



# City of Chicago



R2017-401

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	5/24/2017
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	Emanuel (Mayor) Moore (17)
<b>Type:</b>	Resolution
<b>Title:</b>	Congratulations extended to Father George Clements on 60 years in priesthood
<b>Committee(s) Assignment:</b>	

## R E S O L U T I O N

**WHEREAS**, The Chicago City Council is pleased to note that Father George Clements is celebrating his sixtieth year in the priesthood; and

**WHEREAS**, George Harold Clements was born in Chicago on January 26, 1932. He was the fourth of six children born to Samuel George Clements and Aldonia Peters Clements. George Clements grew up near 51<sup>st</sup> and King Drive in the Bronzeville community; and

**WHEREAS**, He attended Corpus Christi Elementary School in Chicago, where Sister Felician encouraged him to go to the seminary. He then attended Quigley Preparatory Seminary, becoming the first African-American to graduate from this Catholic high school. At Quigley he met Dan Mallette, who became a lifelong friend and a Father at a church in Scotland; and

**WHEREAS**, George Clements attended St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, where he obtained his Bachelor's degree in Sacred Theology and a Master's degree in Philosophy. He was ordained a Roman Catholic priest by Cardinal Samuel Stritch on May 3, 1957; and

**WHEREAS**, Father Clements served as Associate Pastor at St. Ambrose Parish for five years. In 1962, he was assigned to work with the Reverend Gerald Scanlan at St. Dorothy in Chatham. It was there he became a national leader in the civil rights movement. He participated in the 1965 freedom march from Selma to Montgomery, led by Martin Luther King, Jr. He remains socially active, still participating in anti-violence marches at the age of 85; and

**WHEREAS**, Father Clements was named Pastor at Holy Angels Church in Bronzeville in 1969, becoming the church's first African-American pastor. Under his leadership, church membership grew from 1,500 to over 4,000 and Holy Angels School became the largest black Catholic elementary school in the country. The church burned to the ground in 1986. Shortly after the church was rebuilt in 1991, he retired as pastor; and

**WHEREAS**, In 1980 Father Clements started the One Church - One Child program to encourage adoption of African-American children, a program which was implemented nationally and has resulted in the adoption of over 350,000 children. The following year he received approval from the Vatican to become the first United States Catholic priest to adopt a child, Joey. He has adopted three other boys: Friday, Stewart and St. Anthony. Father Clements has eight grandchildren. In 1987, ABC produced "The Father Clements Story", starring Lou Gossett, Jr. as Father Clements, Malcolm-Jamal Warner as his son Joey and Carroll O'Connor as Cardinal John Cody, Archbishop of Chicago; and

**WHEREAS**, When he left Holy Angels in 1991, Father Clements served as minister for one year at Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani monastery near Bardston, Kentucky. He then was a pastor for three years at the Resurrection Catholic Church in Nausau, Bahamas. In 1994, he moved to Washington, D.C. In 1995 he created the One Church - One Addict program to provide services for recovering addicts. More than 1,000 churches now participate in the program; and

**WHEREAS**, In 1999, Father Clements began the One Church - One Inmate program to help prisoners transition back into society. This program was adopted by over 1,000 churches. In 2001, he retired and moved back to Chicago; and

**WHEREAS**, Father Clements also was active in civic organizations. He served on the Board of Directors of the Better Boys Foundation, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, Malcolm X College, Operation Breadbasket, the Black United Fund and Paul Hall Boys Club; and

**WHEREAS**, This esteemed Body has been notified of Father Clements' auspicious milestone by the Honorable David Moore, Alderman of the 17<sup>th</sup> Ward, who has been inspired to further Father Clements' noble and wide-ranging causes; and

**WHEREAS**, Father Clements has received many awards. In 1977, he was named Priest of the Year by the Association of Chicago priests. Five years later, he received an award from the National American Council on Adoptable Children. Father Clements' sixty years in the priesthood was celebrated in both a mass at Holy Angels and a gala at the Hilton Chicago on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED**, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered this twenty-fourth day of May, 2017, do hereby express our hearty congratulations to Father George Clements on his sixty remarkable years in the priesthood; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to Father George Clements as a sign of our esteem and respect.

CONS.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

RAHM EMANUEL  
MAYOR

May 24, 2017

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith, together with Alderman David Moore, a congratulatory resolution concerning Father George Clements.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Mayor