


The Spaniard Juan Ponce de León stumbled ashore near Melbourne Beach in 1513. He called the place La Florida, the first permanent geographic name of European origin to be etched upon the maps of the American continent. Over three centuries of Spanish and English colonial history followed before the United States acquired Florida in 1821.


This timeline covers the major events in the History of the Catholic Church in the state of Florida. It begins with Ponce de Leon, then traces events from the landing of Pedro Menendez de Aviles on the shores of St. Augustine up through the installation of Augustin Verot as our first Bishop. Some significant world events are also included for reference.

1513-04-01 01:20:11. Juan Ponce de Leon. In April of 1513, Ponce de Leon sailed for the country of Spain hoping to find riches and land to conquer in the new world.

1545-04-01 01:20:11. Council of Trent. In the early 1600s, the Spanish settlers of St. Augustine established the first Shrine to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the United States. The original chapel and several reconstructions were damaged by storms and attacks.