

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 14

BY SENATOR MURRAY

A RESOLUTION

To commend and congratulate Sister Vera Butler, director of the Rebuild Center at St. Joseph Catholic Church of New Orleans, upon receipt of the Hibernian of the Year Award for 2014 presented by the Louisiana Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

WHEREAS, Sister Vera Butler is a humble servant of Christ, a member of the Order of Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a conduit of God's tender mercy, a community organizer, and director of the Rebuild Center located at St. Joseph Catholic Church, whose good works benefit the less fortunate and homeless in Mid-City; and

WHEREAS, born in County Kerry, Ireland, Sister Vera entered the Order of the Presentation Sisters in 1970; since that time, her mission continues to be one of service to the needs of those forgotten souls who cling to the margins of society; and

WHEREAS, Sister Vera is an unshakable optimist who operates the Rebuild Center, a multi-service complex that provides the homeless with access to services vital to a return to the workforce and a move off the streets to better living conditions; and

WHEREAS, as a collaborative effort of St. Joseph's Church, the Harry Tompson Center at Immaculate Conception Church, the Archdiocese of New Orleans Hispanic Apostolate, and the Presentation Sisters/Lantern Light ministry, the center creates a respite that provides facilities for personal hygiene and laundry, a free lunch program that daily feeds two hundred patrons, mail service, a neighborhood food pantry, telephone access, medical care, legal assistance, necessary documentation and identification cards, and even cultural enrichment; and

WHEREAS, Sister Vera, along with Sister Anna Ramone, Sister Dolores Cooney and Sister Enid Story offer the downtrodden a modicum of peace, dignity, and hope, precious commodities for those who feel shunned and left behind by society; and

WHEREAS, Sister Vera is a proactive community service dynamo of the highest order; she solicits donations of funding, time, and hard work from private citizens, businesses, and nonprofit organizations; the Lantern Light's annual fish fry is a fundraiser that brings out a pantheon of New Orleans finest culinary artists and celebrity chefs; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, Sister Vera was the recipient of the Catholic Extension Lumen Christi Award for her work after Hurricane Katrina when she went door-to-door through devastated neighborhoods to assist the impoverished; and

WHEREAS, from the Holy Bible's New Testament, in the book of Matthew, Chapter Five, Verse Three, the first of The Beatitudes reads, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven*; and

WHEREAS, Sister Vera's unshakable faith has helped many of those 'poor in spirit' to recover their dignity; they come from every walk of life, those who have lost their way through some unfortunate circumstance, and some of these stories do have happy endings, due in no small part to the efforts of Sister Vera; and

WHEREAS, the Hibernian of the Year Award originated with the Ancient Order of Hibernians, a fraternal organization, that promotes the interests and welfare of the Irish in America; Sister Vera, who is a member of the women's auxiliary, the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians in Louisiana, Margaret Haughery Division, will receive the award at the annual St. Patrick's Day Banquet on March 17, 2014; and

WHEREAS, Sister Vera is the first woman to be so honored; and

WHEREAS, each year, the Ancient Order of Hibernians selects one person who best represents the Order and its core beliefs; and like the beloved historic figure, Margaret Haughery, Sister Vera Butler is a New Orleanian by choice who, through her love of Christ, has embraced the lifelong vocation of helping others; and

WHEREAS, Sister Vera Butler personifies the finest character traits of goodness and humanity; she assures the poor and despairing that there is hope for a brighter future; and she continues the legacy of charity and philanthropy that is woven into the lengthy history of the city of New Orleans.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate Sister Vera Butler upon receipt of the Hibernian of

the Year Award for 2014.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be transmitted to Sister Vera Butler and the president of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Margaret Haughery Division.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE