

By: Olivo

H.R. No. 431

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The Basilian Fathers of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish
2 concluded nearly seven decades of exceptional service to the
3 Rosenberg community on June 26, 2005; and

4 WHEREAS, Founded in France, the Congregation of St. Basil
5 expanded to Canada in the 1850s; Basilian Fathers extended their
6 work to Texas in 1899 and in time became the largest religious order
7 of priests in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston; and

8 WHEREAS, While the Basilians have traditionally devoted
9 their efforts primarily to education, they also administer parishes
10 and conduct missionary work; in the mid-1930s, the Basilian Fathers
11 adopted an apostolate to work with the Hispanic population of South
12 Texas; and

13 WHEREAS, Father Joseph P. Dillon agreed to lead this mission
14 endeavor and was assigned all the western counties in the Galveston
15 diocese; practical considerations, however, caused him to confine
16 his work to an area about 150 miles north of the Gulf of Mexico,
17 where growing numbers of Latinos were settling; Hispanic residents
18 in that area, many of whom did not speak English, greeted the
19 Basilian initiative with great thanksgiving; and

20 WHEREAS, Father Dillon held his first mass in Rosenberg on
21 September 26, 1936, in Zaragoza Hall; in addition to his pastoral
22 efforts in that community, he traveled a circuit that eventually
23 included nine towns, together with a number of smaller communities
24 and area ranches; following Basilian tradition, he regularly

1 visited individual families, taking care on those occasions to
2 determine their needs and, especially, to seek out the sick; and

3 WHEREAS, On May 25, 1938, Bishop Christopher Byrne granted
4 Father Dillon's request for permission to build a mission church in
5 Rosenberg; Father Dillon and Father Thomas O'Rourke found property
6 with a house, garage, chicken coop, and 15 fruit trees that was
7 being offered at \$3,500, and on February 21, 1939, a sales contract
8 for the land was concluded and \$100 put down as a deposit; and

9 WHEREAS, Construction on the church began the following year,
10 on January 18, with 75 volunteers and one paid worker; many of those
11 donating their labor would walk a number of miles to get to the
12 building site; in April 1940, Bishop Byrne journeyed to Rosenberg
13 to bless the church and to preside over confirmations; and

14 WHEREAS, Using Our Lady of Guadalupe as their base, the
15 Basilian Fathers established a number of other churches in Fort
16 Bend and Brazoria Counties; in addition to Rosenberg, they were
17 active in Angleton, Sugar Land, Missouri City, Manvel, Richmond,
18 Wharton, Bay City, and Freeport; and

19 WHEREAS, On September 21, 1942, Father Dillon opened Our Lady
20 of Guadalupe School, which was operated by the Sisters of Divine
21 Providence; the school began with 214 students in grades one
22 through four and eventually encompassed grades one through eight;
23 it remained in existence until 1963; and

24 WHEREAS, Father John F. Collins, who served as mission
25 director from 1948 to 1969, established Our Lady of Guadalupe
26 Clinic in 1951 to provide free medical care to members of the
27 community; directed for many years by Sister Mary Walter Gutowski,

1 who also served as a midwife, the clinic was staffed by doctors on a
2 pro bono basis; it was located in a 10-room frame building until
3 1972, when it moved into a brick structure and the Scanlan
4 Foundation took over its financial support; and

5 WHEREAS, While maintained by the church, this clinic helped
6 the poorest of its clients to secure such basic items as clothing
7 and furniture; today, the Pastoral Center of Our Lady of Guadalupe
8 supports a range of social ministry programs that address community
9 needs for food, shelter, clothing, and education, as well as
10 spiritual nourishment; and

11 WHEREAS, The 1950s also witnessed the arrival of sisters
12 affiliated with the Catechists of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary of
13 Tlalpan, Mexico, a community that continues to serve Our Lady of
14 Guadalupe; and

15 WHEREAS, Other milestones in the history of the church
16 include the introduction of the graduation mass by Father Max
17 Murphy in 1960, the elevation of Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission to a
18 parish by John Louis Morkovsky, the coadjutor bishop, in 1966, the
19 formation of the first parish council under the guidance of Father
20 Enrique Bravo in 1974, and the dedication of the Family Life Center
21 by Bishop Morkovsky in 1979; in 1986, during the pastorate of Father
22 John Boscoe, Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrated its 50th anniversary;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, Because early congregants had little money to give
25 to the church, they held bazaars as fund-raisers, donating
26 chickens, hogs, and corn; by 1976 the parish bazaar had grown to
27 such an extent that Father Bravo moved it to the Fort Bend County

1 Fair Grounds; Auxiliary Bishop James A. Tamayo celebrated the
2 annual bazaar mass there in 1993; and

3 WHEREAS, In recent decades, several deacons have greatly
4 assisted the work of this parish; Deacon David Mitchell was
5 ordained and assigned to the church in 1981, Deacon Enrique G.
6 Avila, who served as permanent deacon, was ordained under Father
7 James F. Blocher in 2003, and Deacon Danny Naranjo was assigned to
8 the parish in 2004; and

9 WHEREAS, Over the years, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church has
10 been blessed with the dedicated efforts of a number of fine priests;
11 the roster of those who have served and nurtured the congregation
12 includes Fathers Joseph P. Dillon, Vincent J. Fullerton, Thomas
13 O'Rourke, John F. Collins, Leo Adams, Jaime Mitchell Abercrombie,
14 John Sheehan Broussard, Michael Miller, Arthur McCarthy, Raphael
15 O'Laughlin, Raymond Jackson, Robert Hall, Ronald Alexander Borg,
16 John Leonard Boscoe, Enrique Bravo, James Francis Blocher, Wilfred
17 Steidel Canning, William Edmund Coughlin, Richard Jeffery, Francis
18 Joseph Launtric, Charles E. Lynch, William Leslie May, Max Murphy,
19 Wilfred Murphy, Bernard Charles Owens, Maurice Louis Pierce,
20 Bernard John Pinsonneault, Norbert Reuss, Robert Gerard Ritz,
21 Joseph Paul Shannon, Wencil C. Pavlovsky, and Jay Walsh; and

22 WHEREAS, Throughout the history of this venerable parish, the
23 Basilian Fathers have exemplified the motto of their order, "Teach
24 me goodness, discipline, and knowledge"; these steadfast shepherds
25 have offered spiritual guidance and sustenance while ministering in
26 other vital ways to the needs of their congregants, and their work
27 has brought profound comfort, joy, and hope to countless

1 individuals; now, therefore, be it

2 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 79th Texas
3 Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby honor the Basilian Fathers
4 for their immeasurable contributions to the members of Our Lady of
5 Guadalupe Parish and that they be extended deep appreciation for
6 the example of service and the legacy of good works that they have
7 bequeathed to the community of Rosenberg; and, be it further

8 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
9 prepared for the Basilian Fathers as an expression of high regard by
10 the Texas House of Representatives.