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Saint Mary's Press and the California Catholic Conference launch new eLearning program celebrating California Native Peoples and Missions

Winona — (April 11, 2019) Saint Mary's Press and the California Catholic Conference Education Committee, led by Auxiliary Bishop Edward Clark of Los Angeles, have launched a new eLearning course, *California Native Peoples and Missions*, for fourth grade Catholic school classrooms statewide.

Created in partnership with Catholic educators, tribal leaders, and mission directors, this three-week, online course celebrates Native Americans and Missions. Based on the 2016 *History–Social Science* framework, “California: A Changing State,” this course ensures that both California Indians and Saint Junipero Serra and his missionary ministry are represented in a culturally-sensitive and historically-accurate way.

“This curriculum, which shows a great deal of respect to our people, opens the eyes of students to the fact that Native Americans still exist and are their neighbors, today,” says Acjachemen tribe member, Jacque Tahuka Nunez, master storyteller and teacher. “We are all responsible to make choices that build a cohesive, positive, respectful community. This course has planted a seed in the hearts of students and lets them know their choices matter.”

California Native Peoples and Missions adheres to the “Try-Teach” pedagogy that promotes student-centered and inquiry-based active learning. Content is chunked into digestible parts to promote discovery, critical thinking, and reading with purpose.

“This is a beautiful and interactive curriculum. Each lesson brings the California Native Peoples’ history and significant contributions to life,” says fourth grade teacher Maureen Griffin. “It celebrates the foundation of our Catholic faith in the United States through the founding of California’s missions.”

California Native Peoples and Missions includes three units, consisting of 15 interactive, multimedia lessons, that incorporate engaging and inspiring photographs, stories, quotes and videos.

- Module one: Native Californians and their land
 1. Geographic regions of California
 2. Changing California’s landscape
 3. Native Californians
 4. Native Americans — family and rituals
- Module two: Saint Junipero Serra and the Mission Era
 1. The outside world discovers California

2. Junipero Serra: “Heart on Fire”
 3. Development of the Missions
 4. Mission life
 5. Impact on California Indians
 6. Secularization of the Missions
- Module three: California’s future is in your hands
 1. Healing our history
 2. Catholic Social Teaching in action
 3. Healing our planet
 4. Learning from the past to create a better future
 5. Siempre Adelante — A new California

“My students have benefited greatly from *California Native Peoples and Missions*,” says fourth grade teacher Emily Silady, M.Ed. “The use of real pictures, artifacts, video clips and interviews with native speakers all captured my students’ interest. They were highly engaged and challenged in this course.”

Benefits of eLearning for students and teachers:

- Updated and refreshed digital content
- Clear learning path and consistent messages, resulting in fewer distractions
- Tracks student progress and activity
- Classroom discussions generated through multiple-choice scenarios, polls and social shares
- Critical social skills developed through multimedia stories and social learning interactions

About Saint Mary’s Press

Saint Mary’s Press, headquartered in Winona, Minnesota, is a nonprofit, Lasallian Catholic publisher administered by the Christian Brothers of the Midwest District. It remains “a contemporary expression of the Catholic Church’s mission to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and the Lasallian mission to provide a human and Christian education for young people, including those who are economically deprived.”

About California Catholic Conference

The California Catholic Conference (CCC) is the official public policy voice of the Catholic Church in California. In addition, the CCC carries out statewide pastoral and policy agenda of the Catholic bishops of California in collaboration with, and as a resource to, the diocesan leadership.

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