



## St. Junipero Serra

(1713-1784)

On 24 November 1713, Miguel Jose Serra was born on Majorca, a small island off the coast of Spain. Although his parents were poor farmers, he was sent to Franciscan schools and became a novice at the age of sixteen. Intellectually gifted, he was raised to the priesthood eight years later and taught philosophy before obtaining his doctorate in theology in 1742.

This promising academic career was cut short by a call to the Missions, and he set sail for the New World on 13 April 1749, landing in Vera Cruz, Mexico, on 7 December 1749. He spent the next thirty years of his life in Mexico and what is now the State of California, tirelessly founding missions to bring the joy of the Gospel to the native peoples. Often travelling on foot, he would traverse the Camino Real more than five times, often enduring hardship, hunger, and sickness out of love for Christ.

The afternoon of Aug. 28, 1784, Serra whispered, “Let us go to rest,” and after 30 sleepless hours, he entered the sleep of death, cradling a Crucifix with the Blessed Virgin Mary at its base and tiny relics of Raymond Lull in its wood. He was beatified by St. John Paul II on 25 September 1988 and canonized by Pope Francis on 23 September 2015. His feast day is 1 July.

*Siempre adelante!*

*St. Junipero Serra—pray for us!*