

2015-J3288

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral upon the occasion of celebrating its 90th Annual Saint Maron Day Event on February 6, 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 commend Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral upon the occasion of celebrating its 90th Annual Saint Maron Day Event at the Dyker Beach Golf Course, Brooklyn, New York, on Saturday, February 6, 2016; and

WHEREAS, Festivities for this auspicious occasion will include a cocktail hour followed by dinner and Hafli, a Lebanese celebration of food and hospitality; and

WHEREAS, In 1844, construction began on the church after a small group of individuals met early in that year and agreed to establish an ecclesiastical society which would become the Church of the Pilgrims; and

WHEREAS, The group hired Richard Upjohn, a prominent architect well known for Gothic churches for Episcopal congregations, to design the church; in contrast to his Gothic-style work, he designed the first Romanesque Revival church in the United States, one of which has been

termed a medieval equivalent of a New England meetinghouse; and

WHEREAS, The cornerstone was laid on December 22, 1844, which was the 224th Anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, 71 people assented to the articles of faith and were recognized as a Church of

Christ; construction continued through 1845, and the church held its first public services on May 12, 1846; and

WHEREAS, In 1869, construction commenced on an addition designed by Leopold Eidlitz who had once worked for Richard Upjohn; the addition provided an additional 450 seats in the church, a larger lecture room, and rooms for classes and meetings; and

WHEREAS, The Reverend Richard S. Storm, Jr. became the Church of the Pilgrims' first pastor in 1847, a position he held for 53 years; and

WHEREAS, As the population of Brooklyn Heights, New York, changed in the early twentieth century, the number of members of the Church of the Pilgrims and neighboring Plymouth Church declined; both congregations reassessed their positions within the community and, in 1934, the Church of the Pilgrims merged with Plymouth Church to form Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims; and

WHEREAS, The Maronite community in New York, dates back to 1890, and began in a rented hall at 127 Washington Street in Lower Manhattan, known as Saint Joseph's Maronite Church; arriving in New York, in 1900, Father Khairallah Stephen (Estephan) founded Saint Joseph's, relocated at 81 Washington Street; and

WHEREAS, In 1902, Father Khairallah Stephen used \$2,000 of his own money and \$600 in donations to purchase a large brownstone at 295-297 Hicks Street in Brooklyn; the Certificate of Incorporation of The Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Lebanon was signed on February 17, 1903, and was recorded in the Office of the Clerk of King's County on March 3, 1903; and

WHEREAS, Church services began in Brooklyn in 1904; although the church was initially on the main floor (with the rectory above), the basement and main floor were subsequently combined, and the renovated

church was dedicated as Our Lady of Lebanon Church in January of 1906; and

WHEREAS, The Brooklyn Maronites, who were mostly from Aleppo, Syria,

formed the core of the new parish; over time, many Manhattan Maronites, who were predominantly from Lebanon, relocated to Brooklyn to be closer to the Church; and

WHEREAS, Due to the growth of the Brooklyn Maronite community, the search for a new church began in 1938; on December 8, 1943, Father Mansour Stephen signed a contract to purchase the former Church of the Pilgrims at the southeast corner of Henry Street and Remsen Street in Brooklyn Heights; and

WHEREAS, The sale was completed quickly and the deed was recorded on February 1, 1944; the Maronites officially took possession of the property on February 9, 1944, the Feast of Saint Maron; and

WHEREAS, The first Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Sunday, November 26, 1944, by Father Mansour Stephen, when the new church of Our Lady of Lebanon was dedicated; the brownstone residence immediately adjoining the Church at 113 Remsen Street was purchased on December 30, 1944, through the kind generosity of a parishioner, George Jebaily, later a Papal Knight; and

WHEREAS, On June 27, 1977, Our Lady of Lebanon Church was designated as the Cathedral of the Diocese of Saint Maron in the United States, when the Eparchial See was transferred from Detroit, Michigan, to Brooklyn; and

WHEREAS, Since its designation as the Cathedral, Our Lady of Lebanon has served all three of the Bishops of the Eparchy of Saint Maron: Archbishop Francis Mansour Zayek from 1966-1996, Bishop Stephen Hector Doueihy from 1996-2004, and currently, Bishop Gregory John Mansour who has served since 2004; and

WHEREAS, Our Lady of Lebanon 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 commend Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral upon the occasion of celebrating its 90th Annual Saint Maron Day Event on February 6, 2016; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be tran-

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mitted to Bishop Gregory John Mansour, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral.