

By: Dunnam

H.C.R. No. 139

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Catholics around the world are mourning the loss of  
2 their extraordinary leader, His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who  
3 died on April 2, 2005, at the age of 84; and

4 WHEREAS, Born on May 18, 1920, to a retired army officer and a  
5 schoolteacher in Wadowice, Poland, Karol Jozef Wojtyla suffered  
6 tremendous personal loss early in his life, with the deaths of his  
7 mother when he was eight and his brother when he was 12; in 1938, he  
8 and his father moved to Krakow, where he enrolled at Jagiellonian  
9 University to study literature and philosophy; when the Germans  
10 invaded Poland and closed the university the following year, he  
11 took a job as a stonecutter in a quarry; his father died shortly  
12 thereafter, and the young man, now on his own, continued to work in  
13 the quarry and later at a chemical factory to earn his living and  
14 avoid deportation to Germany; and

15 WHEREAS, Answering the call to the priesthood in 1942, John  
16 Paul began taking courses in the Krakow seminary; he was ordained in  
17 1946 and spent the next few years earning two master's degrees and a  
18 doctorate before assuming duties as an assistant pastor in 1949; he  
19 served as a chaplain to university students at St. Florian's Church  
20 while working on a second doctorate in philosophy; throughout his  
21 career, he continued to pursue his scholarly studies, and his  
22 writings now fill more than 150 volumes; and

23 WHEREAS, In 1954, he was hired as a faculty member in the  
24 theology department at Catholic University of Lublin, the only

1 Catholic university in the communist world, and also served as  
2 professor of moral theology and social ethics in the major seminary  
3 of Krakow; in 1956, he was appointed to the chair of ethics at  
4 Catholic University and, two years later, was named the auxiliary  
5 bishop of Krakow; when the Vatican Council II began deliberations  
6 in 1962 that would revolutionize the Catholic Church, John Paul was  
7 one of its intellectual leaders, taking particular interest in  
8 religious freedom; that same year, he was named the acting  
9 archbishop of Krakow; and

10 WHEREAS, His rapid ascent through the hierarchy of the church  
11 was evidenced by his appointment as cardinal in 1967; widely  
12 respected for his remarkable intellect and leadership abilities, he  
13 was selected as the next pope after the sudden death of John Paul I,  
14 who died only 34 days after taking office; and

15 WHEREAS, Choosing the same name as his predecessor, Pope John  
16 Paul II began his Pontificate on October 16, 1978, earning the  
17 distinctions of being the first non-Italian pope in 455 years, the  
18 first Slavic pope ever, and, at age 58, the youngest pope in 132  
19 years; and

20 WHEREAS, The Catholic Church that he inherited was undergoing  
21 tremendous upheaval with reforms begun by the Vatican Council II;  
22 John Paul II embarked on restoration of the church's conservative  
23 traditions and was not afraid to voice his opinion on nonchurch  
24 matters, criticizing dictators, supporting the Solidarity Movement  
25 in his homeland, hastening the collapse of communism in Europe, and  
26 condemning materialism in all its forms; and

27 WHEREAS, He is widely revered as one of the most popular

1 leaders that the Catholic Church has ever elected; nearly 18  
2 million people participated in the General Audiences held on  
3 Wednesdays during his more than 26 years at the Vatican, and his  
4 travels throughout the world have been international news events;  
5 while his predecessors generally stayed close to Rome, John Paul  
6 made it his mission to walk among his followers around the globe;  
7 despite a 1981 assassination attempt, he remained undeterred in his  
8 travels, visiting more than 115 countries over the past 20 years;  
9 the most traveled pope in history, he met with great success  
10 expanding the church in Africa and Latin America, with the latter  
11 accounting for approximately half of the estimated one billion  
12 Catholics in the world today; voted Man of the Year by *Time Magazine*  
13 in 1994, John Paul spoke eight languages fluently and shepherded  
14 the church into the modern age, welcoming technology into the  
15 Vatican with satellite transmissions and other innovations; and

16 WHEREAS, Pope John Paul II was a staunch defender of human  
17 rights who reached across geographical borders, political  
18 persuasions, and divisions of race, ethnicity, and even religious  
19 ideology to inspire millions around the world with his strength,  
20 compassion, and faith; now, therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, That the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas  
22 hereby pay special tribute to the life of His Holiness Pope John  
23 Paul II and extend sincere sympathy to all who mourn the loss of  
24 this brilliant and beloved man of God.