

2015-J5582

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 80th Anniversary of Our Lady of Grace Church, of Brooklyn, New York, on September 25, 2016

WHEREAS, Religious institutions, and the many spiritual, social and educational benefits they confer, play a vital role in the development of the moral fabric of a responsible citizenry; and

WHEREAS, It is the tradition of this State and this Nation to pay tribute to those institutions and individuals who have contributed to the ethical and spiritual values of their communities; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of Our Lady of Grace Church, of Brooklyn, New York, to be celebrated on Sunday, September 25, 2016; and

WHEREAS, Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Church was founded on January 6, 1935, when its church community celebrated its first Mass in a rented store on 348 Avenue X with The Reverend James Byrnes of Guardian Angel Parish; and

WHEREAS, On June 28, 1935, The Reverend Salvatore Cafiero was appointed as Our Lady of Grace's first pastor with the authority to build a church; and

WHEREAS, Our Lady of Grace Church held its first Mass in its new church edifice in Gravesend, Brooklyn, on September 27, 1936, with Father Salvatore Cafiero presiding over services; His Excellency, Bishop Thomas E. Molloy dedicated the building to Our Lady of Grace, and the first confirmation class with 908 candidates was held; and

WHEREAS, On November 18, 1938, the convent was blessed by Monsignor Alfonso Arcese, and four Pallotine Sisters were welcomed to the parish, including Mother Gemma, Superior, Sister Yolanda, Sister Veronica and Sister Amalia; and

WHEREAS, Due to the congregation's rapid growth, work for an extension to Our Lady of Grace Church began on August 27, 1940; subsequently, on December 22nd, the new extension was used for the first time; and

WHEREAS, In 1951, construction on Our Lady of Grace's school was started and by September of 1952, the Parish School opened its doors for the first time to first and second graders under the supervision of the Pallotine Sisters with Mother M. Aurilia serving as the first principal; and

WHEREAS, By the 25th Anniversary of Our Lady of Grace, the young parish had grown to such a size that in 1960, its school had well over 1,000 students registered; and

WHEREAS, After the death of beloved Founder-Pastor, Monsignor Salvatore Cafiero on October 14, 1969, Father Dominic Sclafani was installed as the new pastor in January of 1970; in October of that year, both the Parish Memorial and the playground were dedicated in memory of Monsignor Cafiero; and

WHEREAS, In 1978, Father Dominic Sclafani and Our Lady of Grace parish were honored to give the blessing which opened the February session of the United States Congress; the year 1981 saw investiture of Father Dominic Sclafani as Monsignor and a large testimonial dinner to honor a most valued parishioner, Joseph Veltri; and

WHEREAS, Four years later, Monsignor Dominic Sclafani was honored with a retirement dinner and on January 2, 1983, Father Dominick F. Cutrone was installed as the new Pastor of Our Lady of Grace Parish; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the years, Father Dominick F. Cutrone proved to many parishioners of Our Lady of Grace that this parish truly is "The Parish with a Family Tradition"; in the fall of 2000, Father Cutrone

rededicated the Parish Memorial and playground in memory of Monsignor Cafiero; he retired in January of 2001; and

WHEREAS, On March 25, 2001, Our Lady of Grace celebrated the installation of its new Pastor, Reverend Thomas F. Leach, who has ably continued

his church community's tradition of service; and

WHEREAS, Today, Our Lady of Grace Church offers numerous programs and organizations for the needs of its members, including the Sr. Janes Pastoral Ministry Program, Faith Formation Office, Widowed Support Group, Golden Age, Grace Gravesend Athletic Association, Knights of Columbus, Columbiettes, Italian Club, Teen Group, Youth Ministry Group, and Boy and Girl Scouts, as well as the Holy Name Society and Catholic Adults of Brooklyn; and

WHEREAS, Under Pastor Thomas F. Leach's luminous direction, Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Church stands on the threshold of tomorrow, prepared to meet the challenges of the coming decades while retaining that spiritual resolve which characterizes its past; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to take note of enduring religious institutions and to bring such institutions to the attention of the people of this Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Church of Brooklyn, New York, to be observed on September 25, 2016, fully confident that this commemoration reflects the belief in those values which enhance the dignity and purpose of life; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Reverend Thomas F. Leach, Pastor, Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Church, Gravesend, Brooklyn, New York.