

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 7027

By Powell

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Reverend Joseph Patrick Breen of Nashville.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should honor the memory of those venerable religious figures who, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, enriched the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such person was Reverend Joseph Patrick Breen, a beloved Catholic Priest, proud Irishman, cherished family patriarch, and tireless community activist; and

WHEREAS, the eighth of nine children of Paul Breen, Sr., and Anne Marie Breen, Father Joseph Breen was born on March 28, 1935, in Nashville; he attended Christ the King Elementary School and graduated from Father Ryan High School in 1954; and

WHEREAS, Father Breen received a bachelor's degree from St. Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa, and completed his studies in theology at the North American College in Rome, Italy; he later returned to Rome and completed graduate studies in theology at the Gregorian University in 1978; and

WHEREAS, following his ordination, Father Joseph Breen was assigned as an associate pastor of Holy Rosary Parish in Memphis and taught at Catholic High School for Boys; in 1966, he was transferred to Chattanooga, where he became an associate pastor at St. Peter and Paul Parish, while also serving as an assistant principal and teacher at Notre Dame High School; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, Father Breen was named the pastor of St. Therese of Lisieux Parish in Cleveland; in addition, he was responsible for the parish's mission outreach in Copperhill and Athens; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, he began a ten-year appointment as pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Murfreesboro; in 1984, he became pastor of St. Edward Parish in Nashville and served there for thirty years until his retirement in 2014; and

WHEREAS, at St. Edward, Father Joseph Breen displayed his deep commitment to Catholic education through his dedicated efforts on behalf of St. Edward School, which included securing annual funding to purchase cutting-edge technology and playing an instrumental role in the construction of two new school wings that provided space for a pre-kindergarten program, a science lab, a large meeting room, and state-of-the-art classrooms; and

WHEREAS, also during his tenure at St. Edward, Father Breen helped launch Our Lady of Guadalupe, a Spanish-speaking parish that started as a St. Edward mission and became independent in 2007; and

WHEREAS, beloved by his parish for his tireless passion and generous spirit, Father Joseph Breen had a boundless courage and commitment that saw him speak out on immigration reform, the minimum wage, and other complicated and controversial issues over the years, keeping true to his own conscience and his understanding of the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, after his retirement, Father Breen moved to Mary Queen of Angels, where he occasionally led mass to a packed room at the chapel; more often, though, he engaged in the ministry of walking around, touching people, praying for them, and inquiring after their families, and at the end of his life, he was surrounded by wonderful friends and staff who eased his transition; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his parents, Father Joseph Breen was preceded in death by his sisters and brothers-in-law, Ann Treadway and Felix Treadway and Mary Jo Beavin and Bill Beavin; brother-in-law, Wallace Williams; brothers, William Breen, Sr., Paul Breen and sister-in-law, Betty Breen, Thomas Breen and sister-in-law, Jean Breen, Hugh Breen, and Reverend Philip M. Breen; niece, Susan Beavin; and great-nephew, Paul Beavin, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Father Breen is survived by his sister, Dorothy Williams; his sisters-in-law, Barbara Breen and Mary Breen; twenty-nine nieces and nephews; numerous great-nieces and great-nephews; and several great-great nieces and great-great nephews; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should remember the bountiful life of this exceptional spiritual leader and devoted servant of God; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the life and memory of Reverend Joseph Patrick Breen, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.