

By: Pickett

H.R. No. 45

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The Roman Catholic Diocese of El Paso, which was
2 founded on March 3, 1914, is launching a yearlong celebration of its
3 centennial on March 3, 2013, and this occasion provides a welcome
4 opportunity to recognize the rich history of the diocese; and

5 WHEREAS, The roots of Catholicism in the El Paso area date
6 back to the late 1600s, when Franciscan missionaries arrived in
7 West Texas; the diocese is home to the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, where
8 the Tigua Indians have preserved their native and Catholic
9 traditions for more than 330 years; and

10 WHEREAS, The 19th and 20th centuries heralded a number of
11 "firsts" for Catholics in the city of El Paso; in 1879, it became
12 the site of the first convent of the Sisters of Loretto in Texas,
13 and in 1892, the Daughters of Charity founded Hotel Dieu, the first
14 hospital in El Paso; a decade later, the city became home to the
15 first council of the Knights of Columbus in Texas; the diocese also
16 helped fund the creation of Mount Cristo Rey, one of the largest
17 statues of Christ in the world, which was completed in 1939 by
18 sculptor Urbici Soler; later that century, in 1978, the Roman
19 Catholic Diocese of El Paso became the first diocese to be led by a
20 Hispanic bishop, Patrick Flores; and

21 WHEREAS, Around the time of its founding by Pope Pius X, the
22 diocese aided thousands of Catholics fleeing Mexico during the
23 Mexican Revolution and the Cristero movement; among them was
24 St. Pedro de Jesus Maldonado Lucero, a priest ordained in El Paso

1 who was killed by Mexican troops in 1939; Father Maldonado Lucero
2 was canonized by Pope John Paul II at the turn of the millennium;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, Today, the diocese encompasses an area of nearly
5 27,000 square miles and serves the counties of El Paso, Hudspeth,
6 Culberson, Jeff Davis, Presidio, Brewster, Reeves, Ward, Winkler,
7 and Loving; home to 55 parishes, 20 missions, 11 schools, and 22
8 ministries, it serves the spiritual needs of more than 680,000
9 Catholic faithful; the diocese remains committed to social justice
10 through its Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services, one of the
11 largest legal aid clinics in the Southwest, and it coordinates
12 numerous charitable works, which include distributing food and
13 clothing to people in need, along with providing them shelter,
14 education, counseling services, and medical care; moreover, it has
15 contributed to the cultural diversity of the state through its
16 preservation of important historic sites and Hispanic Catholic
17 traditions; and

18 WHEREAS, Guided by the dual patron saints of Our Lady of
19 Guadalupe and Saint Patrick, the Roman Catholic Diocese of El Paso
20 has long been a source of fellowship and spiritual enrichment for
21 thousands, and its member parishes remain a positive and vital
22 force in the communities they serve; now, therefore, be it

23 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas
24 Legislature hereby commemorate the 100th anniversary of the
25 founding of the Roman Catholic Diocese of El Paso and extend to its
26 parishioners and clergy sincere best wishes for the future; and, be
27 it further

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1 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
2 prepared for the diocese as an expression of high regard by the
3 Texas House of Representatives.