

## Santo Cristo Society Celebrates 100 Years

1913-2013

The annual celebration of the Santo Cristo Society took place on May 4-5, 2013. This event commemorates the ideals and customs of the Portuguese people in South San Francisco. Thirty one families left from Ponta Delgada in San Miguel, Azores, Portugal to start a new life in South San Francisco. Of the original 31 families, 17 families worked to form the Society which is still active today: Borba, Barboza, Bernardo, Bettencourt, Costa, Castro, DeLemos, Dias, Empina, Caspar, Lucas, Martins, Silva, Silveira, Soares, Villanueva, and Tavares.

In 1913, the men of the original seventeen families started a collection to buy their own Santo Cristo statue. They raised \$400. The statue arrived from the Azores Island in 1922 and was placed at All Souls Church. It was Mr. Ed Kauffmann who went with his donkey and wagon to pick up the statue at one of the ships docked in San Francisco.

According to the April 26, 1923, issue of the SSF Enterprise newspaper, the Portuguese Lodge R.M.A.B. (Royal Michaelense Autonomic Beneficent Association) Council #37, were responsible in assisting the members of the Santo Cristo Society. They had a parade through downtown South San Francisco and a dance was held in the afternoon at Fraternal Hall, 415 Grand Avenue. The building still stands today and is directly across from city hall. In 1924 and 1925, Mayor H. F. Mc Nellis declared the day as one of special sacredness: "The celebration is an honor conferred upon South San Francisco and May 7, 1925 is declared Welcome day."

The tradition of this celebration is a religious one. It is held on the 5th Sunday following Easter. The Portuguese people feel it is very important to take time from their daily lives to publicly honor Christ for all favors received throughout the year by offering a free lunch to anyone who sits down with them on the day of the celebration.

On May 4, 2013, 6:00 p.m, a rosary was said by Mrs. Costa at the Santo Cristo Oak Avenue Chapel. Appetizers and sweets were served and music by Dinis Cruz and Manuel Jacinto made it a special evening. Officers and directors, queens and side maids were confirmed. On May 5, the annual parade left Santo Cristo Hall to All Souls Church at 8:45 a.m. (a distance of 1.5 miles). Mass was said by Father Agnel Jose Heredia. Following mass, the parade returned to Santo Cristo Hall where "Sopas and Carne" were served at 2 p.m.; Mar Bravo, a folkloric group, performed the traditional dance in Portuguese costume. There was lots of dancing and an auction.

Officers for the event were President Manuel Placido; Vice President Joseph Dos Santos; Secretary Maura C. Silva-Bouc; and Treasurer Michael Valadao. Directors were Eduardo Araujo, Nancy Barrosa, Armindo Diniz, Rosa Diniz, Shelly Placido, Mark Raposo, Jose Rocha, Diolinda Valentone, Manuel Viana, Sr., Maria Viana and Manuel Viana, Jr.

- The Senior Queen for 2013-14: Tiffany Tieso
- Senior Side Maids: Krystal Medina and Sabrina Villanueva
- Junior Queen for 2013-14: Amanda Morger
- Junior Side Maids: Briana Morger and Alyssa Perea

The following people, club and organizations (38) participated in the parade: Mayor Pedro Gonzalez and Mrs. Eldie Gonzales, Officers of the South San Francisco Police Department, Santo Cristo banners and flags, IDES of San Leandro, SEDES of Union City, Our Lady of Fatima of Thorton, SFV Lodge of Mountain View, San Leandro band, IDES of Half Moon Bay, IPES of Tracy, MRPS of Manteca, Brotherhood of Saint Anthony of Tracy, SES Council #8 of Newark, Irmandade de Nossa Senhora de Fatima of Santa Clara, IDES of Oakley,

SES Corp of Santa Clara, Musicadet Alumni Band, Buhach Pentecost of Merced, Mar Bravo, IES of San Jose, IFES Society of Mountain View, SFA of Chowchilla, Saint Anthony Council #1 of Santa Clara, PCC of Half Moon Bay, FEES of Oakdale, IDES Council #14 of Hayward, FESM of Manteca, Senhor Santo Cristo of Buhach, Santo Cristo Society Banner Flags, Knights of Columbus Honor Guards, Santo Cristo Dos Milagres, Santo Cristo Society past queens, officers, directors, members of the general public, Santa Clara band, and a classic cable car carrying city officials and founding family members.

The officers and members of Santo Cristo Society wishes to thank the City officials, clubs organizations, and people who turned out, for making the 100th anniversary celebration an outstanding success.

Evelyn Martin and Maura C. Silva Bouc