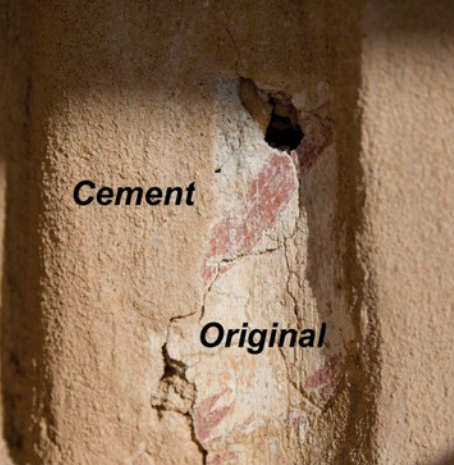




PATRONATO

Mission San Xavier del Bac Spring 2024



The Facade: An Update and More Project Details

San Xavier's conservation team continues to study the facade retablo, the ornate decorative element surrounding the main entrance to the church. This is fast proving to be one of the more complicated and interesting conservation projects undertaken on the 18th century church.

When first constructed at the end of the 18th century, the facade was formed with carved brick covered with layers of painted lime plaster. Its highly decorative relief features lions, fruits and flowers, four female martyrs in ornamental niches, along with the emblems of Jesus, Mary and the Franciscan order (and let's not overlook the whimsical cat and mouse each seated on their respective volutes). Traces of original paint finishes reveal the facade was painted with four primary colors: white (lime), black (charcoal), red and yellow (iron oxide). The result must have been striking. It served to draw people into the church where they would then be overwhelmed by the richness of the even more elaborate retablo mayor, the baroque altar piece within.

Across the next century and a half, exposure to the harsh desert elements degraded the facade retablo's surface finishes. In 1953, noting its poor condition, parish priest Celestine Chinn and his consultant architect, E.D Hererras, carried out the first restoration of the facade using a range of repair materials and techniques. In order to repair damaged plaster, they applied a variety of tinted cementitious plasters, matched to the color of the existing weathered plaster, to stabilize and reconstruct missing elements. In other places—especially down low where easier access was available—they made more extensive structural repairs to the bases of the pillars and the two saints in the lower niches.

At the time, Chinn and Herreras thoughtfully documented and explained what they believed to be their authentic and conservative approach to preservation. Today, we have learned that the application of less permeable coatings to more porous lime-based plasters can cause issues by trapping water and salts that damage underlying material.

Another facet of Chinn and Hererras' work was to install cast replicas of the church's last estipite columns. The two remaining originals were removed from the building in 1942 and were already quite degraded. They were later sent to a workshop in California where castings were made. The ten replicas, made of "cast stone," were reinstalled at the Mission during the 1953 repair campaign. To create some decorative differentiation, the columns were turned so that different side faced outwards. If you look now at some of the columns, the casting reveals patterns of adobe, suggesting these were originally the back of the original column! While they are in relatively stable condition, these may be replaced with more accurate replicas (given the detailed photo documentation that exists of their original appearance) using compatible materials that minimize risk of damage from lightning.



(Continued from page 1)

How best to proceed?

The pilot treatment carried out by the conservation team between February and March provided an opportunity to study existing conditions beneath some of the more invasive 1950's era repairs. As predicted, after centuries of exposure to intense weather, the original plaster below was quite fragile and friable. Determining the best methods for plaster consolidation in such a hot, dry environment was another challenge. Materials typically used for stone and plaster consolidation favor cooler environments with higher humidity. The pilot gave the team an opportunity to see how incompatible repair might be safely removed and to test the effectiveness of different consolidation methods. This will inform the next stage of work, which will focus on a closer study of the columns and their structural stability in their existing configuration as well as the structural stability of the larger relief elements.

The pilot has helped clarify and inform the timing and costing for the next phase of work. Given the limited window of suitable environmental conditions, it is likely that the work on the facade will be conducted as a number of discrete phases over the winter months of the next two years.

What to expect?

It's clear from remaining traces of the original painted surfaces that the facade would have looked quite different than it appears today. While a fair amount of evidence remains, it would be impossible to restore it to a high degree of accuracy without major speculation. Our overall goals are to reduce the amount and appearance of incompatible repair materials—both for the health of the structure and for the aesthetic appearance of the facade—while doing minimal restoration and reconstruction that subtly improve the legibility of the original design intent.

Addressing the many complexities of this project, we are still developing a final cost estimate. We have already received some \$400,000 in donations and grants towards the Facade, our current "Priority Project." But we anticipate the final cost might be around \$1.4 million for all phases of this work. If you are planning a special gift, consider donating directly to the Facade Project.

