



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

May 6, 2021

Dear Nurses of Long Island:

In this last year, no one was left unaffected by the trials and tribulations of the COVID-19 pandemic, but nurses, in a most profound way, were at the frontline from the very beginning, have been there during the darkest hours, and will be there to the very end. I am most grateful for the dedication of every nurse in our Diocese of Rockville Centre who, called to duty in these unprecedented times, demonstrated the grace, strength, and perseverance that epitomizes the Nursing profession and our Christian duty to care for the sick and suffering.

But it is more than just the last year. I thank every one of you in our hospitals, nursing homes and rehabilitation centers, home care environments, hospices, primary care and specialty clinics, schools, and most especially in our Catholic Health system, for giving selflessly, throughout your careers, and bringing Christ's compassion and consolation to so many. I thank you for seeing the beauty and dignity of the human person in every patient you serve.

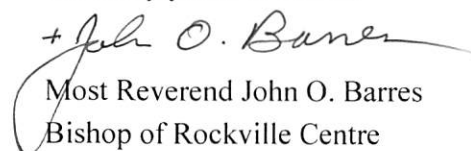
In the last year, I know how so many of you, painfully aware of the dangers you faced with an unknown infection, bravely donned full body Personal Protective Equipment to minister to the sick and dying in our hospitals, nursing homes and private residences. But I also know of the less-chronicled times you have been away from your own families for extended shifts during a snowstorm or hurricane, when you have brought cheer with a small token of love for a lonesome patient, when you have listened or prayed with a family member, and when you have rejoiced over the news of a cure or recovery. At the same time, you have been there to comfort, console, and accompany many patients and their families through difficult times. You have been at the foot of the Cross.

It is for these qualities of character, this deep commitment, and these sacrifices whether small or heroic, that we know those who enter the field of Nursing have a special vocation: to bring Christ to the bedside, to heal the wounds of the body, and more importantly, those of the soul.

And so, as we mark National Nurses Week, it is with the sincerest gratitude that I thank you for all you do to serve God's people here on Long Island, for bearing witness to His call to love our neighbor: "For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Gal 5:14). Nursing, in its purest form, manifests this truth articulated by Pope Benedict XVI in *Caritas in Veritate*: "everything has its origin in God's love, everything is shaped by it, everything is directed towards it. Love is God's greatest gift to humanity; it is his promise and our hope."

May God bless you in your dedicated work and in your heroic sacrifices and charity.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


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