



# Spain Moves In

## THE PRIESTS

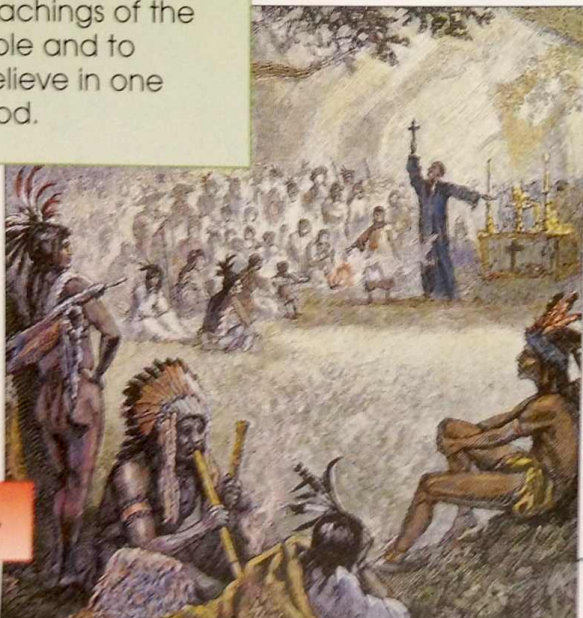


Father Serra was a **missionary** priest for the **Roman Catholic** Church. A missionary is a person who is sent by a church to convince people to choose that church's **religion**. Roman Catholic missionaries wanted the Native Americans to follow the teachings of the Bible and to believe in one God.

Around 1760, Spain wanted to build **communities** north of Mexico, in California. Spain's leaders wanted Spanish people to move from Mexico into the new California communities.

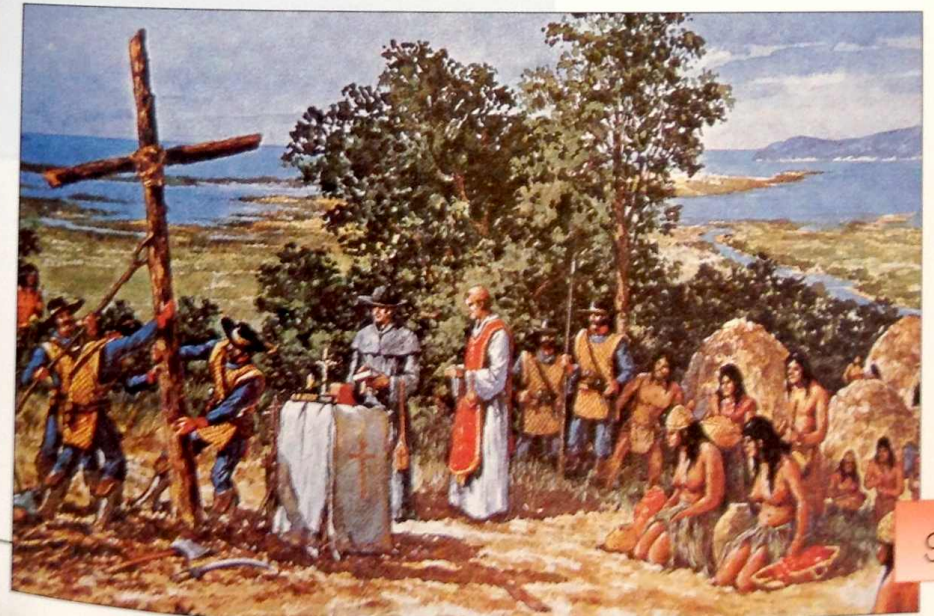
But there were not enough people who wanted to go. So the leaders asked **priests** to build communities called missions and move **Native Americans** into the missions. The priests would teach the Native Americans a new way to live, work, and pray.

The Spanish priests wanted to **convert** the Native Americans. People who convert give up their own religion and accept another. The Native Americans would become Roman Catholic.



In 1769, a priest named Father Junípero Serra rode a mule from Mexico into the area we now call San Diego, California. He brought with him soldiers, priests, and builders. Their job was to build a mission. They hoped that some day the mission would grow into a town, called a *pueblo* in Spanish.

Father Serra and his helpers arrived near present-day San Diego, California, in July 1769. They climbed to the top of a hill and planted a large wooden cross. They would build the mission on this land.



## GOOD OR BAD?



The priests thought missions were helpful to Spain and to the Native Americans. But life became worse for some Native Americans. They had to leave home, give up their beliefs, speak a new language, and work without pay.