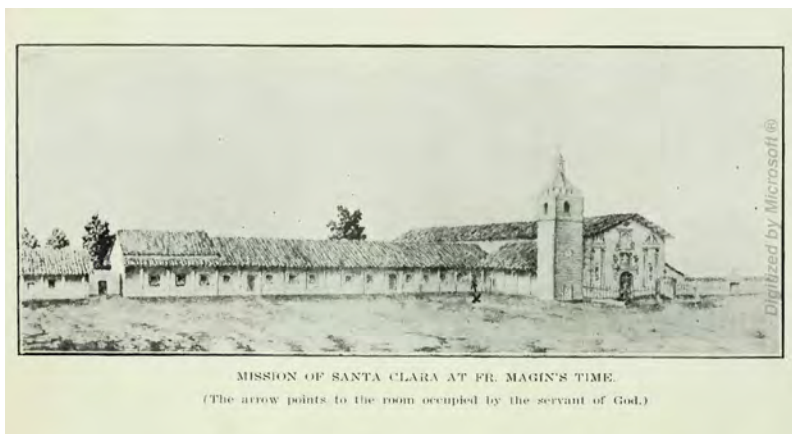


## The Holy Man of Santa Clara: Father Magin Catalá



In 1796, Father Magin Catalá, O.F.M. arrived at Mission Santa Clara, nineteen years after the mission was first founded by Saint Junipero Serra in 1777. Father Catalá is much less well known today than Saint Junipero Serra, but, according to testimony by those who knew Father Catalá, he was miracle worker. He won the devotion of the

Native American converts and the residents of the nearby San José pueblo, whom he also served. When he died in 1830, mourning was universal, people crowded his bier to obtain relics, snipping away pieces of his habit until his body was almost nude, and when the body was clothed with another habit, they did the same thing again. The converted natives mourned his death with vehement sorrow, crying, “The saint has left us.”

Father Catalá labored at the Mission Santa Clara for thirty-six years, persevering in spite of extreme ill health. The mission’s territory was huge, including much of the peninsula on the west side of San Francisco bay. Father Catalá, along with another priest, Father José Viader, taught the faith, administered the sacraments, and guided all the work necessary to teach, feed, clothe, and house the growing population of Native Americas at the mission, who by 1795 numbered one thousand five hundred and forty-one. They also ministered to the Catholics in the nearby pueblo of San José.

It’s hard to imagine how so few priests did so much, but they taught the natives how to build with adobe and clay tiles, to farm, to tend tens of thousands of heads of cattle and sheep on the vast lands of the Mission, and to do a myriad of other tasks. Even though the good will of missionaries is disputed in this cynical age, their intention was always to hand over the mission lands to the natives. The disciplined work ethic and skills the friars taught were meant to enable the natives to sustain themselves on the mission lands after they were on their own. Above all else, the missionaries worked so hard to teach to teach the faith because they desired to save immortal souls.

Reports of several reliable witnesses (whose letters still can be viewed in the University of Santa Clara Library Archives) were given to church officials who were investigating the holy man’s cause for sainthood. Several reported they saw Father Catalá levitate when he prayed in front of a crucifix, and that the figure of Christ detached his hands from the cross and laid them on Father Catalá’s shoulders. That very same life-sized crucifix still hangs over an altar in the restored Santa Clara Mission Chapel.



## 2 The Holy Man of Santa Clara: Father Magin Catalá

Not only did Father Catalá levitate like St. Joseph of Cupertino, he was also reportedly seen several times during his life in two places at once, bilocating like St. Padre Pio.

Fifty-four years after he died in 1830, Father Catalá's cause for canonization was taken up by Archbishop Alemany, the first bishop of San Francisco. Testimony about his life and virtue was submitted to Rome in 1909, but the cause for canonization of this worthy servant of God has stalled for the past 110 years. Friends of Father Catalá work to spread the story of Father Catalá's holiness, and they meet monthly at the altar of the crucifix to pray for his canonization.

### Canonization Prayer

O God, You sent Your holy servant, Father Magin Catalá, to preach Your gospel to Native Americans, and You inspired him to glorify Your holy name among them by the example of his eminent virtues. We humbly ask You to honor Father Catalá on earth with the testimony of miracles performed through his intercession. Grant us by his merits all manner of blessings. Fill our minds with the light of Your truth that, walking always in the way of Your commandments, we may come to eternal union with You. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

- Imprimatur + Patrick J. McGrath Bishop of San Jose

### Some of Father Catalá's Remarkable Prophecies

A free-for-download 1909 book, *The Holy Man of Santa Clara*, documents the miraculous events of Padre Catalá's life. You can download it at this link from:

<https://archive.org/details/TheHolyManOfSantaClara>. Some of his prophecies from the book are included below.

"It appears that Almighty God in those days allowed His servant a distinct view of the future of California. There were still many witnesses alive in 1884 who under oath declared that the holy man had preached substantially as follows: People from almost all the nations of the earth will come to this coast. Another flag will come from the East and the people that follow it will speak an altogether different language, and they will have a different religion. These people will take possession of the country and the lands. On account of their sins the Californians will lose their lands and become poor, and many of their children's children will give up their own religion."

'The Indians will be dispersed, and will not know what to do, and they will be like sheep running wild. Heretics will erect church buildings, but these will not be true temples of God. Sons will be against their fathers, and fathers against their sons, and brother will be against brother. The coming of so many people will create great scarcity, so that a measure of wheat will be bought for its weight in gold. 'Una fanega de trigo se compraria a peso de oro.' As a consequence, much distress will come upon the Indians and Californians. 'I shall not see this,' he exclaimed, 'but there are those alive that will see it.'"