



# ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO

CHANCERY OFFICE

P.O. BOX 28410  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78228-0410  
TELEPHONE (210) 734-2620



## RECOGNITION BY THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO OF THE TAP PILAM COAHUILTECAN NATION

**WHEREAS**, The Coahuiltecan tribe's distinguished history in the State of Texas and Northern Mexico merits strong consideration for official acknowledgment from the Catholic Church, the State of Texas, the United States of America and the United States of México; and

**WHEREAS**, in the late 1600s, Spanish explorers and Catholic priests, Franciscan Missionaries, first encountered the Coahuiltecan tribe, whose name is derived from the State of Coahuila-Tejas, New Spain; and

**WHEREAS**, to increase the number of Spanish citizens on the Frontier, various Native American groups were converted to Catholicism. Five missions were established between 1718 and 1731 in San Antonio, including the San Antonio de Valero, San José, Concepción de Acuña, San Juan Capistrano, and San Francisco de la Espada. Moreover, the Coahuiltecan language was translated into Spanish to make the conversion process easier; and

**WHEREAS**, members of the Coahuiltecan tribe performed important duties at the missions, such as constructing the missions, dams and irrigation canals; working in the fields; becoming the first cowboys; and helping to build what became communities in present-day Texas and northeastern México; and

**WHEREAS**, while many Native American tribes eventually became displaced and assimilated in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Coahuiltecan tribe's proud rituals and traditions have endured, and aspects of its daily life are much the same as those in use at the time of its first contact with Europeans; and

**WHEREAS**, Descendants of this intrepid tribe celebrate time honored occasions and also use ceremonial music and dress as ways of upholding tribal customs; in addition, renewed efforts to ascertain more knowledge about their ancestry are ongoing; and

**WHEREAS**, throughout the years, the Coahuiltecan have played an integral role in Texas Catholic development, and the Native American tribes who were the first native families greatly enriched our shared heritage with their culture; and

**WHEREAS**, given the tribe's justifiable pride in its distinct history and culture, the Catholic Church finds that it is indeed appropriate to bestow such recognition as the first Catholic natives. This recognition will encourage the preservation of the Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan's unique cultural heritage and to support those activities consistent with the Catholic Church's interest in preserving all of Texas' diverse cultural and spiritual resources for future generations; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Catholic Church hereby recognizes the Tap Pilam, Coahuiltecan Nation for its immeasurable contributions as an indigenous people of Texas and commend the tribe's efforts to preserve its cultural and spiritual heritage and traditions.

Most Rev. Patrick F. Flores, Archbishop of San Antonio

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