San Xavier in Spain

You may recall we featured a story three years ago about the first ever conservation of the three original bells at the Mission. That work, directed and coordinated by Patronato Board member and Conservator Professor Emerita, (Arizona State Museum, School of Anthropology University of Arizona) Nancy Odegard, Ph.D. has been turned into a scholarly paper, *Conserving Church Bells: Answering for whom the bells toll*. Nancy's paper on the San Xavier bells was one of only three selected in the Metals Working Group as a featured presentation last August at the International Committee Of Museums - Conservation Committee (ICOM-CC) five-day triennial conference in Valencia, Spain. Nancy's research has served to put conservation work at Mission San Xavier in front of an international audience. The topic was particularly relevant since Spain was nominated in 2023 by UNESCO for an "Intangible Heritage" award for bell ringing!





San Xavier in India

In January, while on a private tour in India, Patronato's Executive Director, Miles Green, made a point of flying to Goa to visit the Basilica Bom Jesus. The church, built between 1594 and 1604 by Portuguese Jesuits when Old Goa was the capital of the Portuguese colonies in India, is a UNESCO world heritage site. It is also the final resting place of St. Francis Xavier (the namesake of our Mission).

Saint Xavier's uncorrupted body lies in an elaborate silver casket, the centerpiece of a mausoleum designed by 17th century Florentine sculptor, Giovanni Battista Foggini, a gift of the last of the Medici's, Cosimo 111, the Grand Duke of Tuscany. It took ten years to complete. Miles was able to meet with the rector, Rev Fr Patricio Fernandes, and to share with him information about our "San Xavier" in the village of Wa:k.

Patronato's Endowment

We communicated in our last newsletter about the new role for the endowment; funding the on-going sustainable maintenance of the historic buildings once most large scale deferred maintenance projects have come to completion. The Board has committed to doubling the size of the endowment by directing a percentage of all undesigned planned gifts to the endowment. Since we last wrote, we have received two significant estate gifts that helped us towards that goal by adding almost \$1 million dollars to these funds. We are now 60% towards our goal of creating an endowment of \$5 million to fund the annual projects and the staffing necessary to maintain on going maintenance at San Xavier.

We encourage our friends with a deep connection with the church and its ongoing preservation to consider a legacy gift to Patronato's Endowment. What better to way to provide a gift that will have a lasting impact on the care and maintenance of our magnificent San Xavier?

.....

Tribute Giving

Are you at a loss for a special birthday gift?

Do you want to make an upcoming celebration extra special?

Have you lost someone recently who you know loved the Mission?

What better way to honor these special people than with a tribute donation in their name to Patronato San Xavier. You can request that such gifts go to any of our funds, including special projects or the endowment. We will acknowledge receipt of your gift and send a letter to the person or family receiving tribute. Such gifts can be made online, or you can call our Development line, (520) 409-0025, if you have special instructions or would just appreciate individual assistance.



Annual Report

Graphs providing information about income and expenditure across Patronato's last fiscal year (2022 - 2023) are available at our website. Use this QR code to take you there.

We also provide a listing of current donors across the last fiscal year. Check to see that we have captured your information accurately.



Your Annual Gift

Because of you and our entire community of support, we are able to embark on major priority projects like conserving the retablo facade. Thank you for all that you do!

If you haven't made a donation since July 1st 2023, there's still time before our fiscal year ends June 30.

Keep your "Friends of Patronato" status current and help us finish our year strong by donating today!

patronatosanxavier.org/donate

Menu of Accomplishments

March 2022 - April 2023



SACRISTY PROJECT

Plaster supporting the art was stabilized and the artwork cleaned and repaired. Incompatible cement plaster removed. Modifications made to electrical and AV infrastructure. Perspex barriers were installed to protect the painted surfaces.

Project cost: \$70,000



MISSION BELLS

Under the direction of Dr. Nancy Odegard, seven bells on the Mission campus have undergone conservation treatments. The conservation protocols developed were shared at an international conference and will form the basis for a technical workshop on bell conservation and maintenance.

Project Cost: \$10,500



FACADE RESEARCH

Two research phases have been completed. Mapping in 2022 allowed conservators to survey conditions across the facade and to map areas of remaining pigment. The Pilot Project this Spring allowed them to test treatment methods and to experiment with products to stabilize original plasters.

Project Cost: \$50,000



TOWER INTERIOR STAIRS

The crumbling treads of the interior stairs in the East Tower had cement removed. New treads were crafted out of flagstone cut to size. Original mesquite nosings were repaired and treated.

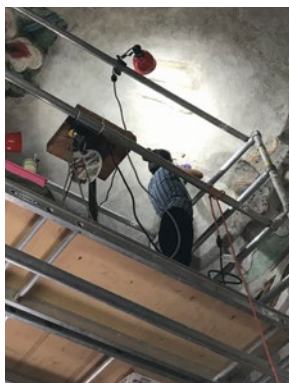
Project Cost: \$27,500



MUSEUM PROJECT

This multi-year project to “refresh” original museum panels and exhibit cases - in place for more than 30 years. Panels remade and original museum cases “refreshed” to include better dust and insect proofing. A new exhibit was created; “The Story of the Wa:k O’odham” Installation of new lighting and construction of new vitrines to hold exhibit items.

