

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 387

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas is pleased to join the members and clergy of San Fernando Cathedral and the citizens of San Antonio in celebrating the cathedral's dedication on March 29, 2003; and

WHEREAS, The dedication marks the completion of the restoration of the historic cathedral; the cathedral's walls are the oldest standing structures in the City of San Antonio; and

WHEREAS, The San Fernando Cathedral has a long and distinguished history; the church had its beginnings with the arrival of 15 families at the Presidio of San Antonio on March 9, 1731; the families had come to establish a permanent settlement in the remote territory of Texas to prevent possible incursion by the French; and

WHEREAS, The cornerstone of the church building in the new village, La Villa de San Fernando, was laid in 1738, thus becoming the first parish church in Texas; the church was completed in 1755, and the original walls still stand today, forming what is now the sanctuary of the church; and

WHEREAS, The church has long been considered the geographical center of the city, and a white marble circle on the floor beneath the dome still marks all distances in and out of San Antonio; throughout the years there have been many remodeling and renovation projects, and numerous historical events have taken place in and around San Fernando Cathedral; and

WHEREAS, Several battles occurred in San Antonio during the War for Mexican Independence and many of the fallen soldiers were buried in the church; the Battle of the Alamo in 1836 began after Mexican General Santa Anna raised his battle flag from the tower of the church, and the remains of Alamo defenders were purportedly buried under the sanctuary railing; and

WHEREAS, Various church and civic dignitaries have visited the cathedral over its long history; Pope John Paul II spoke to students there in 1987, and presidents, politicians, ambassadors, governors, and other leaders have been a part of the cathedral's history; and

WHEREAS, The French Gothic building, which is now the main body of the church, was completed in 1873 in preparation for the naming of San Antonio as a diocese with San Fernando as its cathedral by Pope Pius IX; in 1926, San Fernando was blessed as a metropolitan cathedral, the official church of an archbishop; the current archbishop, the Most Reverend Patrick F. Flores, was installed in 1979 and is the first native Texan to serve in that position; and

WHEREAS, San Fernando Cathedral is considered the spiritual center of San Antonio; each week over 4,000 people participate in its weekend Masses; over 900 baptisms, 100 weddings, 70 funerals, and countless other ceremonies are performed there each year, and events such as symphonies, concerts, and television specials are regularly scheduled; and

WHEREAS, The restoration of San Fernando Cathedral will assure that the historical significance of the church will be maintained for the benefit of its members, for the citizens of San Antonio, and for all people of Texas; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 78th Legislature, congratulate the citizens of San Antonio on the dedication of San Fernando Cathedral and extend best wishes to all attending this joyful event; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared as a memento of this special occasion.

Van de Putte

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on March 17, 2003.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate