

2017-K471

Assembly Resolution No. 471

BY: M. of A. Cahill

MOURNING the death of Pastor Johann Christoph Arnold, distinguished citizen, religious leader and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to bring full recognition and just tribute to those men and women of religious commitment who accept the responsibility of moral leadership and render the wisdom of human understanding; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Johann Christoph Arnold passed on Saturday, April 15, 2017, at the age of 76; and

WHEREAS, Fondly remembered by many names, Father, Opa, Pastor, Senior Elder of the Bruderhof Communities, Chaplain, Author and Speaker, Johann Christoph Arnold inspired thousands to believe in Jesus, their own special worth in God's eyes and hope for purpose in life through a message of love and forgiveness as a power to overcome any obstacle and trouble; and

WHEREAS, Johann Christoph Arnold's parents, Johann Heinrich and Annemarie Arnold, were members of the Bruderhof, a Christian Community founded in Germany by his grandfather Eberhard Arnold; as the Nazi regime rose to power, his parents and members of the Bruderhof fled to England; and

WHEREAS, Johann Christoph Arnold was born on November 14, 1940, during the Battle of Britain; two years later, members of the Bruderhof were forced to emigrate to Paraguay, South America; and

WHEREAS, In 1954, Johann Christoph Arnold moved to the Woodcrest Community in Rifton, New York, his primary home for the rest of his mortal life; he attended Kingston High School where he learned the English language, ran cross country and picked up a life-long love of Shakespeare; and

WHEREAS, Johann Christoph Arnold earned his degree in business from Orange County Community College in 1960; shortly thereafter, he began working for Community Playthings, the growing business of Bruderhof Communities and the Plough Publishing House; and

WHEREAS, On May 22, 1966, Johann Christoph Arnold married the love of his life, the former Verena Meier; together, the couple raised eight children; and

WHEREAS, In 1972, Johann Christoph Arnold began his lifelong career of spiritual guidance and nurturing of the citizens of the State of New York; he was ordained as a Pastor, then as an Elder of the Bruderhof Communities in 1983; he served as a Senior Elder from 2001 until his passing; and

WHEREAS, Under his luminous leadership, the Bruderhof Communities expanded from North America back into Europe, Australia, South America and added many small community houses in urban settings; and

WHEREAS, A man of many interests, Pastor Johann Christoph Arnold wrote 12 books which have been published in 20 languages on various

issues he was passionate about such as marriage, family, raising and educating children, forgiveness, death and dying, peace and faith; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Johann Christoph Arnold worked tirelessly for peace through forgiveness and reconciliation; this vocation brought him in contact with thousands of people including hundreds of religious and political leaders, often in troubled hotspots of war, conflict and natural disaster such as Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Northern Ireland, Rwanda, Nigeria, Chiapas, Mexico, Paraguay, Cuba, Thailand and Haiti; and

WHEREAS, Concerned for the welfare of today's youth, Pastor Johann Christoph Arnold helped found Breaking the Cycle, a program aimed at teaching middle and high-school students, including incarcerated youth, conflict resolution through forgiveness; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Johann Christoph Arnold truly loved all people and was always willing to help anyone; he enjoyed serving as Chaplain to the Ulster County Sheriff's Office and Ulster County Police Chiefs Association; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by his daughter Margrit Zimmerman and one granddaughter, Stephanie Jean, Pastor Johann C. Arnold is survived by his wife of 51 years, Verena Meier Arnold; five daughters, Emmy Maria (Michael) Blough, Vreneli (Raymond) Hofer, Annemarie (Tim) Keiderling, Hanna (Chris) Rimes, and Priscilla (Red) Zimmerman; two sons, Heinrich (Wilma) Arnold, and Chris (Estelle) Arnold; one son-in-law, Reuben Zimmerman; 44 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Johann Christoph Arnold brought to his ministry an overwhelming spirit of charity and compassion, acting from vision and enlightenment in conducting his administrative and spiritual duties,

while always displaying the highest standards of personal and professional integrity and dedication; and

WHEREAS, This distinguished man of God always gave guidance and wisdom to the many entrusted to his care and administered abundantly and unstintingly to the spiritual and corporal needs of all; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Pastor Johann Christoph Arnold leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor the life and accomplishments of Pastor Johann Christoph Arnold and to express its deepest condolences to his family, colleagues and friends who mourn his passing; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Pastor Johann Christoph Arnold.