Foreword

Miiyum: Hello!

We, the people of the San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians from Oceanside, California, are honored to have the opportunity to share the history and culture of our people. We still live on land that is the territory of our ancestors, from the ocean to the mountains. We have experienced and survived both natural and manmade challenges through ten thousand years of sustainable living.

We see ourselves as being here from the beginning of time. Our creation story is here.

Today our goal is to achieve Federal recognition. It is important to be recognized as a sovereign nation by the Federal government. We are actively engaged in this long and complicated process.

Pablo Tac, a young Indian boy from the village of Quechla, which is now the site of Mission San Luis Rey, was taken to Rome, where he was trained as a scholar. His enormously significant writings are the only primary source of Luiseño language and culture written by a Luiseño until the twentieth century.

In this book Lisbeth Haas shows how Pablo Tac transcended his own time to demonstrate the profound depth and richness of the Luiseño culture. James Luna, in his contemporary performance art at the Venice Biennale, has brought Pablo Tac to the forefront of consciousness by reenergizing the connection of the past to the present.

Pablo Tac died in Rome in 1841 without revisiting his homeland. We can only wonder how his return would have benefited our ancestors as well as contemporary Luiseño people. He is a respected Luiseño scholar and hero.

No\$úun Lóovic: *My Heart is Good!*

*Melvin J. Vernon, Tribal Chair
San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians
Oceanside (San Diego County), California
February 2010*