

BY: Senator GRIFFO

COMMEMORATING the 125th Anniversary of Holy
Trinity Church of Utica, New York

WHEREAS, Religious institutions, and the many spiritual, social and educational benefits they confer, play a vital role in the development of the moral fabric of a responsible citizenry; and

WHEREAS, It is the tradition of this State and this Nation to pay tribute to those institutions and individuals who have contributed to the ethical and spiritual values of their communities; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of Holy Trinity Church of Utica, New York; and

WHEREAS, The history of Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Utica, New York began in October of 1894 when 82 families and individuals contributed a sum of 79 dollars toward a future Parish and Church to serve Polish Immigrants to the Utica Area; and

WHEREAS, Well before 1889, Polish families began to arrive in Utica from a Poland which was dismembered by three neighboring nations; and

WHEREAS, The Polish immigrants entering the Utica area worked in local factories and foundries seeking a better life for themselves and their children; above all, they desired to live and preserve their Catholic Faith and Polish Culture and to share it with future generations; and

WHEREAS, With this in mind, the St. Stanislaus Society, a fraternal aid society dedicated to their great Polish Patron was established in 1889, and would be the foundation upon which the future parish and church was built; and

WHEREAS, This Society endeavored to seek out and invite Polish-speaking Priests to come to Utica as they were able, especially during Lent and Easter; after the initial offering of 79 dollars in 1894, monthly collections continued and in August of 1896, the Saint Stanislaus Society purchased a tract of land along with a wooden frame building on Chenango Avenue; Chenango Avenue became Lincoln Avenue, the current address of the church; and

WHEREAS, In October of 1896, the deed to this property was turned over to the Syracuse Diocese and Bishop Patrick Ludden, who was named the first Bishop of the new Syracuse Diocese 10 years earlier; he assured the people he would honor their request for a priest to serve them in their own Polish language; and

WHEREAS, Two months later, on December 23, 1886, Father Simon Pniak arrived in Utica as the new pastor; his first Mass was celebrated on Christmas Day in the St. John's School Hall on Burnet Street since the

small frame building was still being converted into a modest chapel, rectory and office; one week later, on the Sunday after Christmas, 60

families attended the first Mass celebrated in this new little wooden church; and

WHEREAS, On March 25, 1897, Holy Trinity Church was legally incorporated, and on September 19th of this same year, the cornerstone for a larger church was laid and blessed by Bishop Ludden; and

WHEREAS, Due to events in Poland and the favorable opportunities for employment in Utica, more Polish immigrants began to settle in the area and the Parish began to raise more funds and make plans for a larger church; and

WHEREAS, During the summer of 1905, groundbreaking took place for a new granite church; on July 15, 1906, Bishop Ludden laid the cornerstone of this, Holy Trinity's present church, and at the same time confirmed a class of 500 children and spoke to the 2,000 people who gathered that glorious day; and

WHEREAS, Today, Holy Trinity Church remains committed to proclaim the gospel message of Jesus Christ as a Roman Catholic community of faith, by promoting a sense of commitment to the church, encouraging divine worship and prayer, fostering evangelization and nurturing the spirit of service; and

WHEREAS, Within the context of its Polish-American religious and cultural heritage, Holy Trinity Church truly fosters its traditions and continues to aspire to personal growth in faith; furthermore, this vital institution is determined to develop its vision for the future, to educate the children in Christian values and to be receptive to the creative and saving grace of the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit; and

WHEREAS, Under the luminous direction of Father John E. Mikalajunas, Holy Trinity Church now stands on the threshold of tomorrow, prepared to meet the challenges of the coming decades, while retaining that spiritual resolve which has so characterized its glorious past; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to take note of enduring religious institutions and to bring such institutions to the attention of the people of this Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of Holy Trinity Church of Utica, New York, confident that this commemoration reflects our belief in those values which enhance the dignity and purpose of life; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Father John E. Mikalajunas, Holy Trinity Church.