

DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
EVA-MARIE TROPPER, DIRECTOR
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150 WEST JEFFERSON STREET
JOLIET, ILLINOIS 60432-4158

DATE: August 31, 2021

TO: Land Use & Legislative Committee

FROM: Eva-Marie Tropper, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: A Resolution Approving an Honorary Street Name Change for Reverend Michael A. Valente

BACKGROUND: Ms. Linda Dyke has requested that the City of Joliet recognize Reverend Michael A. Valente for his tireless efforts to restore St. Anthony's church at 100 Scott Street in Joliet, Illinois.

Reverend Michael A. Valente was ordained a Catholic Priest on June 7, 1958. His first assignment was to the Church of St. Anthony on June 25, 1958. He was an associate there until July 1, 1964. On March 29, 1974, he became the Pastor of the Church of St. Anthony until 1988. In 2011, Reverend Michael A. Valente became Administrator of the Parish until 2015.

As St. Anthony's longest serving Pastor and Priest, Reverend Michael A. Valente was responsible for the outside and the inside restoration and beautification of the Church of St. Anthony. Father Valente celebrated his 90th birthday on June 13, 2021.

Because of these initiatives, it is fitting to recognize Reverend Michael A. Valente by honorarily dedicating Van Buren Street between Art Schultz and Scott Street, Reverend Michael A. Valente Way. The requisite fee has been submitted.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Land Use & Legislative Committee reviews and recommends this matter to the Mayor and City Council at their September 8, 2021 meeting.



Honorary Street Name Program Description & Application

POLICY:

The City of Joliet has established a policy with a review process and set of criteria for the designation of honorary street names in the City. Listed below are the purpose of the program; review criteria; detailed provisions of the program and the application form. The program is managed by the Department of Community Development. All supporting documentation is required at time of application submittal. The application will be reviewed by the Joliet Land Use & Legislative Committee who will make a recommendation to Joliet City Council for final review.

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM:

The City of Joliet honorary street name program is a means for honoring Joliet residents who have become well known for their civic, charitable, educational, or business contributions to the Joliet community. The honorary street name identifies a certain portion of a Joliet street with an individual name in honor of that person. The honorary street name supplements the permanent street name and does not change the permanent street name designation, nor does it require residents and businesses fronting on the street to change their address. There are also provisions in the program for honoring important local sites and events.

LIST OF CRITERIA:

The following list of criteria is used in determining eligibility for an honorary street name designation:

1. A site, event, or individual of known historic or cultural importance to the City;
2. Responsible for an accomplishment of local, regional, national or international significance;
3. Worked tirelessly for the benefit of the less fortunate of the community;
4. Exceptional involvement in church, school, service club or other organization which made Joliet a better place;
5. An individual with a distinguished career brought to the City or notable humanitarian achievement made while a resident of the City;

6. A site of national, regional, or local geographical interest.
7. A clear geographical relationship of the street to the area of interest of the nominee;
8. A clearly defined record of local community or public service made by the nominee.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS:

The following list describes the application process for an honorary street name designation:

1. The applicant must file a petition signed by 50% of property owners abutting the frontage to be dedicated as an honorary street;
2. The applicant shall pay a filing fee of \$120.00 to cover administration costs and the cost of the sign production;
3. The application will be reviewed and recommended by the Joliet Land Use & Legislative Committee with final approval by the Joliet City Council;
4. The Joliet City Council may authorize a waiver of the "50%" rule noted above on a case-by-case basis;
5. Nominations solely based on commercial or corporate-related identification shall not qualify for the program;
6. There shall be only one honorary street designation per street.
7. The honorary street designation shall not conflict with any other official street name.

PLEASE FILL OUT THE ATTACHED APPLICATION

PETITION FOR HONORARY STREET NAME APPLICATION - JOLIET

Name of Honoree: Rev. Michael A. Valente
(As it would appear on the street sign)

Proper Street Name: VAN BUREN St.

