



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, November 13, 2012

House of Representatives

VISCLOSKY HONORS SAINT JOSEPH THE WORKER CROATIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mr. Speaker: It is my great pleasure to congratulate Saint Joseph the Worker Croatian Catholic Church in Gary, Indiana, on the celebration of its 100th anniversary as a parish that took place on Sunday, October 14, 2012. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Father Stephen Loncar, parish pastor, on this special occasion. The 100th anniversary festivities began with a Mass of Thanksgiving at 10:00 A.M. at the church, celebrated by the Most Reverend Dale J. Melczek, Bishop of Gary. After the service, a banquet was held at the Croatian Center in Merrillville, Indiana.

I would also like to commend the members of the Saint Joseph the Worker Parish Council and Anniversary Committee for the work they have put forth in the planning of this momentous event. Members include: Robert Balash, John Benich, Larry Brown, Irene Flores, Glenda Garriot, Charlene Gyurko, Anne Krpan, Tom Lashenik, Carmen and Frances Lenzo, Cheryl Lenzo, Sam and Celeste Linde, Marta McCobb, Marian Nicksich, Peter Podnar, Charlene Reynolds, Joe Ruda, Nick and Esther Sanchez, Mike Stulac, Guy and Rose Sutton, Kathy Swanson, Rosella Tuszynski, Michael Velasco, and Paul Yurkas.

In 1906, Croatian immigrants, comprised mainly of small business owners and steel workers, arrived to the growing city of Gary, Indiana, seeking employment opportunities and a better quality of life. Upon arrival, the immigrants dealt with numerous obstacles and prejudices, including a difficult language barrier. In order to create a sense of community with the hope of preserving Croatian heritage and culture, they joined together to create their own parish, and in 1913, Holy Trinity Croatian Catholic Church was built. The church continued to grow over the years due to the unwavering dedication of its leaders and parishioners. By 1919, a parochial school was added under the leadership of Reverend Charles Jesih of Croatia. Due to the growing population, the church continued to expand, and by 1956, under the leadership of Father Venceslav Ardes, a new larger church was completed and consecrated Saint Joseph the Worker Croatian Catholic Church in Gary, Indiana. One hundred years ago, the immigrants longed for a parish where they could attend mass in their own language and today that practice remains. The pioneers would be proud to know that this tradition is still alive today.

The church continues to seek innovative ways to sustain the traditions and ideals of the Catholic Church throughout Gary and Northwest Indiana. In 2009, Saint Joseph the Worker joined in an alliance with the

Gary Cluster Parishes, a group formed by pastors and commissions with the goal of maintaining the Catholic Church in Gary, Indiana.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating Saint Joseph the Worker Croatian Catholic Church on the 100th anniversary of its founding. Throughout the years, the leaders and parishioners of the church, both past and present, have dedicated themselves to preserving Croatian tradition and upholding the values of their Catholic religion. For their commitment to public service and for touching the lives of countless individuals, the leaders and parishioners are worthy of the highest praise, and I wish Saint Joseph the Worker Croatian Catholic Church many prosperous years to come.