

2015-J6037

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 125th Anniversary of Our Lady of Angels Parish 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 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 125th Anniversary of Our Lady of Angels Parish, to be celebrated with a Mass on Sunday, September 25, 2016; and

WHEREAS, On September 24, 1891, in the rapidly growing village of Bay Ridge, then part of the suburban Town of New Utrecht, Long Island, Our Lady of Angels Church was founded by the first Bishop of Brooklyn, John Loughlin, as the 153rd parish in the diocese, and the last territorial parish he would establish; and

WHEREAS, Our Lady of Angels Church first mass was held on 67th Street between Second Avenue (Ridge Boulevard) and Third Avenue on September 27, 1891, by its founding pastor, the Reverend Martin J. Loftus; and

WHEREAS, One year later, on September 25, 1892, the cornerstone was laid for Our Lady of Angels' original church on the corner of Fourth Avenue and 74th Street, by Charles Edward McDonnell, second Bishop of Brooklyn; and

WHEREAS, Bishop McDonnell proudly dedicated the newly completed church on September 24, 1893, the first to be built under his supervision; this "cathedral in the woods" was designed in the Italian Romanesque style of architecture and had a seating capacity for 600 worshippers; and

WHEREAS, The second pastor of Our Lady of Angels, Reverend Matthew J. Flynn, saw the fast-growing parish's need for catholic school education and initiated a fund raising program; in 1922, Fr. Flynn presided over the cornerstone laying of a new 30-classroom school building, complete with auditorium and gymnasium; and

WHEREAS, In September of 1924, Our Lady of Angels' elementary school opened, staffed by the Sisters of Charity from Halifax, Nova Scotia; the 18 girls and 24 boys comprising the first graduating class of June 1928, received many honors and awards, personifying the school motto "usque ad optima" meaning "reach out for the highest"; and

WHEREAS, The extension of the Fourth Avenue Subway to Bay Ridge in 1916, sparked a decade of tremendous population growth during which time Our Lady of Angels took its place among the largest and best parishes in the diocese; and

WHEREAS, Upon the death of Fr. Flynn, Monsignor Francis J. O'Hara became Our Lady of Angels' third pastor and immediately turned his attention towards the monumental task of building a bigger and better church, initiating construction on April 13, 1928, and setting the cornerstone on December 9, 1928; and

WHEREAS, Six months later, on Sunday, June 23, 1929, the new church was dedicated by Thomas E. Molloy, third Bishop of Brooklyn; following the architectural style of the original 1893 church, the new church was also "Romanesque" in design and was constructed of the same distinctive brickwork as the school with a seating capacity that was twice that of the old church; and

WHEREAS, Our Lady of Angels' fourth pastor, Bishop Edmund J. Reilly, initiated construction of a major new addition to the original school building which opened in September 1958, to meet the educational needs

of the still-growing parish; a friary was also erected in 1958 for the Franciscan Brothers who had arrived to teach the boys, allowing the Sisters to teach the girls; and

WHEREAS, Bishop John J. Boardman, Our Lady of Angels' fifth pastor and well known for his work as Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, dedicated a new convent in 1968, while leading the parish through the many changes resulting from the Second Vatican Council; and WHEREAS, Throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s, an era in which the number of families in the parish remained generally high, Our Lady of Angels continued to be blessed with strong, faithful leadership under its sixth and seventh pastors, Monsignors Francis B. Donnelly and Peter L. Altman; and

WHEREAS, Monsignor James M. Cavanaugh, Our Lady of Angels' eighth pastor, presided over an era in which the number of parishioners began to noticeably decrease due to an aging population and the inability of young families to afford Bay Ridge's escalating real estate prices; and WHEREAS, The Reverend James E. Devlin, Our Lady of Angels' ninth pastor, spiritually supported the many parishioners affected by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; he also initiated the parish's second major renovation program in 2005, and was instrumental in keeping the school open as enrollments decreased while laying the groundwork for the transition of Our Lady of Angels School to Holy Angels Catholic Academy in 2009; and

WHEREAS, In July of 2009, Monsignor Kevin B. Noone, a graduate of Our Lady of Angels' class of 1958, became the parish's tenth and current pastor; this esteemed man is presently leading the parish through a time of significant demographical change as he initiates the parish's third renovation program and its 125th anniversary observance; and

WHEREAS, Our Lady of Angels stands on the threshold of tomorrow, prepared to meet the challenges of the coming decades while retaining that spiritual resolve which characterizes its past; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of Our Lady of Angels Parish on September 25, 2016; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Monsignor Kevin B. Noone, Our Lady of Angels Parish.