

# A TRIBUTE TO MY CYO BASKETBALL COACH JOE GALLICK

## — AND TO ALL CYO COACHES ON LONG ISLAND



Gus Alfieri, the legendary St. Anthony's coach and biographer of coach Joe Lapchick, invited me last October to give the invocation for the Joe Lapchick "Character Award" luncheon in Manhattan.

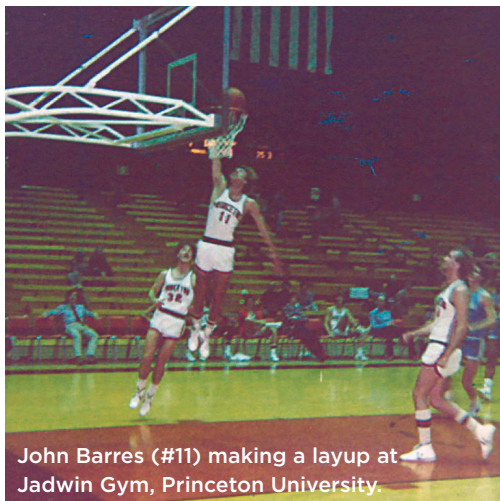
When I arrived, he also asked me to give some remarks. It was a great opportunity for a former lowly Princeton junior varsity point guard turned Catholic bishop to address New York basketball royalty.

As I thought through my remarks, I immediately went to my CYO basketball coach, Joe Gallick, at St. Augustine's Parish in Larchmont, N.Y. Joe coached us when we were in seventh and eighth grade (1972-1974).

Joe had been a 6'4" forward for Iona in the early 1970s. He looked like and admired New York Knick Phil Jackson. Joe sensed something great in the character and spirit of Phil Jackson, a marginal but hustling player who turned into a Hall of Fame NBA coach.

Joe was a lot like Phil, both as a hustling marginal player at Iona — he averaged 3.8 points and 4.5 rebounds a game for the Iona Gaels in his senior year (1971-72) — and a collaborative and intuitive coach who asked our input as seventh-and eighth-graders about what was actually happening on the floor and how we should react and press forward aggressively.

Joe was my basketball mentor. He taught all of his players a love for basketball, the



John Barres (#11) making a layup at Jadwin Gym, Princeton University.

fundamentals and the history of the game. Joe patiently melded together some very spirited personalities with different kinds of games and talent.

In my remarks at the Lapchick luncheon, I decided to focus on how Joe Gallick taught us the full court press of renowned UCLA coach John Wooden. Our team was fast, quick, smart and clever.

A full court press takes heart, stamina, perseverance and tenacity. It was Joe's character, support and kindness that made us want, even as seventh-and eighth-grade boys prone to distraction, to focus and go all out even when we were tired.

I found myself at the Lapchick luncheon connecting the character, heart and tenacity we learned from Joe Gallick with my life as a bishop, a successor of the apostles, asking the Holy Spirit to lead me in being the point guard of the Catholic

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**BISHOP JOHN O. BARRES** is the fifth bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre. Follow him on Twitter, @BishopBarres

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*You teach us how to compete with class, character, mature self-possession and charity.”*

Church on Long Island on a full court press for dramatic missionary growth in our parishes.

There was a deep connection between coach Joe Gallick introducing us to the Wooden press — breaking it down and practicing it with us until it became a part of us — and my daily life as a Catholic bishop. In a mysterious and beautiful way, this experience, with many others in my life, prepared me for a relentless, non-stop, New Evangelization full-court press as a parish priest and as a bishop.

So I would like to thank coach Joe Gallick — RIP — as well as all the CYO coaches on Long Island and around the country for all the life and faith lessons you have taught so many of us.

Thank you, CYO coaches of Long Island, for:

**1** Modelling for our players and their families the connection between the Catholic Mass, vibrant Catholic parish life and community and the parish gym. Your fidelity and that of your family to the Sunday Mass is a great inspiration and critical foundation to the team play and chemistry you teach us.

Never underestimate the witness you give when your players and their families, along with the entire parish, see you consistently and faithfully at the Sunday Mass. It sets a tone. It is “salt and light” to parish life, unity and mission. It is what I expect as your bishop and the point guard of the mission of the Catholic Church on Long Island.

**2** Thank you for the character lessons you teach us in both victory and defeat. Our experiences of defeat are especially valuable since we learn how to bounce back and address positively and constructively the defeats of life.

**3** Thank you for the way you model a respect for the dignity of the individual in your sportsmanship and classy treatment of opposing team coaches and players, referees and the crowds at games. You teach us how to compete with class, character, mature self-possession and charity.

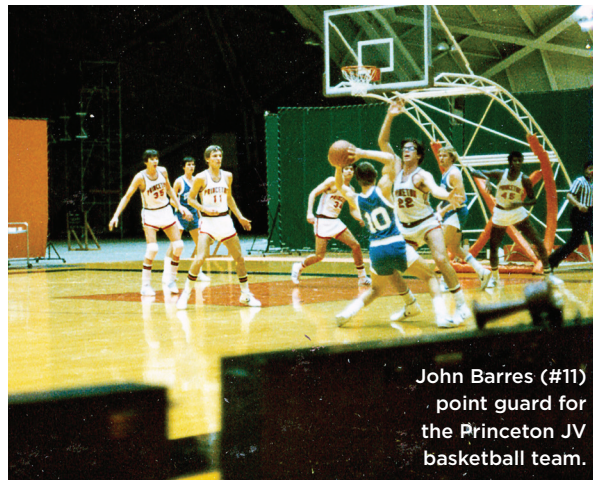
**4** Thank you for the way you model sacrifice for the team, radical unselfishness and team chemistry, unity and spirit. We will take this with us in our educational experiences, career and vocational paths and our future marriages and families. You also teach us the responsibility we have toward the younger children who come to our games and look up to us.

**5** Thank you for your halftime talks and game plan adjustments. You model for us how to recognize problems and issues quickly both in games and in life and how to recognize and address these problems and challenges proactively and effectively. We carry this into every dimension of our lives.

**6** Thank you for the friendships between families that are part of the CYO experience and how families support each other in the practice of the Catholic faith through these friendships.

**7** Thank you, too, for the service projects you connect us to and the opportunity to serve the poor you provide us.

Thank you CYO Coaches and Players of Long Island — together, with the Body and Blood of Christ at the center of our lives and our families, let's take it to the next level! †



John Barres (#11) point guard for the Princeton JV basketball team.



John Barres, St. Augustine's CYO Larchmont, NY 8th Grade, 1973-74 season.