



# Allegheny County Council

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## Legislation Text

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Proclamation honoring the life, memory and legacy of *Fr. John “Jack” O’Malley*.

**WHEREAS**, Allegheny County Council does hereby honor the life of the late *Fr. John “Jack” O’Malley*, a retired Roman Catholic priest and civil rights activist, who passed away on September 11, 2020 at the age of 83; and

**WHEREAS**, born on November 17, 1936 in the Strip District., *Fr. O’Malley* always knew what he aspired to do with his life. After graduating from Central Catholic High School in 1954, *Fr. O’Malley* went to St. Francis University on a basketball scholarship; and

**WHEREAS**, *Fr. O’Malley* turned down a professional offer to play for the Detroit Pistons of the National Basketball Association, instead he chose to attend St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, where he received his master’s degree; and

**WHEREAS**, on May 1, 1965, *Fr. O’Malley* was ordained in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh. He then went on to become a pastor at several Pittsburgh parishes and one in Wilmerding, Massachusetts; and

**WHEREAS**, *Fr. O’Malley* served as the labor chaplain to the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO and Allegheny County Labor Council for several years and, as a result he fostered remarkable fortitude and passion towards helping obtain workers’ rights to a living wage, safe working conditions and good health care; and

**WHEREAS**, as a social justice advocate, *Fr. O’Malley’s* efforts extended across the globe - he traveled to Nicaragua in the 1980’s to attend an action called “Witness for Peace.” In the 1970’s, he was a part of the National Council of Churches movement in support of Native Americans at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. And in the 1960’s, *Fr. O’Malley* worked along Cesar Chavez on the United Farm Workers picketing campaign at grocery stores and markets across the Pittsburgh region; and

**WHEREAS**, beyond his work as a priest, *Fr. O’Malley* founded the Labor and Religion Coalition of Western Pennsylvania, which was created to bring churches and unions together to discuss workers’ issues. He also helped start the Thomas Merton Center and the Association of Pittsburgh Priests, a diocesan-wide organization of ordained and non-ordained men and women;

**WHEREAS**, *Fr. O’Malley* lived an exemplary life purposefully filled with many acts of kindness and charity;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that I, Allegheny County Council President Patrick J. Catena, do hereby honor the life, memory and legacy of *Fr. John “Jack” O’Malley*, and I extend condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto caused the Seal of the County of Allegheny to be affixed this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of September 2020.