Intersecting streets at each end of the street segment to be designated: Art Schultz + Scott St.

Please check all that apply and give a brief explanation of the applicable criteria. A street can be named for an individual, place or event.

☒ **Individual**
See Attached

☐ **Place**

☐ **Event**

☐ **Cultural Impact to the City:**

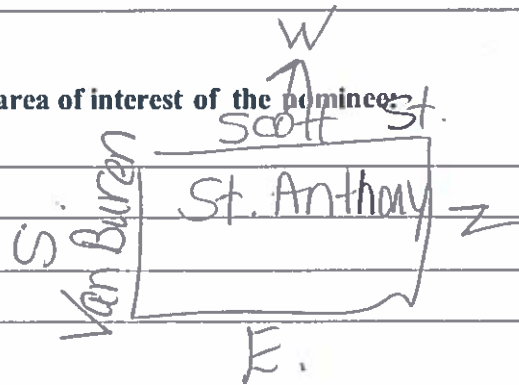
☒ **Historical impact to the City:**
Restoring St. Anthony
Building was purchased from Baptist in 1902

____ Humanitarian efforts:

____ Close association with Joliet:

____ Geographical relationship of the street to the area of interest of the nominee:

Van Buren



____ Responsible for an accomplishment of local, regional, national or international significance:

Rev. Michael Valente was ordained ^{again} on
June 7th, 1958. His First assignment was
to the Church OF St. Anthony on June 25th, 1958
He was an associate here until July 1, 1964
Again on MARCH 29, 1974 he was made the
Pastor to the Church OF St. Anthony until
1988. In 2011 he was made Administrator
until 2015. He was the longest serving
Pastor, Priest at the Church OF St. Anthony
He was responsible FOR the outside and Inside
restoration OF the Church OF St. Anthony,
+ beautification OF St. Anthony
FR. Valente just celebrated his 90th.
Birthday on June 13, 2021

Petition indicating 50% of adjoining property owner approval of an honorary street name

As an adjoining property owner to the proposed honorary street name known as Rev. Michael Valente, I hereby approve of the honorary street name being proposed:

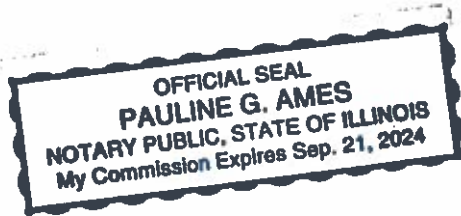
DATE

NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF ILLINOIS
JANUARY 1, 1900
JAMES G. AMES

Attach additional sheets if necessary

I, Linda Dyke, depose and say that the above statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree to be present in person or by representation when this petition is heard before the Joliet Land Use & Legislative Committee.

Signature of Applicant: Linda Dyke Date: July 21, 2021



Subscribed and sworn to before me this 28th day of June, 2021.
Pauline G. Ames

Applicant's Address: 1700 Kelly Ave Phone No.: 815-722-1057
E-mail: Saintanthonyjoliet@hotmail.com

Submit completed form to:

City of Joliet
Attn: Eva-Marie Tropper
Community Development
150 W. Jefferson Street
Joliet, IL 60432
FAX: 815/724-4056
Phone: 815/724-4040

City of Joliet Web Site: Joliet.gov

'Still function'

Joliet Catholic church has undergone

By DENISE M. BARAN-UNLAND
dunland@shawmedia.com

JOLIET – "I came to serve you, but we cannot stay here in this condition."

These were the words the Rev. Michael Valente said he spoke to parishioners of the Church of St. Anthony, at 100 Scott St. in Joliet, when he came to the parish for the second time in 1974. Valente was appalled at the condition of the building – even pieces of the ceiling were cracking and breaking off.

"I thought, 'My God, this is plaster. This will hurt these people,'" Valente said. "They had been given the opportunity to sell the building to the bank next door, which was making offers, but they insisted, 'No, we want to stay here. We want to repair it.'"

Long a spiritual home to Italian Catholics, the Church of St. Anthony in downtown is a survivor that continually renews itself – and no one is more proud of showing off its emergence than Valente, its 83-year-old administrator, who effected many of its changes and has a vision for its future.

The stone building, formerly owned by First Baptist of Joliet, was built in 1858 for \$8,000 Valente said. In 1902, 17 Italian families each pledged \$1,000 and eventually bought the building for \$14,000, he said.

"We had been guests in the basement of St. Mary Carmelite," Valente said. "When we outgrew the basement, we had to buy our own building."

The building that became the Church of St. Anthony, Valente said, was a solid, two-story structure – church on top, basement underneath, which was typical of practical Protestant construction of that time, he added.

"We never had a school, so we never needed anything more as far as land," Valente said.



A historical photo of the sanctuary at the Church



Lathan Gou

The Rev. Michael Valente leads Mass on Tuesday at the Church of St. Anthony on Scott Street in Joliet.

In 1922, the church bought 10 stained glass windows from a company in Munich, Germany, which is still in existence, Valente said. He estimates the worth today of those windows is \$100,000 each. The windows tell the story of St. Anthony of Padua, whom Valente called a great scholar and preacher.

"He was a brilliant man, and that is why he became such a marvelous converter

of people to faith," Valente said.

At some point, Valente said, he was tempted to be and bestow the parish with simple wooden exterior in stone, Valente said.

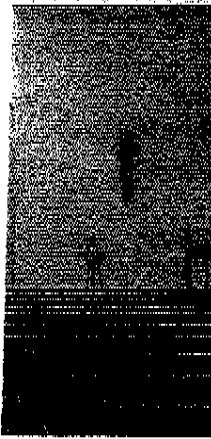
"It was as far as I could go," Valente said. "It was slat

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many transformations, looks to future



of St. Anthony hangs on the church's wall.



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In 1958, Valente was assigned to the Church of St. Anthony as an associate priest and stayed six years before being transferred to another church. In 1974, Valente returned to St. Anthony as its pastor. By then, the stucco was falling apart, he said.

But Valente's first move was to gut the interior — new pews, plaster walls and carpet. The plaster statues also were deteriorating — some had hands missing — so these were replaced by various wood sculptures.

"We did it with volunteers and love and labor and gifts," Valente said. "The people decided amongst themselves to donate \$100 per family."

Next, Valente tackled the exterior and make it architecturally appealing as well as safe. He and the parishioners decided on a Williamsburg appearance and veneer brick. Again, members pledged to donate \$100 a family.

"We never had any debt on the whole thing," Valente said. But some parishioners

did more, Valente said. For example, one member paid for a new steeple — including the cost of removing the former handmade wood one, Valente said. Another bought the four pillars at its entrance and dedicated them to his grandparents. A third donated the concrete for the church, the garage and the rectory. Another laid the bricks, handmade in South Carolina, Valente said.

"They looked very appropriate for the age of the structure," Valente said. "They were oversized bricks and had the right color and all that."

Valente retired in 2001. In 2011, he again returned to the Church of St. Anthony, this time as its administrator. Again, the building needed work: \$40,000 worth of repairs to plumbing, windows, the Muller organ, windows on the north side and church hall, as well as painting.

But it's not just the building that's undergone change. Membership has dropped from 1,400 to 200 since 1998, although the church still attracts new members, Valente said.

"Decades-long members are now in their 80s and 90, and one is 100." People of Italian descent still attend the church, as do those who are not Italian.

Although the church will eventually need a new roof, it doesn't need much else, he said.

"We're still functioning and viable," Valente said.

Valente, who intends to leave the parish for good in June, hopes that with the University of St. Francis and Joliet Junior College both having a presence in the downtown area, college students will discover this historical parish and use it for their spiritual growth.

"I want to put this church on the map with its great legacy," Valente said. "It has become a beautiful structure."