



**The Most Reverend John Oliver Barres, S.T.D., J.C.L., D.D.
Fifth Bishop of Rockville Centre**

OFFICIAL BIOGRAPHY

On December 9, 2016, Pope Francis named Most Reverend John Oliver Barres, the fifth bishop of Rockville Centre. Bishop Barres came from the Diocese of Allentown in Pennsylvania, where on May 27, 2009, he was named the fourth Bishop for the diocese by Pope Benedict XVI. His installation in the Diocese of Rockville Centre on January 31, 2017, was celebrated in the Cathedral of Saint Agnes, Rockville Centre, New York. His episcopal motto “Holiness and Mission” comes from Pope St. John Paul II’s encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* which emphasizes the universal call to holiness and mission in the Catholic Church.

During his installation homily (https://www.drvc.org/pdf/BishopBarres/Installation_homily_01_31_17.pdf),

Bishop Barres appealed to inactive Catholics to rediscover the power of the Word of God, the power of the Sacrament of Penance, and the power of the Catholic Mass. He encouraged and challenged active Catholics to invite one inactive Catholic friend or family member to Mass, to gently, compassionately, non-judgmentally witness the beauty of their intimacy with Christ and their love for the mission of the Catholic Church.

His ministry to the Diocese began immediately. At the start of Lent in 2017, Bishop Barres called on Catholics to pray for *dramatic missionary growth* in the Diocese of Rockville Centre,

and reiterated his installation challenge to active Catholics about inviting one inactive Catholic back to Mass.

In May 2017, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Blessed Mother's apparitions in Fatima, Portugal, Bishop Barres released his first pastoral letter entitled, "Miracle of the Sun" (<https://www.drvc.org/pdf/BishopBarres/Fatima100yearsMay2017.pdf>). The letter was an invitation to the faithful to join him in praying the rosary daily during the month of May for the promotion of *dramatic missionary growth* on Long Island.

During the summer, Bishop Barres ministered to Catholics in many ways. In June 2017, Bishop Barres ordained five men to the diocesan priesthood.

To reach commuters suffering from long train delays during the summer of 2017, Bishop Barres created with Telecare, the diocesan television network, an innovative daily video series entitled, "The Catholic Spirituality of Commuter Delays." The two-month series refocused the reality of commuter delays as disguised missionary moments and well-hidden time of God's presence among us.

In July 2017, Bishop Barres conducted the first *Quo Vadis* Leadership Camp in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, to promote an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life. *Quo Vadis* (Latin for "Where are you going?") was a five-day, four-night experience for young men and women at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington that demonstrated the richness found in the religious life and priesthood on Long Island.

In response to an invitation by Bishop Barres to visit the Diocese, His Eminence Jose Gregorio Cardinal Rosa Chavez of El Salvador, who worked closely with Blessed Oscar Romero as a young priest, visited the People of God of the Diocese of Rockville Centre in August 2017. His four days were grace filled as Cardinal Rosa Chavez celebrated the global missionary spirit of Pope Francis and promoted *dramatic missionary growth* on Long Island.

Cardinal Rosa Chavez touched the hearts of thousands during a packed schedule of pastoral visits to the local communities on Long Island and at Masses attended by thousands of worshippers. Cardinal Rosa Chavez brought the light of Christ to communities grappling with immigration issues and gang violence. Along with Father Daniel Rivera and seminarian Roger Velasquez, Cardinal Rosa Chavez appealed to the Hispanic community to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

In October 2017, Bishop Barres announced a major commitment to the ongoing healing of survivors of acts of child sexual abuse committed by clergy. He announced the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program (IRCP) for the Diocese of Rockville Centre. The Program is a critical and tangible step toward reconciliation, healing and compensation for survivors of acts of abuse committed by diocesan clergy.

In the pursuit of *dramatic missionary growth* on Long Island, Bishop Barres has promoted a partnership with the Augustine Institute for a dynamic Senior Year of Catholic Apologetics for the Catholic High School students on Long Island and the use of FORMED.ORG (A Catholic version of Netflix) in the parishes of the Diocese. In the course of two months, the number of parishes enrolled in FORMED rose from 20 parishes to 93 parishes. Bishop Barres has also promoted a partnership with FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) so that four Catholic missionaries could work with the Catholic Chaplain and Campus ministers at Stony Brook University, a flagship University in the State University of New York (SUNY) system.

In his pastoral letter for April 2018 entitled, “The Dream and Our Deepest, Truest Selves” (<https://www.drvc.org/pdf/BishopBarres/TheDreamandOurDeepestTruestSelves.pdf>).

Bishop Barres commemorated the life and mission of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the 50th Anniversary of his assassination and offered reflections on Dr. King’s message, life and death through the lens of Catholic theology and spirituality.

Bishop Barres wrote a chapter in the recently released book, “Apostolic Athletes: 11 Priests and Bishops Reveal How Sports Helped Them Follow Christ’s Call.” The Bishop reflects on how sports helped shape his early life and his response to a call to the priesthood. He looks at his years as a Princeton University Junior Varsity (JV) point guard and how the Holy Spirit helped develop his leadership through that experience.

