

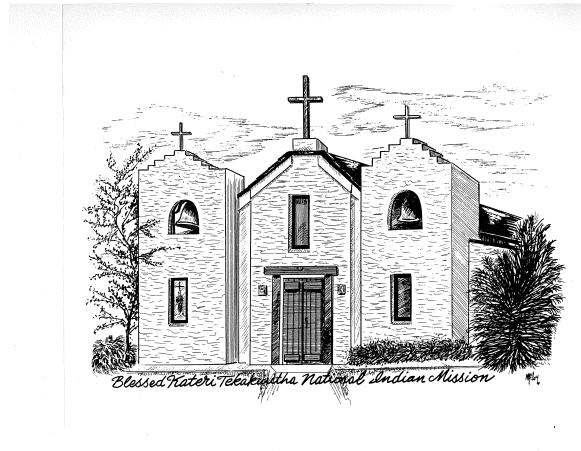
# History of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mission Church

After moving to the Barona Valley in 1932, the Barona Band of Mission Indians decided that having their own place of worship was one of their first priorities. With the help of architect Irving Gill and members of the community the Mission was established.



The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was the first structure built on the newly-created Barona Reservation in 1932. The architect, Irving J. Gill, designed the church inspired by his study of missions in the southwest and this can be seen in original details: the side entrance, the single bell tower, and the stepped buttresses along the exterior. He also consulted with Father LaPointe who instructed Gill on the customs of the Catholic Church with respect to orientation and arrangement for fonts, confessionals, an altar, and properly spaced pews. Gill “went back to the drawing board” six times to get the design just right—both Ramon Ames and Bob Quitac signed off on the final design of the church but when construction began and the foundation had been built, Ramon Ames stopped construction as he believed the church was too small. The church was expanded enough to include 16 more people, bringing the capacity to 80. Even though Gill received no payment from the government for his design of the church, he stayed onsite and taught our People how to build it for free.

The People also wanted their new church to have a stained glass window. After talks with the Catholic Church, a few were purportedly salvaged from an abandoned church in Old Town. The current windows are not the originals, they were donated by different families over time. However the statue of Mary in the front right corner made the trip from Capitan Grande!



The Church was dedicated August 15, 1934 on the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.

Renovations to the church occurred in the early 1950s, being completed in early 1953, in time for the first May crowning. The confessional became the front entry of the church, the original side entrance was enclosed, and a second bell tower was added.

On October 21, 2012, the Church was rededicated to Saint Kateri Tekakwitha. While the church remains The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Parish, which serves Sycuan and Viejas as well, is named after Saint Kateri.

