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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2011**

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**SENATE RESOLUTION**

**COMMEMORATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF  
SAINT PATRICK'S CHURCH, VALLEY FALLS**

Introduced By: Senators Crowley, Picard, and Moura

Date Introduced: June 28, 2011

Referred To: Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar

1           WHEREAS, In the late 1700s, Rhode Island became one of our nation's front runners  
2 leading the charge towards the Industrial Revolution, and it was during this era that mills and mill  
3 communities came into prominence; and

4           WHEREAS, The founders of St. Patrick's Church were the hard-working men and  
5 women of Pawtucket who came to the Blackstone Valley seeking a better life; and

6           WHEREAS, St. Patrick's Church on Broad Street in Valley Falls was originally a part of  
7 Saint Mary's Parish in Pawtucket. The growth of the Catholic population in the Blackstone  
8 Valley necessitated the establishment of a parish at Valley Falls, with missions in Ashton,  
9 Berkeley, and Manville; and

10           WHEREAS, In 1859, land was purchased by Father Delany to start construction of the  
11 new church. The cornerstone was laid by Bishop McFarland in September 1860. A year later, the  
12 Bishop blessed the newly constructed church. It opened with the Reverend Richard O'Gorman as  
13 pastor; and

14           WHEREAS, Over the decades, St Patrick's Church continued to adapt to its growing and  
15 evolving community. In 1870, the church needed to add space and five years later was the largest  
16 wooden church in the Providence diocese. Three years later, the church founded a parish school,  
17 as well as a convent for the Sisters of Mercy who staffed the school until it was forced to close in  
18 the 1970s. In 1894, a large Catholic Institute was added which served as a center of parish life  
19 until it was destroyed by fire in the 1940s; and

1           WHEREAS, The Great Depression took its toll on the American public, and many  
2 churches saw diminishing attendance as area mills declined and mill operations migrated to the  
3 South.; and

4           WHEREAS, Saint Patrick’s Church has withstood the test of time and continues to serve  
5 as a diverse parish. Its mission “to give people hope and empower them to make that change”  
6 remains relevant today. Currently blessed by the outstanding and devout leadership of Reverend  
7 Lawrence Toole, the parish provides for the spiritual needs of families from Pawtucket and  
8 surrounding communities; and

9           WHEREAS, This year marks the 150th Anniversary of worship at Saint Patrick’s Church.  
10 The momentous occasion represents a major milestone for the Church’s congregation and is to be  
11 commemorated with numerous celebrations; now, therefore be it

12           RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
13 hereby congratulates the congregation and ministry of Saint Patrick’s Church on the church’s  
14 joyous 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. We furthermore wish the Church continued spiritual success and many  
15 more years of community enrichment and service; and be it further

16           RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to  
17 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Reverend Lawrence Toole.

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