

2017 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 59

BY SENATOR BISHOP

COMMENDATIONS. Commends the Sisters of the Holy Family on 175 years of service.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To commend and congratulate the Sisters of the Holy Family on one hundred seventy-five
3 years of service.

4 WHEREAS, the Sisters of the Holy Family were founded in 1842 by Henriette
5 Delille, a free woman of color, with cofoundresses of the African-American religious
6 community, Juliette Gaudin and Josephine Charles, who defied the mores of the time to live
7 a chaste life together dedicated to God; and

8 WHEREAS, Henriette overcame resistance to the idea of a Black religious
9 congregation, the lack of finances to more fully serve those in need, and the lack of support
10 from the Church and civil authority; and

11 WHEREAS, she had to secretly get religious training with the Sisters of the Sacred
12 Heart in Convent, Louisiana, where she served as a pantry girl; and

13 WHEREAS, Marie Jeanne Aliquot, a Caucasian, a good friend to Henriette served
14 the small community as their Novice Directress; and

15 WHEREAS, the Sisters had as their mission to teach slave women and children the
16 Catechism of the Holy Catholic Church for their reception of the Sacraments of Baptism and
17 Holy Communion, and Henriette and the cofoundresses became godmothers to many Blacks,
18 Whites, slaves, and free people of color as well as witnesses to marriages; and

1 WHEREAS, in 1846, Henriette wrote the Rules for the Sisters of the Presentation
2 (the original name of the order) which provided direction for the group; and

3 WHEREAS, the Sisters took in four elderly women into their home, the beginning
4 of the old folks home which today is known as Lafon Nursing Facility, recorded in the
5 National Register as the oldest continuously existing Catholic nursing facility for the elderly
6 in the United States; and

7 WHEREAS, the Sisters cared for the sick during the yellow fever epidemic in New
8 Orleans, and when children were left homeless by the pestilence in 1853, the Sisters took
9 care of them and opened an orphanage; and

10 WHEREAS, in 1847, a group of free people of color incorporated the Association
11 of the Holy Family of which Henriette was president and Juliette Gaudin was secretary; and

12 WHEREAS, the Sisters lived a very poor life, doing laundry and sewing, teaching
13 during the day and begging for funds in the evenings; on many days and nights they went
14 to bed hungry, because they gave their food to the poor; and

15 WHEREAS, when Henriette Delille died in 1862, she willed her house to the church
16 so that the ministries could continue; and

17 WHEREAS, in 1867, St. Mary's Academy, the first secondary school for free girls
18 of color in New Orleans, was established; today, St. Mary's Academy educates students from
19 preK three-year-olds through twelfth grade, is coed from grades preK three-year-olds
20 through fifth grade, grades sixth through twelfth are all girls; in the middle school, the
21 classes for the boys and the girls are separate; the male academy was initiated; the school
22 is accredited by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges; graduates hold prominent
23 positions throughout the United States; and the school's principal, Sister Jennie Jones, was
24 honored by the White House as a "Champion of Change"; and

25 WHEREAS, in 1906, Mother Austin Jones purchased 123 acres of land in New
26 Orleans East, the cornerstone for the motherhouse, St. Mary's Academy, St. Paul the
27 Apostle, Lafon Nursing Facility, Lafon Daycare Center, and Delille Inn Apartments; and

28 WHEREAS, the motherhouse and St. Mary's Academy were formerly housed at 717
29 Orleans Avenue, but in 1955, the motherhouse moved to New Orleans East and St. Mary's
30 Academy was moved there in 1965; and

1 WHEREAS, in 1973, invited by the Bishop, the community sent Sr. Sylvia
2 Thibodeaux to cofound a community in Benin City, Nigeria, Africa; and

3 WHEREAS, in 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated the ministries in New Orleans
4 and the Sisters were not able to move back into the motherhouse until 2006; however, with
5 the aid of the generosity of people throughout the United States and Federal Emergency
6 Management Agency, all of the institutions have been rebuilt with the exception of one; and

7 WHEREAS, current ministries of the Sisters include care for the sick and elderly at
8 Lafon Nursing Facility, St. John Berchmans Manor (apartments for low-income senior
9 citizens), Delille Inn (apartments for low-income senior citizens), St. Mary's Academy High
10 School, St. Mary's Academy Elementary School, St. John Berchmans Early Childhood
11 Development Center, school teachers and administrators in archdiocesan schools, pastoral
12 care in parishes, and prison ministry; and

13 WHEREAS, the canonization process for Henriette Delille was opened in 1988 by
14 Archbishop Philip Hannan of New Orleans and on March 27, 2010, she was named
15 Venerable by Pope Benedict XVI; and

16 WHEREAS, there have been eighteen Superior Generals, and Sister Greta Jupiter is
17 the current Superior General; and

18 WHEREAS, the community has ministered in Louisiana, Texas, California,
19 Oklahoma, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Illinois, Tennessee, Washington, DC, Belize,
20 Central America, and Nigeria, Africa; and

21 WHEREAS, the charisma of the Sisters of the Holy Family, true to the divine
22 inspiration of its foundress, is to be a prophetic witness in proclaiming the Gospel message
23 of compassion, liberation, healing, and empowerment to all peoples with a preferential love
24 for the poor and the powerless; and

25 WHEREAS, for over 175 years, the Sisters have continued the mission of educating
26 the youth, caring for the sick and elderly, providing housing for low-income senior citizens,
27 participating in prison ministry, and pastoral care in parishes, especially for the poor and
28 marginalized of society; and

29 WHEREAS, the Sisters of the Holy Family is the only religious order founded in
30 New Orleans in existence today.

1 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
2 does hereby commend and congratulate the Sisters of the Holy Family on one hundred
3 seventy-five years of service.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
5 Sister Greta Jupiter, Superior General of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jerry J. Guillot.

	DIGEST	
SR 59 Original	2017 Regular Session	Bishop
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