, *Relación histórica de la vida y apostólicas tareas del venerable padre fray Junípero Serra*. México City, 1787.

[5] See the image in Isidro Félix de Espinosa, *El peregrine septentrional atlante: delineado en el exemplarissima vida del venerable padre Fray Antonio Margil de Jesús*. Mexico City, 1737.

[6] See the reproduction in Lino Gómez Canedo's edition of Fray Diego de Córdova Salinas's, *Crónica franciscana de los provincias del Perú*. Washington, D.C., 1957.

the unconverted with the other.[6]

In the 1787 engraving of Serra that opens Palou's hagiography, Serra holds in his left hand a crucifix upon which we can see the body of Christ—the central object of Franciscan devotion and the symbol of man's potential redemption through the physical suffering and death of God's only son. To Franciscans of Serra's own era, it was Christ's death—rather than his life—that was inspiring. In his right hand, Serra holds a symbol of his own religious devotion and practice; unlike the aforementioned image of Solano, however, where we see him holding a baptismal shell, Serra grips a rock, the sort of pounding stone that he was known to have used to strike his chest during his fiery sermons. Arrayed at Serra's feet are the instruments —props if you will— of the traveling missionary and itinerant preacher of 18th century Mexico: a broken skull (a warning to those who had not yet repented their sins that death is always near) and his tools for dramatic and public self-mortification: the chain and burning taper.

All around Serra are sinners being moved to repentance. These people seem overwhelmed by his presence, realizing that they are small, sinful, and worthless. They clutch their hearts and avert their eyes. Serra rises above them all, head in the clouds, with circling birds above that are perhaps representations of saved souls. Serra here is the savior. His tunic surrounds him and he appears impenetrable—a metaphor for the strength of his inner faith. He stands ready—rock in one hand, crucifix in the other and chains and tapers at his feet—to punish his own body to atone for the sins of others, all in the name of the crucified Christ. Palou's hagiography of Serra was widely read in Majorca and the missionary colleges of New Spain, and it helped to foster a new generation of Franciscans who came to the missions of California.

A few years after Serra's death, and perhaps largely inspired by Palou's writings about him, the city of Palma commissioned a painting for its town hall, where it hangs today alongside the portraits of other illustrious Majorcans, showing an elderly Serra in his final days, praying with Palou.

Image Three: Portrait of Fray Junípero Serra,1790. Fra Francesc Caimari Rotger, Ayuntamiento de Palma, Majorca, Spain.

During the nineteenth century, Serra fell into relative obscurity in his homeland, Mexico, and California, and thus was the subject of few, if any, portraits or sculptures. Finely worked sculptural representations of Serra, however, began to appear in the late nineteenth century and reached a zenith in the early decades of the 20th when Serra was achieving great fame and renewed acclaim across California. The very first public sculpture and memorial devoted to Serra in California was installed in Monterey in 1891. It was commissioned in 1889 by Jane Stanford, wife of the railroad tycoon and leading politician Leland Stanford. The Stanfords were frequent visitors to the Monterey region and were thus familiar with Serra's work and the years he spent there. When in Monterey, the Stanfords stayed at the luxurious Hotel Del Monte, which had been opened in 1880 by Charles Crocker, one of Stanford's business associates. In the 1880s and like many visitors to the region, Jane Stanford took frequent trips to the nearby ruins of Mission San Carlos; as a result of these visits, she became an early benefactor of efforts to restore Mission San Carlos and make the life of Serra known (he was buried in the mission's ruined chapel).

At some point, Mrs. Stanford became interested not only in rebuilding the mission but in commemorating Serra with a granite statue. Most likely through her association with Father Angelo D. Casanova at the mission, she learned of the story of Serra's arrival in Monterey in early June 1770 and seemingly decided not to commemorate him as a Catholic missionary priest but rather as a courageous American pioneer. This choice is evidenced by the location she chose for the monument: rather than at the mission, she selected Serra's landing place in Monterey, where he established a presidio-mission complex on June 3, 1770.

According to Serra's own writings, on that day in 1770 the padre held a Mass and took possession of Monterey in the name of the Spanish Crown.[7] To commemorate Serra's arrival in Monterey and his taking possession of Alta California along with Gaspár de Portola, Jane Stanford contracted the Western Granite & Marble Company, paying them $5,000 in gold coin to create a life-size figure of Father Junípero Serra. When he arrived in Monterey, Serra was 56 and not in great health. He was a small man, suffering from an ulcerated leg and occasional chest pain. The statue, however, depicts a healthy youthful man around six-feet tall disembarking from a boat. Oddly, it is as if Serra has made the journey to Monterey alone, and he seems to have a blank stare and a placid smile. He is wearing his ceremonial vestments, just as he did on June 3, 1770. He holds his bible against his heart in his left hand while making a peaceful gesture with his right. Part of the stone sculpture was a large cross, inscribed June 3, 1770; notably, it remained in the boat. The base of the monument listed missions founded by Serra and it was dedicated to him: «A PHILANTHROPIST SEEKING THE WELFARE OF THE HUMBLEST, A HERO DARING AND READY TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF FOR THE GOOD OF HIS FELLOW BEINGS, A FAITHFUL

Image Four: Serra Monument, Monterey. Stanford Historical Photograph Collection, Box: 2, Folder: Stanford, Jane L. -- Father Serra Monument -- #4. Provided by the Stanford University Libraries.

[7] Serra to Palou, June 13, 1770, Monterey, in Antonine Tibesar (ed.), *The Writings of Junipero Serra*, Vol. 1, Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955, p. 177.

SERVANT OF HIS MASTER».

The actual model for this Serra was a local Franciscan priest, Father Clementine Deymann, who was assigned to an orphanage in nearby Watsonville. Deymann was not just a Serra enthusiast but also an impressive physical specimen. On June 3, 1891, the day the statue was unveiled, thousands of people thronged to

Image Five: Serra Monument, Monterey. Stanford Historical Photograph Collection, Box: 2, Folder: Stanford, Jane L. -- Father Serra Monument -- #3. Provided by the Stanford University Libraries.

Monterey.

No doubt many of the 5,000 people who attended were encouraged by the special excursion rate of $3.00 for a round-trip fare between San Francisco and Monterey offered by Stanford's Southern Pacific Railroad. The monument drew immediately criticism: it was poorly located and too small, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which would have preferred «a marble monument large enough to be discernable from out at sea». In the words of a sculptor whose views were printed in the *Chronicle*: «It is unworthy of being classed as a work of art. . . . The expression of the face of the father as portrayed in the statue can only be described as vacuous. It is absolutely devoid of intelligent expression and suggests more the Easter-island monolith that the face of a man whose noble soul must have given evidence of its greatness in his countenance. The head, especially at the back, is very poorly formed; the neck is too long and there is no room for brains».[8]

While the statue in Monterey may have been bad art, the program for the monument's dedication was more successfully executed. It unambiguously linked Serra to the United States'

[8] *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 4, 1891, p. 3.

Founding Fathers. Notably, there were no leading Catholics in the ceremony; there was no Spanish or Mexican band, nothing to complicate Serra's arrival on the American stage when he left that boat and stepped into the spotlight as a Founding Father. A United States flag was draped over the statue before it was shown to the public and when it was pulled back to unveil the monument, the band played «Hail Columbia!» a highly popular and patriotic song that was composed in 1789 for the first inauguration of George Washington. The first lines of the hymn are as follows:

Hail Columbia, happy land!
Hail, ye heroes, heav'n-born band,
Who fought and bled in freedom's cause,
Who fought and bled in freedom's cause,

Those are stirring words, but not ones that had anything at all to do with Serra's own life. His mission in June, 1770 was to secure Monterey not for liberty, but for the absolute monarchy of Charles III. True to form, the festivities concluded with the playing of the «Star-Spangled Banner». Serra's Catholicism was little emphasized that day and it is almost as if the sculptural Serra, being not nearly as brainless as the *Chronicle's* art critic thought, looked around before emerging from the boat, read his audience well, adopted that blank stare in incomprehension of the spectacle of his unveiling, and wisely decided to leave his large cross in the boat.

Over the first two decades of the twentieth century, a whole series of additional monuments was raised in honor of Serra. The most important Serra sculpture installed in this period was a very dramatic representation in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park in 1907. The work was by Douglas Tilden, a deaf-mute sculptor who won several important commissions in the San Francisco Bay Area at the turn of the twentieth century. Tilden seems to have had as a patron James D. Phelan, a wealthy Catholic San Franciscan, who was mayor between 1897 and 1902. Unlike the poorly received statue in Monterey that was criticized for its small size, this one is larger than life. Serra stands nine-and-a half feet tall and is elevated by a twenty-foot pedestal. Unlike the Monterey monument, this one clearly commemorates Serra the priest: he is carrying a cross and seems to be delivering a religious benediction, with his expression suggesting nothing if not religious exaltation. Three thousand people attended its unveiling and speaker after speaker noted that Serra was the first and greatest of pioneers who, through dedication and courage, had saved California from barbarism. Archbishop Patrick William Riordan declared that the statue was magnificent, and the ceremonies concluded with a prayer by a Franciscan.[9]

As big and bold as this statue was, within a decade at least one artist in San Francisco was calling for an even bigger and bolder commemoration of Serra. In 1915, San Francisco was the site of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, a type of World's Fair. The exposition had many purposes: among the most important was the celebration of the completion of the Panama Canal and to demonstrate that San Francisco had rebounded from the destruction of the catastrophic 1906 earthquake and fire. Thinking big—supersizing,

Image Six: Junípero Serra Monument, Golden Gate Park, Douglas Tilden.

[9] *San Francisco Call*, November 18, 1907, p. 14.

if you will—was an integral part of these fairs. In 1911, the local artist Lewis Rothe proposed a colossal Serra statue based on Tilden's recently installed work; this statue would be so gigantic that it would tower over the exhibition. Rothe proposed that it rise from a group of buildings dedicated to the California missions and should be equal if not greater in size than the Colossus of Rhodes or «the Statue of Liberty in the New York Harbor». It would be cast in bronze.

Image Seven: Proposed Junípero Serra Monument,
Panama Pacific International Exposition, Lewis Rothe, 1911.
San Francisco Call, Volume 110, Number 85, 24 August 1911.

A ring of powerful lights would illuminate the cross, form a halo for Serra, and serve as a beacon for ships out at sea. Stairways within the statue would allow visitors to ascend to the top of the statue and enjoy a magnificent view of the ocean

and the city. In what might have been a desperate bid for relevance, the statue was to also contain chimes to warn mariners in foggy weather. Serra would have been pleased with this statue, as literally all of San Francisco would have lived «beneath the bell». Rothe's reach exceeded his grasp, and the colossal Serra was never built; nevertheless, it was considered a serious enough plan to be front-page news in San Francisco, and discussed by the commission planning the Exposition.[10]

In the early 1920s a whole series of Serra statues and monuments was dedicated throughout California. However, 1931 stands as a watershed year for the commemoration of Serra with the unveiling of the larger-than-life statue sculpted by Ettore Cadorin in the U.S. Capitol. Nearly nine feet tall and standing on a three-and-a-half-foot marble pedestal, the statue of Serra in the nation's capital is impressive. Serra's posture and heavenly gaze suggest his confidence, his inner strength, and his higher purpose. On the day that Serra was installed in Statuary Hall, speaker after speaker extolled his piety, his tireless work among Indians and, most importantly, his role as the «pioneer of pioneers» who brought civilization to California. In the words of Ray Lyman Wilbur, Secretary of the Department of Interior, Serra, «imbued with divine spirit, charged with an exalted mission and sustained by an unfaltering faith, faced with supreme courage danger, privation, suffering, [and] disease, to carry the message of salvation over unknown paths along the uncharted shores of the Pacific».[11] The recipients of this salvation were, in Wilbur's racist formulation, «the hostile, ignorant, lowly Indian dwellers in that wild empire of the West». Notably, Serra was also lauded for bringing the key crops of the Golden State's agricultural empire to California: oranges, lemons, olives, figs, grapes, and assorted vegetables, as well as cattle, sheep, goats, and horses.[12] The Serra who stands so tall in the capital is a very impressive physical specimen; in many ways, however, his statue is most resonant for how it calls attention to the gap that had emerged by 1931 between how Serra lived his own life, how he was commemorated in the 1780s and how California had chosen to commemorate him for

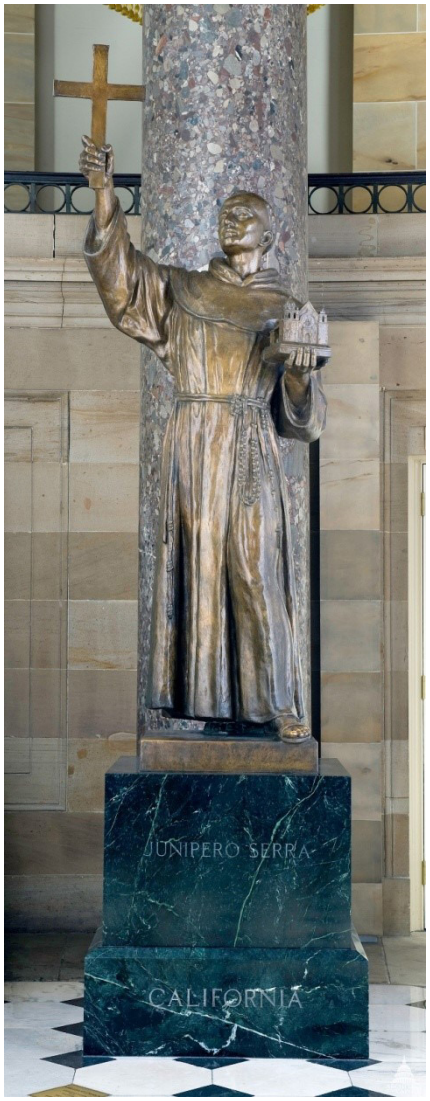

Image Eight: Junípero Serra statue. Ettore Cadorin. National Statuary Hall Collection, 1931. Courtesy Architect of the Capitol.

[10] *San Francisco Call*, Volume 110, Number 85, 24 August 1911.

[11] Address by Secretary Wilbur in *Acceptance and Unveiling of the Statues of Junipero Serra and Thomas Starr King.* United States Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1932, p. 29.

[12] Address by Mr. Dockweiler in *Acceptance and Unveiling of the Statues of Junipero Serra and Thomas Starr King.* United States Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1932, p. 37.

posterity in the U.S. Capitol.

Gone from Serra's hand is the crucifix, the object of Franciscan devotion, replaced now by a cross, a generic and rather bland symbol of Christianity and western progress. In turn, the rock (the symbol of his self-mortification and the intensity of his faith) has been pried from Serra's other hand, being replaced by a model of Mission San Carlos, albeit not as it stood in Serra's day when it was still composed of rude huts, but rather as it appeared a century later, around the same time that Jane Stanford was commissioning the first Serra sculpture. There is no trace in the 1931 sculpture of Indians or anyone else, or of the angst and soul-searching that Serra intended to inspire in those who attended his sermons. This Serra is not the small, sickly, and terrifying man of the late eighteenth century but rather the polar opposite; whereas in the Guerrero painting he is crouching down and nearing death, in 1931 he is shown as a big man whose body projects strength, not mortality. If we were to peel off his tunic, we might find a strong body, somewhat reminiscent of Father Deymann, who had been the model for Jane Stanford's monument in Monterey.

Similar erasures and substitutions characterize the image of Serra portrayed in a medal that was cast in 1963 on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of his birth. Here, as in Statuary Hall, Serra holds a large cross aloft in one hand, while in the other he displays a miniature of Mission San Carlos. As in 1931, Serra comes across as an impressive physical specimen, appearing tall and robust, even though he was neither. The main difference between the medal and the statue is that in the former Serra's left leg now peeks through his heavy wool tunic. Serra was never one to bare his skin, unless he was going to mortify himself. This medal would have made him blush. However, there is a clear purpose behind the semi-nudity of the left leg: it alludes to the ulcerous leg wound that dogged him for more than thirty-five years as he traveled on foot throughout central Mexico and then Alta California.

In the background of the scene is a Spanish ship that evokes Serra as the pioneer of pioneers—the man who brought civilization to the «uncharted shores of the Pacific». Serra stands alone on the shores of Monterey Bay, bringing civilization to this Virgin Land. The bay, coast, and mountains all are devoid of man's handiwork. It is a simple and simplifying image, just like the 1931 statue: the unadorned cross presents a bland form of Christianity and the work speaks of an age that was blind to the complexities of California's colonial past or what we now see as the various and contested legacies of the encounters between Indians and Spaniards in Alta California.

Perhaps it was only as a manly path-finder, a cross-wielding Lewis and Clark-like figure, a pioneer of pioneers, and generic Christian that Serra could have made it into Statuary Hall and onto the curriculum of every fourth grade California classroom. Nonetheless, this «makeover» did not come without cost: to a great extent, people, Catholicism as practiced by Serra and Indians are absent from the twentieth-century images of Serra that made him a popular icon. What the statue and coin show instead is a bland ahistorical priest disconnected from wider issues, struggles, and transformations of the age. What the statue and medallion seem to be saying is: what could possibly be controversial about a man who brings everything to a land with nothing?

