

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Now housed in Cristo Rey Church in Santa Fe, the reredos of Our Lady of Light is set in the rear wall behind the altar. It is carved from a native, light-colored, tightly compressed volcanic stone. Although patches of the original polychrome decoration remain visible on its surface, the paint has worn so much in the last 210 years that only faint browns, blues, and yellows are left. The overall dimensions of the piece are, at the greatest points, 18 feet, 4 inches wide, and 25 feet, 8 inches high.

The iconography of the reredos includes the following portrayals carved in bas relief. At the very top, in a semi-circle, is an image of God wearing the papal crown. In a square area directly below are figures of the Mother and Child, placed in the midst of a tree. This is the Lady of Valvanera, a favorite of the Benedictine Order, and an unusual representation in the Franciscan territory of New Mexico. Below the Lady of Valvanera is another square containing the figure of Santiago, the patron saint of Spain and the protector of the highest military order of Spanish knighthood. He is depicted in the popular Latin-American manner as a warrior on horseback with a sword in one hand and a standard in the other. To his left is St. Joseph, with the infant Jesus on his left arm and his flowering staff in his right hand. To the right of Santiago is St. John Nepomuck, patron of Bohemia and protector of the Jesuit Order. Below is St. Francis Solano, canonized in 1726, a Franciscan missionary in South America, portrayed standing over a group of Indians. Across from Solano is St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuit Order, shown standing on two globes, holding his standard and an open book inscribed with the Order's motto: Ad maiorem Dei gloriam (for the greater glory of God).

Between these two lower figures is a niche that originally held an oil painting of the Lady of Light, but which now has a stone portrait slab of the same figure. It represents the Lady rescuing a human being from the jaws of a monster (Satan), while she is being crowned by angels. In her left arm she holds the infant Jesus, who is taking two flaming hearts from a basket held by another angel. It is this representation that gives the reredos its name. The carved portrait was incorporated in the reredos in 1940.

At the bottom of the whole screen, on either side, are elliptical plaques carved with the following inscription:

A devocion de Senor DN FCO Anton del Valle, Gobernador y Capitan General de este reino. Y de su esposa Dna Maria Ignacia Martinez de Ugarte ano Cristiano 1761
 (By the devotion of Senor Don Francisco Antonio del Valle, Governor and Captain General of this kingdom. And of his

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

In 1760, the Spanish Governor, Francisco Antonio Marin del Valle, had a military chapel built on the Santa Fe Plaza, on land which he had bought for that purpose. Not only did he finance the construction of the building, known as La Castrense, but he donated as the central interior decoration a stone reredos carved by masons brought up from Zacatecas, Mexico. The Governor, a devout and wealthy man, conceived of this project as a fitting way to benefit the territory he governed.

Stone for the reredos, of volcanic origin, was quarried in the barrancas of nearby Pojoaque. It was most probably carved inside the new building, a conclusion based on the discovery of numerous chisel-marked fragments of the same stone during an archeological excavation and survey of the site in 1955.

The occasion of the construction of the new chapel and the fashioning of this unique New Mexican stone reredos--significant in themselves--were enhanced by the visit of the Bishop of Durango, Pedro Tamaron, who described the work on the chapel and reredos in his report to the King of Spain written in 1760.

Governor Marin del Valle was also instrumental in organizing the confraternity of Our Lady of Light, a religious society connected with the new place of worship. Their constitution, drafted in 1760, contained the following remarks:

It is well known how zealously and fervently the said Governor was serving Our Most Blessed Lady of Light by fostering the building of her church and planning the construction of the big reredos of white native stone as the main altar, in which he would place the picture of Our Most Blessed Lady of Light.

