

1 Introduced by Council Members Peluso and Diamond:
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4 **RESOLUTION 2025-201**

5 A RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND DECADES
6 OF SERVICE OF REVEREND WILLIAM "BILL" KELLY AND
7 EXPRESSING THE CITY COUNCIL'S CONDOLENCES UPON
8 HIS PASSING; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.
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10 **WHEREAS,** Reverend William "Bill" Kelly was born in Castlereagh,
11 Ireland and ordained to the Catholic priesthood in June of 1959; and

12 **WHEREAS,** following in the footsteps of hundreds of other
13 priests from his homeland, Father Kelly came to the United States in
14 the early 1960s to offer his services in ministry in the state of
15 Florida, serving as a parish priest in Orlando and teaching at
16 Cardinal Mooney High School in Sarasota and at Bishop Barry High
17 School in St. Petersburg, before being recruited to the Diocese of
18 St. Augustine; and

19 **WHEREAS,** in 1965, Father Kelly was assigned as pastor of
20 Epiphany Catholic Church in Lake City where he served for 12 years
21 and also had the responsibility of serving the spiritual needs of the
22 mission churches without a resident priest throughout Live Oak and
23 Jasper. In 1977, he was named pastor at St. Paul's Catholic Church
24 in Jacksonville Beach, where he served with great distinction until
25 his retirement in 2015; and

26 **WHEREAS,** Father Kelly's 38-year tenure as pastor at St. Paul's
27 Catholic Church was filled with remarkable achievements and a myriad
28 of small acts of kindness, where the Church membership tripled to
29 over 3,200 families, the parish school doubled its facility's capacity
30 and enrollment, and a new Family Life Center was constructed. After
31 his retirement, a building heavily damaged by Hurricane Matthew was

1 reconstructed as a gymnasium and named the "Father William A. Kelly
2 Athletic Center" in honor of his decades of devoted service to the
3 parish; and

4 **WHEREAS**, Father Kelly's legacy of service in Jacksonville
5 includes his participation in the establishment of the Beaches
6 Emergency Assistance Ministry (BEAM), the parish's support for
7 Habitat for Humanity, his participation in inter-faith ecumenical
8 activities among churches of different faiths, and his long history
9 of hospital ministry and visitations to the sick and shut-in, bringing
10 blessings and encouragement to those in need; and

11 **WHEREAS**, throughout his ministry in Florida, Father Kelly was
12 known as a man of peace, humor and compassion, with a gentle spirit
13 and a heart for selfless service; now therefore

14 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the City of Jacksonville:

15 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby commemorates the life
16 and decades of service provided to the parish of St. Paul's Catholic
17 Church in Jacksonville Beach and to the people of Jacksonville by
18 Reverend William "Bill" Kelly, and extends to his parishioners,
19 family, friends and admirers the City's sincere condolences on his
20 passing. Father Kelly's life of faith and service will be a lasting
21 memorial to the thousands of lives he touched through his faith and
22 ministry.

23 **Section 2. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
24 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
25 without the Mayor's signature.

26 Form Approved:

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28 /s/ Shannon MacGillis

29 Office of General Counsel

30 Legislation Prepared By: Jeff Clements, City Council Research

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