

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 51

By Dickerson

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Reverend Joseph Patrick Breen of Nashville on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those venerable religious figures who, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Joseph Patrick Breen of St. Edward Catholic Church in Nashville, Tennessee, is one such estimable individual, who inspired his congregation with his faith and leadership for thirty years and took a much-deserved retirement in July 2014; and

WHEREAS, the eighth of nine children of Paul Breen, Sr., and Anna Marie Nenon Breen, Father Joseph Breen was born on March 28, 1935, in Nashville and attended Christ the King Elementary School and Father Ryan High School, before continuing his education at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa; and

WHEREAS, pulled toward joining the priesthood even before he completed college, Father Breen accepted the call to the cloth and pursued graduate studies in theology at North American College in Rome, Italy, and was ordained there as a diocesan priest in St. Peter's Basilica on December 20, 1961, before he received a license in sacred theology from Gregorian University; and

WHEREAS, returning to Tennessee after his ordination, Father Joseph Breen served in Memphis as an associate pastor at Holy Rosary Parish and a teacher at Christian Brothers High School for four years, then in Chattanooga for three years as an associate pastor at St. Jude Parish and as assistant principal at Notre Dame High School, before being named pastor of St. Therese Parish in Cleveland, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, after five years of service to St. Therese, Father Breen was named the pastor of St. Rose of Lima in Murfreesboro, where he also served as the chaplain at Middle Tennessee State University's Catholic Student Center until 1984, when he returned to Nashville as pastor of St. Edward; 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 his generous spirit, Pastor Breen's boundless courage and commitment saw him speak out on immigration reform, the minimum wage, and other complicated and very controversial issues over the years, keeping true to his own conscience and his understanding of the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, although retiring to Mary, Queen of Angels, Father Joseph Breen will continue to share his exuberant personality and welcoming spirit as he presides over weddings, baptisms, and funerals for those who have been touched by his deep faith and stewardship; and

WHEREAS, the members of the General Assembly are delighted to join in honoring this faithful Christian and dynamic leader – an eminent citizen of Tennessee and of his community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we extend to Reverend Joseph Patrick Breen our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.