



City of Chicago



R2017-361

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	5/24/2017
Sponsor(s):	Moore (17)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Congratulations extended to Father George Clements on 60th anniversary in priesthood
Committee(s) Assignment:	

Resolution Honoring Father George Clements

WHEREAS, Father George Clements is celebrating his sixtieth year in the priesthood; and

WHEREAS, This esteemed body has been notified of Father Clements' auspicious milestone by the Honorable David Moore, Alderman of the 17th Ward; 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 51st and King Drive in the Bronzeville community; and

WHEREAS, He attended Corpus Christi Elementary School in Chicago. It was at this Catholic school that Sister Felician was promoting the idea of George going 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. The church membership grew from 1,500 to over 4,000, including members of the Black Panthers. Under his leadership, 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 went to 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 to provide services for recovering addicts. More than 1,000 churches now participate in the program; and

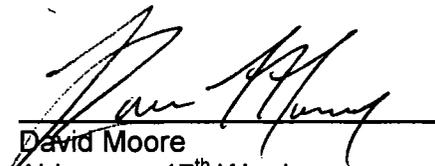
WHEREAS, In 1999, Father Clements began the One Church – One Inmate program to help prisoners transition back into society. This program was adopted by over 1,000 churches. In 2001, he retired and moved back to Chicago; and

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, 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 a both a mass at Holy Angels and a gala at the Hilton Chicago on May 3rd, 2017; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago gathered here 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.

Be It Further Resolved, That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to Father George Clements.


David Moore
Alderman, 17th Ward

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