When the Catholic Church moved forward with Serra's beatification in 1987, the beatified Serra needed visual representation and what emerged twenty-five years ago was a rather bland, ahistorical figure of ambiguous inspiration. The official Vatican beatification portrait of Serra was painted by Lorenzo E. Ghiglieri, who stated that the face was a composite constructed from the other known portraits of Serra. Others, however, have suggested that Ghiglieri was inspired by Father Noel Francis Moholy, who commissioned the portrait and for decades was the official leader of the effort to canonize Serra. It is more likely though that the portrait was inspired by the 1924 sculpture by Sally James Farnham with one important difference: Farnham's sculpture depicts Serra protecting Indians.

Image Nine: Lorenzo E. Ghiglieri. Official Serra Beatification Portrait. Archdiocese of San Francisco.

There are no Indians in Ghiglieri's painting: the rendering makes Serra look more like a member of the Sierra Club than a man intent on telling anyone who would listen about the glories of heaven and the horrors of hell. This is the man who never turned back, who by some estimates walked more than 7000 miles during his years as a missionary. No crucifix is shown, although hanging around his neck is an enlarged version of the cross that he himself wore throughout his life, and which was probably buried with him in 1784. The «mission model» of the 1931 statue is gone, and the Pacific coast of the 1963 medal has been replaced by mountains; there is no trace of Indians or anyone else in the portrait. The beatified padre walks alone, seemingly climbing towards heaven. Oddly though, he looks down at us not up towards Heaven.

With the Pope's announcement in 2015 that he would canonize Serra came another opportunity for the church to update its visual portrayal of Serra. Soon after the Papal announcement, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, under the direction of Archbishop José H. Gomez, commissioned Mexican-born artist Lalo Garcia to create the «official» portrait of Serra. The oil painting is dominated by the depiction of Serra, who now has the halo of a saint. His face bears a strong resemblance to the 1787 engraving from Palou's hagiography. What is new here, however, are Serra's hands being clasped in prayer—a modern-day representation of prayerfulness—and his apparent focus on the Virgin of Guadalupe, which came at the suggestion of Archbishop Gomez, a tireless advocate for the rights of Mexican immigrants in the United States. While Gomez's political positions are laudable, Lalo Garcia's rendering links Serra to the Virgin of Guadalupe and Mexico in ways that never existed. While Serra did visit her shrine at the end of his walk from Veracruz to Mexico City either on the last day of December 1749 or January 1, 1750, he seems to have never manifested any outward devotion to this depiction of the Virgin. As a Majorcan Franciscan through and through, Serra was fiercely devoted to the notion of the Immaculate Conception, although other Catholic figures resonated intensely with him too. Serra had a particular devotion to Saint Francis of Solano, praying to him when he was in need of guidance. He was also particularly moved by the spiritual life of Maria de Jesús of Ágreda, the seventeenth-century Spanish nun who claimed to have exhibited bilocation to the New World, preaching to the Indians in their own language.

The painting has other historical oddities and inaccuracies. To Serra's right shoulder is the Pacific Coast, showing nine missions (the number founded in California under Serra); next to these is the modern symbol for the El Camino Real: the shepherd's staff with the bell attached. This symbol was created in the twentieth century by the Southern California Automobile Association to promote automobile tourism. To the bottom of the painting there are three California missions: on the left is Mission San Buenaventura, Serra's last California mission established on Easter Sunday, 1782; in the center is Mission San Gabriel, founded in 1771 by other Franciscans while Serra

was in Carmel (this mission was not central to Serra's life but it is the most prominent mission in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles); on the right is Mission San Carlos Borromeo, established by Serra in June 1770, and where he spent most of his time and is now buried. The images of each of these missions are standard, typical, and therefore not in any way a representation of the missions as

Image Ten: Lalo Garcia, Official Serra Canonization portrait, Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2015.

Serra knew them. In his day, they were still rather primitive structures. The buildings shown here were for the most part raised long after his death.

