
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 619 Session of
2008

INTRODUCED BY M. O'BRIEN, W. KELLER, KENNEY, MCGEEHAN, D. EVANS, BELFANTI, BENNINGTON, BEYER, BIANCUCCI, BISHOP, BOBACK, CALTAGIRONE, CLYMER, COHEN, CONKLIN, DALEY, DONATUCCI, FAIRCHILD, FLECK, FRANKEL, GALLOWAY, GEIST, GEORGE, GIBBONS, GINGRICH, GRUCELA, HARKINS, HELM, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, HESS, HICKERNELL, JAMES, KULA, MAHONEY, MAJOR, MANDERINO, McILHATTAN, MANTZ, MILLARD, MUNDY, MUSTIO, PALLONE, PARKER, PAYNE, QUIGLEY, RAMALEY, READSHAW, REED, REICHLLEY, SAINATO, SANTONI, SAYLOR, SCAVELLO, K. SMITH, SURRA, TURZAI, VULAKOVICH, WALKO, J. WHITE, YOUNGBLOOD, GABIG, MELIO, PETRONE AND RUBLEY, MARCH 5, 2008

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
MARCH 5, 2008

A RESOLUTION

1 Extending congratulations on the 275th anniversary of the
2 founding of Old St. Joseph's Church and designating the month
3 of May 2008 as "Old St. Joseph's Church Month" in
4 Pennsylvania.

5 WHEREAS, English Jesuits first arrived in Maryland in 1634,
6 and in 1704, the Jesuits began expanding their missionary
7 efforts to surrounding locations, including Philadelphia; and

8 WHEREAS, In 1733, a small church was established in
9 Philadelphia by Father Joseph Greaton called St. Joseph's
10 Church, and this church was the only place in the British
11 colonies where Mass could be legally celebrated in public until
12 the American Revolution; and

13 WHEREAS, In 1757, Father Robert Harding built a second church
14 that served as the home base for the Jesuit circuit riders who

1 expanded the mission to other mid-Atlantic states; and

2 WHEREAS, Old St. Joseph's Church was integral in establishing
3 both the nation's first hospital, Pennsylvania Hospital, and the
4 first Roman Catholic orphanage to help care for orphaned
5 children after the 1793 epidemic of yellow fever; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1808, Philadelphia became a diocese and
7 Philadelphia's first two bishops began residing at the church;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, In 1839, Father Felix Joseph Barbelin established
10 the current location and building for St. Joseph's Church, and
11 soon the church became known as Old St. Joseph's Church; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1840, St. Joseph's Hospital was established due
13 to the efforts of Father Barbelin to help care for Irish
14 immigrants who could not be cared for due to overcrowding at
15 other hospitals; and

16 WHEREAS, Father Barbelin also established many education
17 programs, including four parochial schools, a well-known Sunday
18 school and St. Joseph's University; and

19 WHEREAS, In the 1950s, the gardens and open space were
20 created when buildings to the north of Old St. Joseph's Church
21 were demolished; and

22 WHEREAS, In 1985, efforts were made to reach out to the
23 growing homeless population of Philadelphia, and programs were
24 created to serve dinner to homeless and low-income men and to
25 deliver dinner to people who lived in the area surrounding the
26 church; and

27 WHEREAS, Old St. Joseph's Church continues to build upon its
28 rich history of public service and ministry and has been
29 acclaimed as a National Shrine to Religious Freedom; therefore
30 be it

1 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives congratulate Old
2 St. Joseph's Church on the occasion of its 275th anniversary;
3 and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the
5 month of May 2008 as "Old St. Joseph's Church Month" in
6 Pennsylvania.