The painting referred to was a copy of a 17th century Italian work. It was displayed in a large niche in the lower center of the reredos. The stone piece itself was carved in a manner which may be described as the primitive repetition of Renaissance style. Although reminiscent of the sculptural techniques of 16th century Europe, it is essentially colonial, and indeed New Mexican, in feeling, with details similar to the ecclesiastical stone work of Zacatecas. After the carving was

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Adams, Eleanor B., "The Chapel and Cofradia of Our Lady of Light in Santa Fe", New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XXII, No. 4, Oct. 1947

Dominguez, Fray Francisco, The Missions of New Mexico, 1776, Ed. by Eleanor Adams and Fray Angelico Chavez, The University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1956

Keleman, Pal, "The Significance of the Stone Retablo of Cristo Rey", El Palacio, The Museum of New Mexico, Vol. 61, No. 8, August, 1954

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		35° 40' 43"	105° 55' 0"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: LESS THAN TEN

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Samuel Larcombe, Planning Technician

ORGANIZATION: State Planning Office DATE: June 3, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER:
State Capitol

CITY OR TOWN: Santa Fe STATE: New Mexico 87501 CODE: 30

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Elo S. Gohmert

Title State Liaison Officer

Date June 3, 1970

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest Allen Connally
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date SEP 4 1970

ATTEST:

William J. Neustadt
Keeper of The National Register

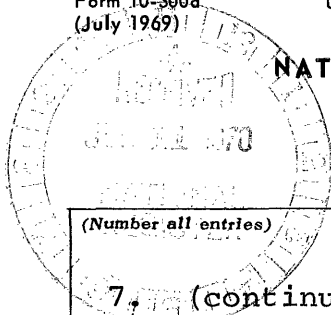
Date JUL 20 1970

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
New Mexico	
COUNTY	
Santa Fe	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70-9-30-0006	9/7



(Number all entries)

The Reredos of Our Lady of Light

7. (continued)

wife Dona Maria Ignacia Martinez of Ugarte in the year of our Lord 1761.)

8. (continued)

finished, the figures and decorative detail were painted with water soluble colors, but today the piece is so faded that it is impossible to tell what it looked like when the paint was fresh. The masons carved at the same time a separate stone portrait of Our Lady of Light, which was placed in the exterior of the chapel's front wall.

One interesting aspect of the reredos is the introduction of Jesuit subject matter. In the first place, this unusually sumptuous New Mexican church building had for its patroness Our Lady of Light--the favorite of the Society of Jesus. Then, the iconography of the reredos portrays only one Franciscan saint, Francis Solano, while two of the other saints are Jesuits, Ignatius Loyola and John Nepomuck.