The painting's color scheme is dramatic. The missions almost seem to be on fire (a reflection of the artist's sense of Serra's intense religious desire) and Serra himself almost looks aflame, seemingly erupting from Mission San Gabriel. Most importantly, the painting does not contain a single reference to Indians—the object of Serra's efforts. Moreover, there is no allusion to his years in Majorca or Mexico. Finally, a highly notable omission is the crucifix. Whereas the 1787 image has him holding one aloft and the 1931 statue converting it to a cross to make him appear less Catholic and more of a symbol of Christianity and Western Progress, here, one could argue, a further progression or «makeover» takes place. Serra is simply a Mexican man of prayer, devotedly praying to the Virgin of Guadalupe who watches over him and the missions of California. This is a Serra for the Southern California masses, not one that situates him necessarily in the past or even outside of California.

What all of these twentieth-century images of Serra have in common is a highly selective portrayal of their subject so that he might appeal to new and different constituencies. Nevertheless, when we see Serra simply as the embodiment of a generic Christian ideal, a rugged outdoorsman, a Mexican priest or a man surrounded by missions but not by Indians, we lose sense of who he was during his own lifetime and what California itself was during the colonial period. We fail to see Serra's importance in his own time and, of course, we unable to appreciate how different Serra's world was from our own.

Today, in the wake of Serra's canonization, we now find ourselves in an extended period that is focused less on Serra's canonization than on public memorials to him that exist across the California. This era began during the run-up to Serra's canonization. In 2015, some California lawmakers—motivated by the belief that Serra had been cruel to Indians—attempted to remove his statue from the National Statuary Hall. The attempt was unsuccessful and the matter was put to rest when the governor declared that he would not endorse any such effort and that Serra would remain in the U.S. Capitol «until the end

[13] Matt Fleming, «State Lawmaker Is on a Mission to Swap Out Statue of Father Serra», *Orange County Register*, February 17, 2015. For the governor's response, see Michael Smolens, «Gov. Brown: Serra Statue Not Going Anywhere», San Diego Union-Tribune, July 25, 2015.

of time».[13] Of course, not everyone shares the governor's views and those who wish to contest Serra's legacy, arguing that he should be removed from public places, have directed some of their ire at the statues of him. In September 2015, in the immediate wake of Serra's canonization, vandals attacked Serra statues at Mission San Carlos and decapitated the one that had been placed on the coast of Monterey by Jane Stanford in 1891.[14]

The reexamination of the appropriateness of Serra's public prominence has accelerated as part of a wider national debate over the appropriateness of commemorative sculptures of controversial historical figures in public places. In 2017, vandals attacked Serra statues at Santa Barbara, San Fernando, and San Gabriel Missions. Furthermore, and as part of a new movement, Stanford University convened a faculty committee to consider whether Serra's name should be removed from campus buildings and streets.[15] The committee was deadlocked and collapsed; this led to two new committees being constituted: one to determine the standards the university should use in renaming buildings and another to apply those standards to Serra in particular. While it seems a foregone conclusion that Stanford University will do something to erase the presence of Serra on campus, a recent opinion piece in the *Los Angeles Times* decried said effort.[16] The University of San Diego has also initiated a very public discussion about whether or not it should rename its «Serra Hall».

It seems highly unlikely that Californians and others will cease debating Serra's legacies anytime soon. As an indication of Serra's «staying power», it is worth briefly looking back again at the statue Jane Stanford had erected in Monterey in 1890. Initially mocked as bad art at its unveiling in 1890, it was then basically ignored until its decapitation in 2015. Miraculously, though, the severed head washed ashore six months later and was discovered at low tide not far from where the headless statue stood. In February 2017, the head was re-attached and the statue—now reinforced with an internal rebar structure—stands firm in Monterey's Lower Presidio Park.[17] If there is a lesson here, it might be that some figures when attacked come back even stronger. Simply put, Serra—a man widely cast in stone and depicted on canvas, who is now a saint and can be read in many ways—will prove hard to erase as successive generations continue to find relevance in his ministry, even as the modern world moves further from the values and goals that underscored his own life.

[14] Kate Linthicum. «Shock after Junípero Serra Statue Vandalized Days after Sainthood Declared». Los Angeles Times, September 28, 2015; David Schmaltz. «Junípero Serra Statue at Presidio of Monterey Is Decapitated». Monterey County Weekly, October 15, 2015.

[15] Kathleen J. Sullivan. «Stanford to Establish Principles for Renaming Streets and Buildings». *Stanford News Service*, March 4, 2016.

[16] Charlotte Allen. «Stanford can take Junípero Serra's name off its buildings, but it can't purge him from history». *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 2017.

[17] James Herrera. «Head reattached to Junípero Serra statue in Monterey». *Monterey County Herald*, February 28, 2017.