

DESERT CHRIST PARK



The statues in Desert Christ Park are unique, being of solid concrete. The fresh concrete was molded around steel rods, for strength and support. These provide a framework of rigidity and form. Triangular bracing is afforded by three rods in each statue extending down into a block of cement underground, thus firmly anchoring the entire work.

The main form of each statue is of conventional concrete. The white finish is a special mixture developed by Mr. Martin, bonded on to a thickness of about one-half inch. It was then smoothed, brushed and rubbed laboriously by hand and with special tools. Anthony Martin used as few tools as possible, using his hands for most of the work. Trowels, hammer and chisel, and various saw-like implements were used for smoothing, refining and securing the final lifelike contours.

Except for the original and tallest statue set high on a nearby knoll, and the large figure of the seated Christ in the "Suffer Little Children to Come Unto Me" group, all the statues were created on the Park grounds. Their individual weights vary from four to sixteen tons each. The Last Supper facade is estimated to weigh 125 tons. As many as 40,000 persons in a single year have paused before these stately figures to look, to commune or to photograph.

Desert Christ Park is a publicly - owned, nondenominational park, open twenty - four hours a day, seven days a week. There is no admission charge and there are no entrance restrictions. Picnic tables are available for use at any time without reservations. Visitors may take photographs.

Desert Christ Park is easily accessible to motorists from U. S. Highways 60, 70 and 99 and from U. S. Highway 66. Yucca Valley, 125 miles from Los Angeles via express freeway, is on State Highway 62.



The group of Disciples during its construction, with two unfinished statues in the background.



In the Last Supper facade, only the head of Christ, against the open window, is sculptured in three dimensions. The twelve Disciples are carved in bas-relief, at the 30-foot long table. Weight of the complete structure is estimated at 125 tons.



YUCCA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

YUCCA VALLEY PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT
57090 Twentynine Palms Highway
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

DESERT CHRIST PARK

Nestled on a slope of a desert hillside overlooking Yucca Valley is a collection of Biblical statuary in a public park destined to become one of the most unusual of Southern California's scenic attractions. This is Desert Christ Park.

Started in 1951 by the Reverend Eddie Garver, the "Desert Parson" of Yucca Valley, with one huge statue of Christ, Desert Christ Park now contains over thirty individual pieces of statuary, plus several architectural works and a massive facade of the Last Supper.

All the statues are life-size or larger, sculptured by Antone Martin, who lived on the park site from 1953 until his death in 1961, devoting all his efforts to the creation of these Biblical scenes in white concrete statuary. He created all but two of these figures in this desert setting, just as the scenes they represent may have been enacted almost two thousand years ago. The rugged brown hills of stone, the desert growth, the weird Joshua trees and yuccas, the eternal sun on the sands of the High Desert - match very nearly the original settings of the biblical passages or references portrayed by the statuary.

Dedicated as a world peace shrine, all figure groups in the Park portray the artist's concepts of peace on earth and goodwill toward men. Scattered among the Joshua trees and sheltered cottonwoods are the sculptured figures of Christ and his followers in seven scenes. In one, before a background of columns, Christ receives a group of parents and children in the "Children are Blessed" tableau. Another architectural setting is the group depicting Christ with Mary and Martha in the home of Lazarus.

In the "Garden of Gethsemane," on the hillside, Christ kneels in prayer while Peter, James and John sleep.

One of the most spectacular works of the artist is the Last Supper facade. This work, carved in bas-relief, except for the head of Christ which is sculptured in three dimensions before an open window, stands three stories high. It commands a wide expanse across the valley below. Thirteen figures, approximately nine feet in height, are depicted in this glorious scene.

Desert Christ Park is truly unique - an outstanding collection of solid concrete statuary all designed and sculptured by one artist.

For permanent protection, after Mr. Martin's death in 1961, the park was presented to the Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District for perpetuity. The District administers Desert Christ Park as a public park.

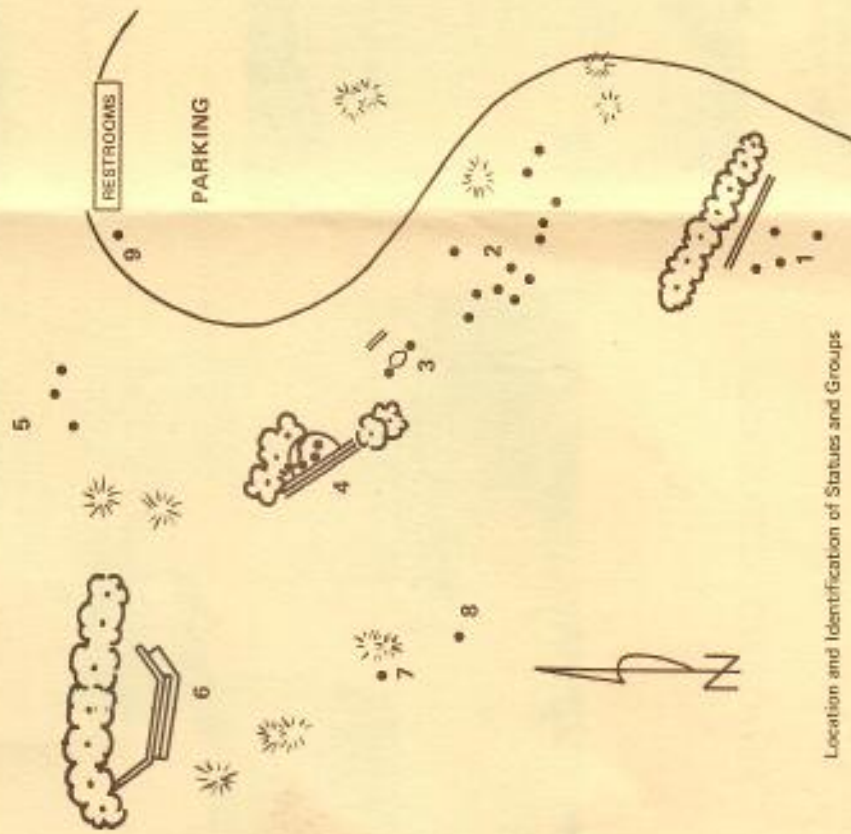
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LEGEND

1. Little Children are Blessed.
Mark: 10
 2. Sermon on the Mount.
Matthew: 5
 3. Christ and the Woman of Samaria. *John: 4*
 4. Christ in the Home of Lazarus. *John: 11*
 5. Garden of Gethsemane.
Matthew: 26
 6. The Last Supper.
Matthew: 26
 7. Suffer Little Children.
Mark: 10
 8. A Thought In Statuary.
 9. The Unfinished Statue.
- Individual Statues.
 - ☼ Joshua Trees.

Picnic Facilities
Parking and Restrooms



Location and Identification of Statues and Groups