

By the Honorable Jim Beall, Jr.
24th Assembly District; Relative to

Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America

Whereas, On January 24, 2012, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious will celebrate the culmination of the national touring exhibit of *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* with a reception at The California Museum in Sacramento, and it is appropriate at this time to highlight the many achievements of Women Religious and underscore the positive impact they have made in California and throughout the nation; and

Whereas, Sponsored by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in association with the Cincinnati Museum Center, *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* is a traveling exhibit that reveals the mystery behind a small group of innovative American women who helped shape the nation's social and cultural landscape; and

Whereas, The exhibit has been experienced by millions during its three-year trajectory which has taken it to the preeminent Smithsonian Museum in our nation's capitol; and

Whereas, From its beginnings, California has been an immigrant state; wave after wave of immigrants have arrived on California's shores, deeply enriching California life, but also creating many challenges, and Women Religious added to this influx--immigrants themselves from Europe, Mexico, Central America, Asia, and Africa, they served the immigrant community; and

Whereas, California's multi-ethnic population created a complex mixture of languages, beliefs, and customs in the Golden State, and Women Religious answered, and continue to answer, the challenge of diversity; and

Whereas, Gold Rush California was a chaotic and dynamic time, when the state needed everything--hospitals, schools, orphanages, homes for the elderly, and other institutions of charity--and while countless individuals swarmed into California in search of gold, Women Religious sought a different treasure, that of providing care for the poor and marginalized, and in an era well before free public services, Women Religious attempted to provide social stability by creating a “safety net”; and

Whereas, *On The Frontier's Edge: Stretching The Boundaries of Church and Society*, the local exhibit of *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* highlights Women Religious meeting the many needs for the new state of California during its Gold Rush days by establishing hospitals, schools, orphanages, homes for the elderly, and other institutions of charity which still thrive today; and

Whereas, California's Women Religious are well known for their practical charity--care for the poor, the sick, and the elderly; however, they did not settle for salving social wounds--many religious women have engaged in the struggle for social justice to correct the source of those ills; and

Whereas, Women Religious have provided leadership, advocacy, and support for civil rights, the farm workers' struggle, immigrant rights, the peace movement, and the right to life, attempting to en flesh and make real the Catholic Church's teaching on social justice; and

Whereas, Women Religious' work with the poor and marginalized did not darken their view, but deepened their vision of the beauty of the world; the natural beauty of California and the tolerant attitude of its people toward trying something new have enriched its literature, music, theater, and the lively arts for generations, and Women Religious have expressed this celebration of life and mystery in a variety of art mediums, both expected and unexpected; and

Whereas, Women Religious have provided California women with an outlet for grace, beauty, intellect, and leadership often not available in the larger society; as such, Women Religious led the way in a number of fields from catechetics to higher education and in social justice, and they did not do so in isolation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by Assembly Member Jim Beall, Jr., That he draws to the attention of the public the celebration of the national touring exhibit of *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* at The California Museum in Sacramento, and points with great pride to the contributions that Women Religious have made to the State of California and throughout the nation.

Members Resolution No. 238

Dated this 23rd day of January, 2012

Honorable Jim Beall, Jr.

24th Assembly District