

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 54

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Reverend Thomas Anthony James, S.V.D.

WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and profound sorrow that the passing of Reverend Thomas Anthony James, on October 28, 2022, at the age of eighty, has been learned; and

WHEREAS, Father James was born on June 11, 1942, in St. Martinville, Louisiana, to Collins Henry James Sr., and Eva Anthony James; and

WHEREAS, Father James was educated at Notre Dame Catholic Elementary School in St. Martinville and St. Augustine Seminary in Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi, and ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Auxiliary Bishop Warren Boudreaux of the Diocese of Lafayette on December 18, 1969; and

WHEREAS, Father James' priestly service continued for over half a century where he was an active member of the Black Clergy Association and devoted himself to increasing vocations to the priesthood among African Americans; and

WHEREAS, Father James was also an educator who was deeply committed to and worked tirelessly in support of Catholic education, particularly in the African-American community, and he maintained lifelong friendships with former students and co-workers; and

WHEREAS, throughout the years, Father James served in many parishes and was a Pastor at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church in Lafayette, St. Edward Catholic Church in New Iberia, St. Joseph Catholic Church in Broussard, St. Anthony Mission Chapel in Cade, and the Holy Ghost Catholic Church in Opelousas; and

WHEREAS, one of his proudest accomplishments was erecting a Memorial to the "First Four" African-American Priests on the grounds of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church; and

WHEREAS, Father James also served as Episcopal Vicar for both the South Region and the Central Regions of the Diocese of Lafayette, served three terms as Vice-Provincial for the Southern Province of the Divine Word Ministries, and served several terms on the Provincial Council; and

WHEREAS, Father James was steadfast in his support of the Miles Perret Cancer Center, veterans programs, and Hospice of Acadiana, where he served on the Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, Father James also devoted himself to mentoring young priests throughout the course of his ministry and he loved engaging individuals in growing their faith; and

WHEREAS, he was a spirited person, a great storyteller, and he loved teaching, reading, enjoying time with his friends, fishing, listening to music, and being with his family, whom he cherished so deeply; and

WHEREAS, left to cherish his memory are his siblings, Sister Geneva James, SSF, and Collins James Jr. and his wife, Hazel; his niece Louise and her husband, Amos Batiste Jr.; great-nephews Dylan and Tyler Batiste, and Brandon Chapman; great-nieces Naseyani and Khylee James and their mother, Forqueena James; his godchildren, Khalia Irons and Karlee Taylor, and a host of relatives and friends; and

WHEREAS, Father James will always be remembered and respected for his leadership, his courage, and his passion to serve God's people; his memory will be etched forever in the minds and hearts of all who knew and loved him; and with his passing, Louisiana has lost one of her finest sons.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby extend its sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Reverend Thomas Anthony James, S.V.D. and his exemplary life of service to the Catholic church is hereby recognized and recorded for posterity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Reverend Thomas Anthony James, S.V.D.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE