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City Council Document Tracking Sheet

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	5/9/2012
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	Zalewski, Michael R. (23)
<b>Type:</b>	Resolution
<b>Title:</b>	Congratulations extended to Father Thomas Bernas
<b>Committee(s) Assignment:</b>	

### SALUTE TO FATHER THOMAS A. BERNAS

WHEREAS, Father Thomas Bernas is celebrating his retirement after 15 years of dedication to the St. Richard Roman Catholic parish in this city's South Side Archer Heights community; and

WHEREAS, Father Thomas arrived to St. Richard's in 1997 as an administrator. During the next two years, he was able to finish the installation of a new organ and a new roof as well as the repainting and re-carpeting of the church; and

WHEREAS, On June 26th, 1999, His Eminence Francis Cardinal George appointed Father Thomas as the pastor. He was able to pay off the parish debt and has kept it debt-free for 14 years through prudent financial practices. Additionally, he has even had an elevator installed in order to facilitate access for the handicapped; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the years, Father Thomas has overseen many projects, most notably the construction of the St. Richard Parish Center that was dedicated on November 7, 2004. This building houses all parish offices and a gym that is used by the St. Richard School pupils, the Boy Scouts, adult parish groups, and Archer Heights Community groups. In 2011, the Parish Center was renamed the Father Thomas A. Bernas Parish Center. Most recently, he has taken part in the oversight of the renovation of the church; and

WHEREAS, Father Thomas Bernas is also supervisor of the St. Richard Grammer School whose enrollment of 330 students makes it the second largest parochial school on the city's entire Southwest Side. He initiated a pre-school program for three and four year olds. The kindergarten program has an active enrollment of 41 and he has also established a Science Lab and Computer Lab as well as a Before and After School program the school's pupils; and

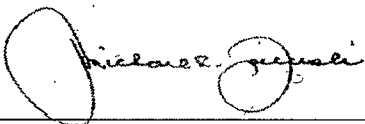
WHEREAS, Father Thomas Bernas has hosted many events for the community such as the annual Archer Heights Civic Association Halloween Party for community children in the church hall. Furthermore, he conducts the blessing of Chicago Fireman, Paramedics, Police Officers, and a St. Francis Pet Blessing. Aside from this, he actively encourages the development of Cub Scouts and Boy Scout troops; and

WHEREAS, Father Thomas has established food and coat drive programs for a "sharing parish", Holy Cross/Immaculate Heart of Mary and also aids in the Christmas gift program for the Mother Theresa House in Lemont as well as the Polish-American Association. Furthermore, he began the Simbang Gabi Mass for Filipino parishioners, the Las Posadas and Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass for parishioners of Hispanic descent, and an Our Lady of Czestochowa and Corpus Christi celebration for the Polish congregants; and

WHEREAS, The Honorable Michael R. Zalewski, Alderman of the 23rd Ward has informed this august body of the retirement of this remarkable spiritual leader and administrator; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED That we, the Mayor and members of the City of Chicago City Council, gathered together this 9<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2012 AD, do hereby salute Father Thomas Bernas on the occasion of his retirement and extend our very best wishes for his continued health, happiness and success in all he may endeavor to do in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to Father Thomas A. Bernas.



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MICHAEL R. ZALEWSKI  
Alderman – 23<sup>rd</sup> Ward