



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Christmas 2017

To the People of God of the Diocese of Rockville Centre:

Merry Christmas to you and your families! As we celebrate the Prince of Peace's entrance into world history, we give thanks to Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the Mission of Mercy of our Holy Catholic Church.

We give thanks for our families, our domestic churches, which transform the world and history with Christ's Love and the Church's missionary spirit

This past month we dedicated the Gianna Center of Long Island for Women's Health and Fertility, which in its mission unites the Splendor of Truth of Catholic Moral Teaching on Marriage and the Family with ethical reproductive science through the use of *NaPro Technology* and the *Creighton Model Fertility Care System*.

This was an important moment for the Catholic Church and Catholic Health Services in its service to the common good of Long Island.

The dedication of the Gianna Center gives a living expression of celebration to some important 2018 Church anniversaries.

On July 28, 2018, we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Blessed Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. Blessed Paul VI was prophetic as he courageously taught that all marital intimacy celebrates both the love-giving and life-giving dimensions of married love that cannot be separated.

The Holy Father predicted accurately the dire consequences for society of separating the love-giving and life-giving dimensions of married love. He was widely criticized, even ridiculed at the time, but as we know from the Old Testament that is exactly what happens to prophets who stand up for liberating truths.

Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman once said: "The Catholic Church is not behind the times. It is beyond the times." And as the renowned particle physicist Professor Stephen Barr emphasizes, in the history of the world, the Catholic Church is the greatest friend and supporter of *ethical* scientific development. The Gianna Center is an expression of this friendship, support and partnership in history.

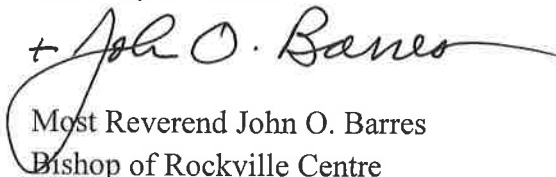
On August 4, 2018, we will also celebrate the 25th Anniversary of St. John Paul II's great encyclical *The Splendor of Truth*, which shows that moral choices and decisions that are grounded in objective truth transform and illumine the lives of individuals and society.

The Gianna Center is a powerful part of that dedication to truth, charity and mercy and during this Christmas 2017, we ask the Christ Child to lead all those involved in the mission of the Gianna Center and all who are served by that mission.

The Center's patroness, St. Gianna Beretta Molla (1922-1962) was a wife, a mother and a physician dedicated to the progress of medical science. Her image is prominent at the main altar of St. Agnes Cathedral where I will celebrate Christmas Midnight Mass.

I will pray that her intercession and her courageous and holy example may inspire each one of us and our family members this Christmas season and be yet another catalyst of *dramatic missionary growth* on Long Island.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John O. Barres". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre