



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Also naming Ritner Street, between South 17th Street and South 18th Street, "Bishop Louis DeSimone Way", in honor and recognition of his decades of exemplary service to Saint Monica Parish, the worldwide Catholic Church, and the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS the Most Reverend Louis A. DeSimone, auxiliary bishop emeritus of Philadelphia, has dedicated his 95 years of life in selfless commitment to the Catholic faithful and the broader communities of our City, region and beyond; and

WHEREAS, As an undergraduate student at Villanova University, Louis DeSimone answered his country's call to serve in World War II, becoming an Army officer in North Africa and Italy, and taking part in the liberation of Rome in 1944; and

WHEREAS, Upon completing his formation for the priesthood at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary and his ordination on May 10, 1952, Father DeSimone embarked on what would become seven decades of ministry in the parishes, schools, and charitable institutions that serve 1.5 million Catholics in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, In November of 1976, Father DeSimone was named a Prelate of Honor by Pope Paul VI and appointed as Pastor of Saint Monica Church - the spiritual leader of 5,000 families in South Philadelphia's largest parish; and

WHEREAS, On June 27, 1981, Saint John Paul II, then the Pope, chose Louis DeSimone as the first Italian-American ever to become a Catholic bishop in Philadelphia. Likewise, he was the first to live and serve primarily in South Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, While remaining as Pastor of Saint Monica Parish for a quarter century, Bishop DeSimone was called to, and faithfully carried out, national and international leadership roles in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, the worldwide Catholic Relief Services, and Catholic Charities USA; and

WHEREAS, Bishop DeSimone's concern for the wider community at home and across the globe has been recognized by his selection for a host of additional leadership roles and special honors. Notable among them are his long service on the boards of directors of Methodist Hospital and Pennsylvania Hospital and as vice-president of the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania. Moreover the Republic of Italy has recognized him as a Commander of the Order of Merit, and the American Catholic Historical Society has bestowed upon him its highest accolade, the Commodore John Barry Award; and

WHEREAS, As a Bishop, Louis DeSimone has conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation on more than 100,000 young people across our region, and ordained scores of Catholic priests and deacons. Nevertheless, his most cherished mission has always remained his first vocation: the simple, unsung life of a parish priest - always present for his people day in and day out, especially in the happiest and most difficult moments of their lives;

and

WHEREAS, Over 25 years as Pastor of Saint Monica Parish, Bishop DeSimone labored mightily to maintain one of Philadelphia's most legendary Catholic outposts as a beacon far beyond its boundaries: a place which continues to serve tens of thousands of City residents of all backgrounds, from infants to senior citizens, through its two schools, Early Learning Center, adult education and athletic programs, and numerous other ministries; and

WHEREAS, Having chosen for himself the motto "*Servus Tuus*" - "Your Servant" - while never seeking any attention or praise for himself, Bishop DeSimone is universally admired and esteemed as a model of Pope Francis' call that the clergy should bear "the smell of their sheep" long before that phrase was coined; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY VIRTUE OF THIS CITATION, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Also names Ritner Street, between South 17th Street and South 18th Street, "Bishop Louis DeSimone Way", in honor and recognition of a lifetime of faithful, heroic witness and historic labors for his church, his country, his Lord, and for the City and people of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Most Reverend Louis A. DeSimone as evidence of the sincere respect and appreciation of this legislative body.