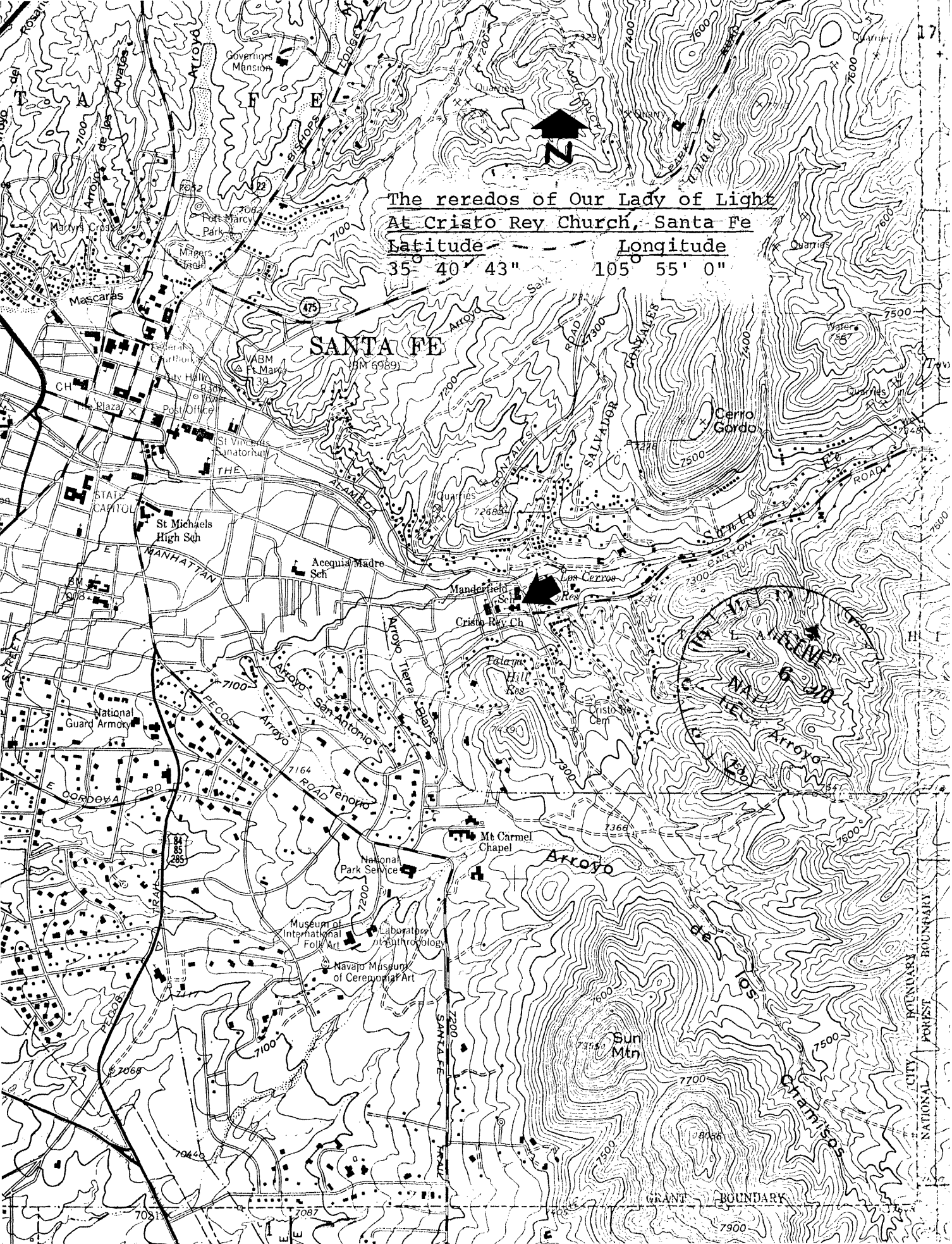
By the 1840's the chapel was in a state of disrepair. Religious services had been discontinued in 1832, and although Bishop Lamy had attempted to revive the chapel, he was unsuccessful. In 1859 La Castrense was finally abandoned and sold by the Catholic Church and Lamy had the reredos removed to the Parroquia, which stood on the site of the present St. Francis Cathedral. By 1894, with the completion of the new Cathedral, the reredos, as well as the stone slab from La Castrense's front wall, were hidden from the common view in a small room behind the Cathedral's altar.

In 1940, the Cristo Rey parish church was constructed in Santa Fe, and the reredos and stone slab were taken from their hiding place and incorporated as the backdrop of the new church's altar. The portrait slab was fitted into the niche that had originally held the oil painting brought from Mexico.

This reredos, the only one of its kind from the Spanish period in the United States, is definitely one of the most extraordinary pieces of ecclesiastical art in the country. Its material, size, iconography, as well as its excellent condition, elevate it to a position of utmost significance both from artistic and from historical points of view.

9. (continued)

von Wuthenau, A., "The Spanish Military Chapels in Santa Fe and the Reredos of Our Lady of Light", New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. X, No. 3, July, 1935



The reredos of Our Lady of Light
At Cristo Rey Church, Santa Fe

Latitude Longitude
35° 40' 43" 105° 55' 0"

SANTA FE
(M 6989)

Cristo Rey Ch

Sun Mtn

ANAL 6 278

CITY BOUNDARY
NATIONAL FOREST BOUNDARY

GRANT BOUNDARY