**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE THE REVEREND MONSIGNOR RONALD R. CELLINI, OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON, AS HE CELEBRATES FOUR DECADES OF DEVOTED MINISTRY TO HIS CHURCH AND COMMUNITY.

Whereas, born the son of Cataldo “Guy” Cellini and Emma Frioni Cellini on February 25, 1953, Ronald Cellini, with his two sisters, Eileen Leasha and Donna Cellini McDole, was reared in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, all active members of St. Titus Catholic Church; and

Whereas, after graduating from Hopewell High School in 1971, he entered St. Paul’s College Seminary in Crafton, Pennsylvania, and earned a bachelor’s degree in philosophy in 1975 and a master’s degree in counseling in 1981, both from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and

Whereas, Monsignor Cellini earned a master’s degree in church history in 1980 and a master of divinity in 1986 from Mt. St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and he was ordained as a priest at St. Paul Cathedral on September 29, 1979; and

Whereas, in 2004, he earned an education specialist degree from the University of South Carolina and a doctorate in education from Graduate Theological Foundation in Indiana in 2010, and he participated in the Institute for Continuing Theological Education in 2007 at the Pontifical North American College in Rome; and

Whereas, his priestly ministry commenced in the Diocese of Pittsburgh as a parochial vicar and high school counselor, teacher, chaplain, vice principal, and principal in diocesan schools; and

Whereas, in 1993, at the request of Bishop England High School in Charleston, and with the permission of his bishop, Monsignor Cellini began ministry in the Diocese of Charleston as vice rector of Bishop England High School in Charleston, administrator of Our Lady of Good Counsel on Folly Beach, and chaplain of the College of Charleston and the Medical University of South Carolina; and

Whereas, from 1996 to 2008, he served as pastor of St. Peter’s Catholic Church in Beaufort and Holy Cross Mission on St. Helena Island, during which time he served as the director of Religious Education and Evangelization for the Diocese of Charleston and was responsible for beginning a semiannual Religious Education and Evangelization Conference known as “Fire at the Beach”; and

Whereas, Monsignor Cellini led St. Peter’s in a capital campaign to build a twenty‑four thousand square‑foot church in 2006, opened the Sacred Heart House Outreach to feed nine hundred families a month from its food pantry, graduated the first eighth grade class from St. Peter’s Catholic School and expanded its facilities, began a school endowment, rebuilt and refurbished Holy Cross Mission, constructed a columbarium, doubled parish‑owned property, started Angel Auction to benefit the indigent, started a large scouting program, and initiated Homes for the Holidays Gala and Home Tours to provide scholarships for those in need; and

Whereas, with dedication to his community, he served on the oversight board for the humane treatment of research animals at Alpha Genesis in Yemassee and assisted the diocese in parishes and missions across the State, such as St. Andrew in Barnwell, St. Mary in Allendale, Sacred Heart in Blackville, St. Anthony in Hardeeville, St. Anthony in Ridgeland, and St. Mary in Hampton; and

Whereas, as the Dean of the Beaufort Deanery, consisting of several Lowcountry towns, Monsignor Cellini serves as pastor of St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church in Bluffton, which has over eleven thousand parishioners, and he has expanded the Hispanic Ministry, initiated an evangelization effort, founded a St. Vincent DePaul Society, started a program of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration, executed a capital campaign to retire the debt, and began a large capital campaign and built the Parish Life Center; and

Whereas, his significant work has been widely recognized, including being named Clergyman of the Year by Beaufort Kiwanis Club and receiving its Caritas award for outstanding service to the Diocese of Charleston, named Knight Commander of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher and the 2010 Honoree of the 60th Knights of Columbus Exemplification, and designated a Chaplain to His Holiness in 2011 by Pope Benedict XVI. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, congratulate The Reverend Monsignor Ronald R. Cellini, of the Catholic Diocese of Charleston, as he celebrates four decades of devoted ministry to his Church and community.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to The Reverend Monsignor Ronald R. Cellini.

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