

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1538

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor St. Joseph Catholic Church on the celebration of its seventy-fifth anniversary.

WHEREAS, the many fine churches across this State constitute an institutional foundation for an orderly and just society for all Tennesseans, and their dedicated service to God and humanity is the bedrock upon which our State and nation are founded; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that we should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations that, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such dynamic community of faith is St. Joseph Catholic Church in Norris, whose members are celebrating the church's seventy-five years of service to the Lord and their community on April 28, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the history of St. Joseph Catholic Church dates back to construction of Norris Dam in 1933, when a priest from Johnson City began conducting Catholic services for workers at the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp; and

WHEREAS, after the town of Norris was populated and the CCC camp closed, William and Betty Ann Jolly offered their home at 103 W. Norris Road for use as a temporary chapel; Mass was also celebrated at the home of Maurice and Ann Henle, as well as at the Leonard home; and

WHEREAS, as the Norris Catholic population grew, Mass was celebrated in the town's school or at the community building on a weekly basis; and

WHEREAS, in 1948, after a fire gutted the house at 88 West Norris Road, Father Dan Richardson had a vision of converting the charred remains of the three-bedroom home into a church; the Diocese of Nashville purchased the property for \$4,000, and under the leadership of

Raphael "Ray" Saraceni and William Jolly, the men of the parish cleared and rebuilt the structure into St. Joseph Catholic Church; and

WHEREAS, Bishop William Adrian selected the name "Saint Joseph" for the church "to honor the manual skills of Joseph, the carpenter, reflected in the skills of the parishioners who crafted the church with their own hands"; the women of the parish then labored to finish and decorate the interior of the church, which was dedicated on April 20, 1949; and

WHEREAS, today, the parishioners of St. Joseph Catholic Church are most thankful for the contributions of those who have gone before in the establishment and continuing legacy of their parish community; and

WHEREAS, the congregation of St. Joseph Catholic Church has been guided by a number of dedicated and talented pastors throughout its seventy-five years, and its current pastor, Father Dennis Kress, is looking forward to serving the spiritual needs of his community for many years to come; and

WHEREAS, St. Joseph Catholic Church is truly one of the great religious institutions and catalysts for positive spiritual change in our State and nation, and the members of this exceptional congregation should be appropriately honored for their exemplary service to their fellow Christians and to the good people of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we join in the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of St. Joseph Catholic Church, thank this historic congregation for their notable service to their Lord and the State of Tennessee, and wish them much continued success and happiness.

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.