Bishop Barres uses social media to spread the Gospel message. He has the Twitter handle @Bishop Barres, and tweets three times each day. He also has a program on the Catholic Faith Network (formerly, Telecare), entitled, “Encounter.” Bishop Barres writes a monthly column, “Holiness and Mission,” for *The Long Island Catholic* magazine and *Fe Fuerza Vida*, the Spanish-language newspaper of the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

Bishop Barres serves on the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Since 2013, Bishop Barres has been the Episcopal Liaison to the Pontifical Mission Societies for the USCCB. He also serves on the Board of Trustees and the St. Charles Borromeo Council at St. Joseph’s Seminary (Dunwoodie, New York).

In September 2017 Bishop Barres received the St. John’s University Gold Medal, awarded to individuals who exemplify a commitment to service and the St. John’s University Mission and delivered an Address entitled “The Relationship between Catholic Sacramental Theology and Catholic Social Justice Teaching: The Sacrament of Penance in Service of ‘Welcoming the Stranger.’” He gave the Keynote Meditation on September 11, 2017 to the leadership of the United Nations. At the May 11, 2018 Commencement Exercises of St. Joseph’s Seminary (Dunwoodie, New York), Bishop Barres delivered the Keynote Address entitled “Avery Cardinal Dulles and the Future of Catholic Apologetics in America.”

The Journey to the Diocese of Rockville Centre

On May 27, 2009, at the age of 48, Bishop Barres was named the fourth Bishop for the Diocese of Allentown by Pope Benedict XVI. He received his Episcopal consecration on July 30, 2009 from His Eminence Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia. Bishop William Francis Malooly, Bishop of Wilmington, Delaware and Bishop Michael Angelo Saltarelli, Bishop Emeritus, Diocese of Wilmington served as co-consecrators.

Bishop John Oliver Barres was born September 20, 1960, and raised in Larchmont, New York. He was the first son of Oliver and Marjorie Catchpole Barres, Congregational ministers who met at the Yale Divinity School and converted to Catholicism in 1955. The story of their conversion is told in Oliver Barres' book published in 1955, *One Shepherd, One Flock*. He was baptized by renowned preacher Bishop Fulton J. Sheen in 1960 while his father worked for Bishop Sheen's *Propagation of the Faith* magazine in New York City. Bishop Barres is the fifth of six children, and has seven nephews and four nieces.

Bishop Barres graduated cum laude in 1978 from Phillips Academy. In 1982, he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature from Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, where he also played three years of junior varsity basketball during the era of Basketball Hall of Fame Coach Pete Carril. Bishop Barres went on to earn a Master in Business Administration in Management in 1984, from New York University Graduate School of Business Administration, New York.

Bishop Barres completed his seminary formation studies at Theological College, The National Seminary of The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. While at Theological College, he received his Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology in 1988 and Licentiate in Systematic Theology in 1989.

Bishop Barres was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Wilmington on October 21, 1989 by Bishop Robert Mulvee. Bishop Barres began his priesthood as an associate pastor at parishes in Newark and Wilmington, Delaware. He continued his theological education

in Rome, Italy where he studied at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, and earned his Licentiate of Canon Law in 1998 and Doctorate in Sacred Theology in 1999.

Upon returning to the Diocese of Wilmington in 1999, Bishop Barres was appointed Vice-Chancellor and then Chancellor of the Diocese of Wilmington. Pope John Paul II named him a “Chaplain to His Holiness” in July 2000 with the title of “Monsignor.” Pope Benedict XVI named him a “Prelate of Honor” in November 2005.

After serving the Diocese of Wilmington for almost 20 years, Bishop Barres, at age 48, was named the fourth Bishop for the Diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania by Pope Benedict XVI on May 27, 2009. He was ordained and installed as Bishop of Allentown on July 30, 2009, by His Eminence Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia at the Cathedral of Saint Catharine of Siena in Allentown. Bishop Barres was the first priest ordained a bishop within the Diocese of Allentown. Principal co-consecrators were Bishop William Francis Malooly, Bishop of Wilmington and Bishop Michael Angelo Saltarelli, Bishop Emeritus, Diocese of Wilmington.

Through some innovative approaches to Catholic education and pastoral strategic planning, the New Evangelization mission of the Diocese of Allentown was strengthened. Bishop Barres wanted the Church to reach out and help young Catholics find their way spiritually. As Bishop, he took to social media by establishing a Twitter handle and a weekly video blog. He would tweet up to three times each day in order to reach out to younger Catholics.

As shepherd of the Diocese of Allentown, Bishop Barres initiated a vibrant diocesan-wide Saint Thomas More Society for lawyers, focused on local efforts to educate the faithful on the importance of protection for religious liberty. He also established an aspirancy program for young men considering a call to the priesthood. Under Bishop’s leadership, the diocese expanded its Hispanic ministry and evangelization.

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Update: 7/23/18

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