

40 Catholic School Students Start New School Year with Scholarships after Winning Junipero Serra Essay Contest

The William H. Hannon Foundation continues its late founder's interest in Blessed Junipero Serra by conducting an essay contest at Catholic elementary schools each year. Fourth grade students visit the Missions, conduct research and write essays about the life of Serra, who will be canonized a saint on September 23, 2015 by Pope Francis during his visit to Washington, DC.

Two top essays are selected from each school, and the winning students are each awarded \$1,000 William H. Hannon Scholarships toward their fifth grade tuition. In addition, each school receives a grant for tuition aid or computers.

Msgr. Francis J. Weber, Archivist Emeritus of the Los Angeles Archdiocese, reads each essay and selects the winners. Msgr. Weber is a well-respected authority on Serra. He gave a keynote address on Serra to a group in Rome this past May. He is the Director of the San Fernando Mission in the Mission Hills area of Los Angeles. Founded on September 8, 1797, the San Fernando Mission was the seventeenth of the twenty-one Spanish missions in California. Today the Mission is a museum and Church.

"My late uncle started the essay contest and enjoyed going to schools to personally award some of the scholarships. William Hannon enjoyed his friendship with Msgr. Weber and would be glad to know that he continues to read each Serra essay. The Foundation is pleased to make a \$10,000 annual grant to the San Fernando Mission as a way to thank Msgr. Weber for his tireless efforts not only on behalf of our essay contest, but for all he has done in promoting the cause of Junipero Serra's canonization," said Kathleen Hannon Aikenhead, President of the William H. Hannon Foundation.

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