



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: 16-5705 **Version:** 1 **Name:** CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAINT CONSTANCE PARISH
Type: Consent Calendar Resolution **Status:** Approved
File created: 10/3/2016 **In control:** Board of Commissioners
On agenda: 10/5/2016 **Final action:** 10/5/2016
Title: PROPOSED RESOLUTION

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAINT CONSTANCE PARISH

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Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
10/5/2016	1	Board of Commissioners	approve	Pass

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAINT CONSTANCE PARISH

WHEREAS, in 1916, in a small Northwest Side neighborhood of Chicago, a group of 90 Polish families, members and volunteers of the Polonia Club at Our Lady of Victory Parish identified the need for a new parish to serve the Polish Catholic community; and

WHEREAS, with a growing community, these members met with then Auxiliary Bishop Paul Rhode to ask for his permission to pursue the opening of Saint Constance Parish in what is now known as Jefferson Park; and

WHEREAS, with the final approvals and blessings from the Bishop, Father Alexander Knitter was appointed as the first pastor and was tasked with establishing the new parish and its community. Once the Parish's location was chosen at Lawrence and Central Avenues, renovations began while parishioners heard their first Masses in the home of Valentine Wachowski at Lawrence and Long Avenues; and

WHEREAS, the Jefferson Park Community continued to develop at rapid rates and it was evident then that St. Constance Parish would soon need larger facilities. A new site was obtained at Ainslie and Strong Streets and on November 1st, 1916 ground was broken for what would be the new church and a new school; and

WHEREAS, less than a year later, Archbishop George Mundelein presided over the dedication and Father Knitter held the church's first Mass in what is now the current home of St. Constance Parish at 5843 W. Strong Street, Chicago, IL. Within its first 30 years, the St. Constance Community grew to include over 1,000 families; and

WHEREAS, during the community's continuous growth, Parish societies were organized such as the Original Polonia Club, Rosary Sodality, Holy Name Society, Handmaids of the Lord, Church Ushers and the Saint Constance Choir. By the end of 1917, Sisters Mary Waltrudis, Mary Giovanna and Mary Martha of the School Sisters of Notre Dame welcomed the first class of 72 students to the Saint Constance School; and

WHEREAS, by 1937, the school had grown to include a full four-year high school known as Cardinal Stritch High

School. Following the passing of Father Knitter, Fr. Sylvester Wronka was appointed the fourth pastor of St. Constance and under his leadership, a new convent was built in 1956 followed by a new elementary school in 1959. Following in his footsteps, St. Constance's fifth pastor, Fr. Handzel added to the Parish's legacy with the groundbreaking of what would later be the Handzel Social Center in 1967; and

WHEREAS, following the election of an administration, Finance Committee and re-developed Auxiliary Ministries, the year 1973 brought the completion of a small meeting hall, science lab and school library. A short time later, the Parish Athletic Association was founded; and

WHEREAS, St. Constance Parish who began with such humble beginnings in a small frame church and 90 families, has now grown to include a modern church, school, social center and over 1,600 families; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners does hereby celebrate the Centennial Jubilee of the 100th Anniversary of Saint Constance Parish and all the efforts by its Polish Catholic community and their supporters throughout their journey; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this text be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body, and an official copy of same be presented to the St. Constance Parish leaders to commemorate this milestone event.