Project Cost: \$40,000



CUPOLA AND DRUM

On a 50 ft interior scaffold, eight conservators worked for four months to stabilize plasters and to clean the artwork in the highest sections of the church interior. During the project the angels at the altar were removed for their protection. They were provided conservation treatments.

Project Cost: \$325,000



RESTORING THOMAS FRANCO’S NATIVITY

This folk nativity created by a Wa:k community member has been part of Christmas traditions at San Xavier for over 50 years. Patronato’s Preventive Conservation Technician, Susie Moreno as part of her summer projects restored the nativity pieces along with its ramada and painted desert backdrop.

Project Cost: \$3,000



EXTERIOR EAST TOWER FINISHING WORK

Sections removed from the original scope were completed. The exterior stair was repaired, new balustrades were made for the north side of the Tower, and domes lime-washed.

Project Cost: \$400,000

Board of Directors Update

This year the Board has been fortunate to recruit two community leaders.



Arch Brown Jnr.

Arch was an Easterner who discovered the West and has never looked back. He obtained an MBA at UA, long before the terrific success of Eller. He was a stockbroker at Merrill Lynch, and director and then publisher of American West Magazine and finished his working career in advertising. Today he is labelled a philanthropist and is enjoying being involved in non-profits including Patronato San Xavier.



James M. Susa

Jim is both a CPA and attorney and is a shareholder with the law firm, DeConcini, McDonald, Yetwin and Lacy PC where his practice is concentrated in the representation of clients in state and local taxation matters in Arizona and Nevada. Jim has lectured extensively in Arizona and Nevada on property, sales and use tax matters, for a variety of organizations including the State Bars of Arizona and Nevada. As a former Eagle Scout he has served for over a decade on the Board of Boy Scouts of America. He also serves on the Finance Council of St. Thomas Apostle Church in the Foothills.

Patronato's team grows.

Welcome Sydney Tuller, Patronato's new Development Coordinator! Sydney grew up in Tucson, but has lived all over North America including Mexico City, Hermosillo and Chicago. She studied archeology at the University of Arizona and received a Master's in anthropology from Purdue University in 2019. As Development Coordinator, Sydney manages our donor database and donor relations while assisting with events, docent training and strategic planning.



In her free time, she enjoys reading, writing short fiction, taking long walks with coffee, and spending time with her cat.



After several decades of sharing space, our growing team has relocated to our own dedicated office with room for everyone. In fact, we were able to find a workspace that's larger than our previous building, without increasing overhead!

Our new offices are located at **4400 E Broadway, Suite 510**. Please continue to use our PO Box for mail and correspondence.

Patronato San Xavier Board of Directors

Officers

Frank Valenzuela, *President*
Anne Breckenridge-Barrett, *Vice President*
Jennifer Harris, *Secretary*
Charlie Peck, *Treasurer*

Members

Fr. Gregory Adolf
Arch Brown Jnr.
Manuel Martinez
George McNeely
Daniela Nuñez
Nancy Odegaard
Gerardo Peña
Nancy Pollock-Ellwand
Alyce Sadongei
James Susa
Michael Urman
David Yetman

Ex Officio Members

Fr Ponchie Vasquez, *Mission San Xavier*
Bishop Edward J. Weisenburger,
Diocese of Tucson
Chairman Austin Nuñez, *San Xavier District*

Staff

Miles Green, *Executive Director*
Sydney Tuller, *Development Coordinator*
Starr Herr-Cardillo, *Conservation Program Manager*
Susie Moreno, *Preventive Maintenance
Technician / Conservator*
Kathy Baily, *Scheduling Coordinator*



PATRONATO SAN XAVIER

PO Box 522, Tucson, AZ 85702

Phone: 520.407.6130

www.PatronatoSanXavier.org

4400 E Broadway Blvd. Suite 510
Tucson, Arizona 85711



The 2023 Christmas Concerts

For those of you who were able to attend this year's concert series, you will know what a special evening these were. This year we had two sections each of both the Tucson Girls Chorus and the Tucson Arizona Boy's Choir. Almost 90 young voices made for a night of very special magic inside the Mission. For the first time in nine years, we had access to the museum rooms, so we experimented with managing the event within the Mission buildings. We were fortunate that both evenings were perfectly mild, allowing people to mingle on the patio under colorful lights, and then to make their way into the church through the labyrinth of museum rooms. Though we have some issues to address for next year, (primarily bathroom access) the feedback was uniform that people loved this new way to experience the concerts.

We want to acknowledge the corporate and family underwriters who helped ensure the concerts remain a financial success.

DESERT DIAMOND CASINOS



Pat and Chuck Pettis

Bill Horst Family

Laura and Arch Brown

Mary and Fred Frelinghuysen

Barbara and Hank Peck

The Ginny L Clements
Charitable Trust & Tom Rogers

Margaret and Ken McNealy

Becky and Bill LaMear

Don Bennett Moon
Foundation

Vera and Richard DeJong

Patronato San Xavier
PO Box 522
Tucson, AZ 85702