



A Letter to the Catholic Faithful of the Diocese of Rockville Centre
From Bishop John O. Barres
April 3, 2020



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As the human family faces a global crisis, we as God's family of faith prepare to enter into our most sacred time of the year, the celebration of Holy Week and the Easter Season. Whether you are deeply connected with the practice of our Faith, or you have been distant for a while, God is inviting all of us to draw closer to Him and embrace the comfort of His unconditional love.

The Lord Jesus is journeying with us during this time of uncertainty, anxiety and sorrow. At the same time, he is inviting us to journey with him, perhaps more intimately than ever before in our lives. He invites us into the upper room of the Last Supper with his Apostles on Holy Thursday, to celebrate the gift of the Holy Eucharist, his Body and Blood. He invites us to walk with him on the road to Calvary as he carries the cross for our salvation. He invites us to the empty tomb that gives witness to his resurrection, the ultimate victory over sin and death.

We share the pain of separation from our loved ones and our inability to celebrate together in our parish Churches. In this unique moment, we are challenged as the Church to find new ways to meet the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of God's people on Long Island. We urge you to participate virtually with your family in the many liturgies offered via live online streaming and broadcast on the Catholic Faith Network, (CFN). Allow us to bring Christ's comfort and strength to you and your family during this holy season.

Through Catholic Health Services of Long Island and Catholic Charities of Long Island, the Diocese of Rockville Centre is responding to the crisis in incredible ways:

- Providing compassionate care to hundreds of COVID-19 patients at our six Catholic hospitals;
- Expanding our Meals-On-Wheels programs;
- Providing enhanced and expanded homecare services to those who were cared for in congregate day care programs which are now closed;
- Providing shopping services to those who are most vulnerable to the Pandemic;
- Assisting the underserved to get much needed internet service so that children can continue their education and parents can work from home.

If you or a family member is in need of assistance you can contact Catholic Charities helpline at (516) 733-7045.

Creative pastors and priests have found practical and innovative ways to feed the spiritual needs of the Faithful during these unique times by video-streaming parish Masses and Eucharistic adoration, conducting virtual parish missions, and Eucharistic processions through neighborhoods.

Thank God for the tremendous gift of the Catholic Faith Network (CFN), the national television network based here in our own Diocese. It broadcasts five Masses daily and will have complete coverage of Holy Week and Easter liturgies from Saint Agnes Cathedral in Rockville Centre, Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, and Saint Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan. A complete programming schedule is available at www.CFNtv.org. CFN is available on Optimum, Verizon FiOS TV, and Spectrum cable networks, as well as on Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV, Android, or free of charge by downloading the CFN mobile app.

Appreciating the anxieties and significant challenges that you are facing, we urge you, if you can, to please make a special Easter offering to your local parish and to continue supporting the weekly offertory donations. These funds are critical for the continued operation of your parish and for our ability to emerge from this crisis. Every day, your parish provides for the pastoral and spiritual care of its parishioners. It is our source of nourishment and life through the sacraments. It is our place of comfort during the most sorrowful moments of our lives. The Church provides senior services, food pantries, youth ministries, Catholic schools, religious education and Faith formation. We depend upon the generosity of all of the Faithful to sustain these shared missions.

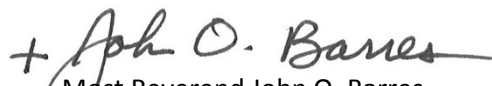
One easy way to help is through your parish's online giving provider. Your parish may have an online giving account that can be accessed through your parish's website. We have also developed a "Text to Give" option for each of our parishes enabling you to make a weekly donation on your smart phone. To access information regarding this innovative form of giving, please visit the following website: <https://www.drvcmissionarygrowth.org/text2give>.

We also ask those who are able, to consider supporting the inspiring work of Catholic Charities, Catholic Health Services and the Catholic Ministries Appeal, which provide vital services during this crisis. The websites of each of these ministries can be reached through our diocesan website: www.drvc.org

We are grateful for the many ways that you live your Faith, especially in difficult times that call us to support one another as a family. Thank you for embracing the mission of the Church.

I ask for your prayers for all who are suffering in our communities and throughout the world. Please know that as part of the Catholic family of Long Island, you are remembered in my daily Masses and prayers. May God the Father give us strength and fill us with the hope of His Son's resurrection. May Mary, our Blessed Mother, intercede for us.

Sincerely in Christ,


+ *John O. Barres*
Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre