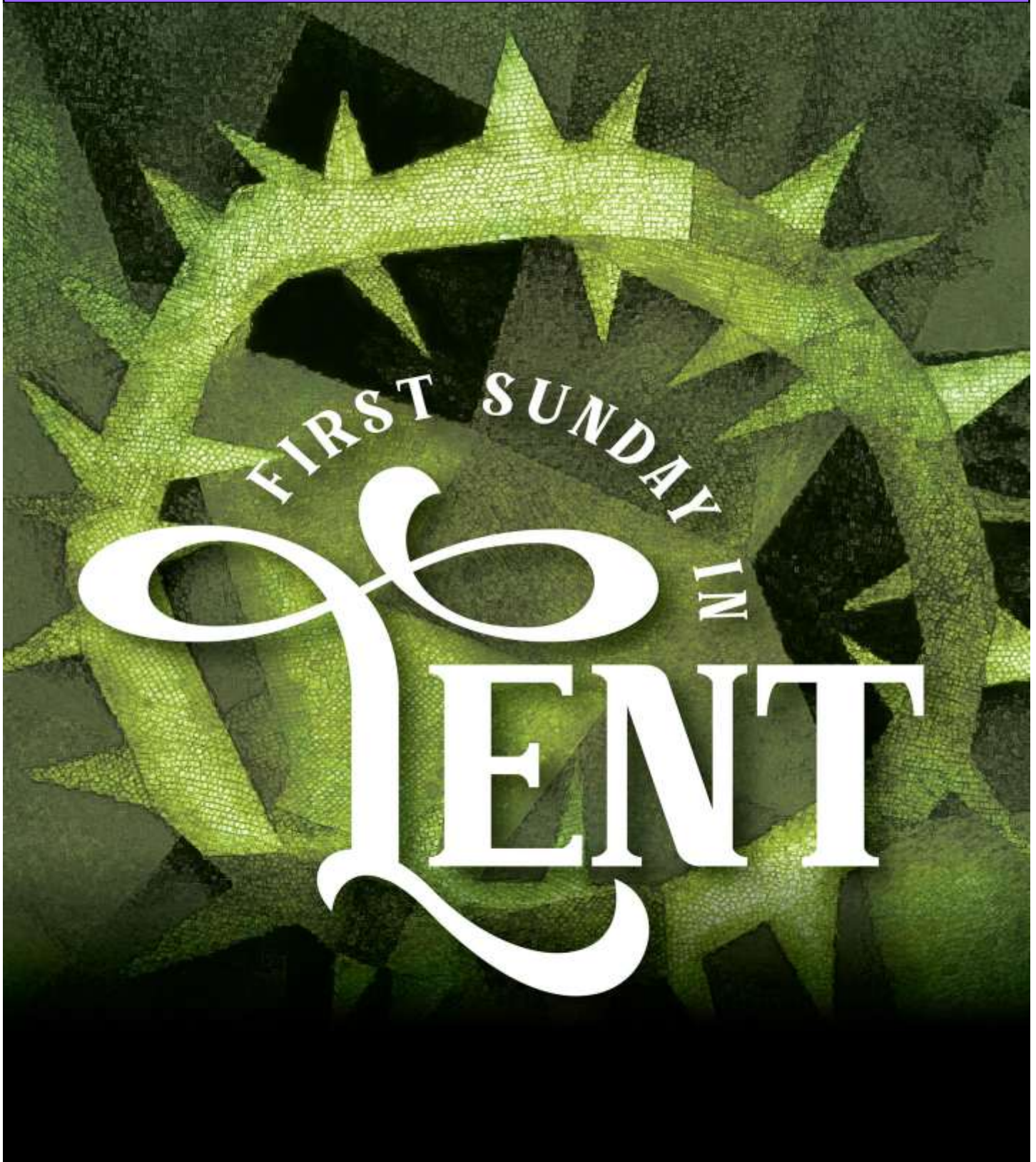


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Westhampton Beach, NY 11978

**Church of the
IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION**

Website: iccwhb.org
Parish email: parishoffice@iccwhb.org
FB: www.facebook.com/iccwhb
YouTube: www.youtube.com/@iccwhb



FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT
February 22, 2026



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Lent 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In this Lenten season 2026, we offer our prayer, fasting, and almsgiving for the Light of Christ's peace and justice to heal the many troubled parts of our nation and world.

Amid so many global and national crises, it is essential that we be guided and inspired by the Word of God. This Lent, let us rededicate ourselves to being deeply biblical Catholics on fire with the Word of God.¹

In Saint Paul's Second Letter to Timothy (2:8-10), the Apostle writes: "The Word of God is not bound," or as another translation renders it, "The Word of God cannot be chained."

The Church of Santa Maria in Via Lata in Rome, near to both the Trevi Fountain and the Pantheon, is traditionally taken as the site of Saint Paul's imprisonment in the Eternal City. Beneath this holy church stands an ancient, freestanding granite column that I visited and prayed at on May 17, 2024.

Etched into that ancient column is the Latin phrase for "The Word of God is not bound." The column also has rust marks indicating that a chain – possibly the one discovered archaeologically in an adjacent well – was wrapped around it.

How powerful it was to place my hands on that granite column and to touch with my fingers the words of Saint Paul! In my ecclesial mission as the Successor of the Apostles on Long Island, that memorable day I asked Saint Paul for his intercession that each one of us in the Diocese of Rockville Centre could be as bold and as audacious in proclaiming that the Word of God cannot be chained!

The Word of God cannot be chained in our own lives and in the lives of our families!

The Word of God bursts through our sin, paralyses, and resistances to change, and ignites our own Road to Damascus conversions!

The Word of God breaks down the self-imposed prison doors of addiction, ego, pride, selfishness, and narcissism, and refocuses our lives on Christ and his call to rejoice!

The Word of God cannot be chained by sin, war, terrorism, racism, injustice, poverty,² or disrespect for the sanctity and dignity of human life!

¹ See Bishop Barres' Pastoral Letter *God's Word Is Living and Effective* available at www.drvc.org.

² See Pope Leo XIV's 2025 Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexisti Te (On Love of the Poor)* available at www.vatican.va.

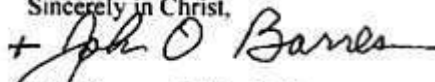
The Word of God cannot be chained by unethical deployments of Artificial Intelligence!³

The Word of God cannot be chained in the global mission of the Catholic Church, regardless of the 21st century persecutions and martyrdoms she experiences!⁴

As the Successor of the Apostles on Long Island, and in communion and mission with our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV, I thank each of you for the way you “cast fire on the earth” (Luke 12:49) through your daily reading, meditating, praying, contemplating, and living the inspired Sacred Scriptures.

Be assured of my prayers for a blessed Lent.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John O. Barres". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre

³ See *Antiqua et Nova*, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery for Culture and Education's January 14, 2025, *Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence* available at www.vatican.va.

⁴ See Robert Royal, *The Martyrs of the New Millennium: The Global Persecution of Christians in the Twenty-First Century*, (New York: Sophia Institute Press, 2025).



DIocese of ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Cuaresma 2026

Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo:

En esta Cuaresma de 2026, ofrecemos nuestra oración, nuestro ayuno y nuestra limosna para que la Luz de la paz y de la justicia de Cristo sane tantas realidades heridas de nuestra nación y de nuestro mundo.

En medio de tantas crisis globales y nacionales, es esencial que nos dejemos guiar e inspirar por la Palabra de Dios. En esta Cuaresma, volvamos a comprometernos a ser católicos profundamente bíblicos, inflamados por la Palabra de Dios.¹

En la Segunda Carta de san Pablo a Timoteo (2,8-10), el Apóstol escribe: “La Palabra de Dios no está encadenada”, o como traduce otra versión: “La Palabra de Dios no puede ser encadenada”.

La iglesia de Santa María en la Via Lata, en Roma, cercana tanto a la Fontana di Trevi como al Panteón, es tradicionalmente considerada el lugar del encarcelamiento de san Pablo en la Ciudad Eterna. Bajo esta santa iglesia se alza una antigua columna de granito, independiente, que tuve ocasión de visitar y ante la cual recé el 17 de mayo de 2024.

Grabada en esa antigua columna se encuentra la frase latina que significa «La Palabra de Dios no está encadenada». La columna presenta también marcas de óxido que indican que una cadena —posiblemente la que fue descubierta arqueológicamente en un pozo cercano— estuvo enrollada en ella.

¡Qué experiencia tan sobrecogedora fue colocar mis manos sobre esa columna de granito y tocar con mis dedos las palabras de san Pablo! En mi misión eclesial como Sucesor de los Apóstoles en Long Island, aquel día inolvidable pedí la intercesión de san Pablo para que cada uno de nosotros, en la Diócesis de Rockville Centre, sea tan audaz y valiente en proclamar que la Palabra de Dios no puede ser encadenada.

¡La Palabra de Dios no puede ser encadenada en nuestra propia vida ni en la vida de nuestras familias!

¡La Palabra de Dios irrumpe a través de nuestro pecado, de nuestras parálisis y de nuestras resistencias al cambio, y enciende en nosotros auténticas conversiones en nuestro propio Camino de Damasco!

¡La Palabra de Dios derriba las puertas de las prisiones que nosotros mismos nos imponemos —la adicción, el ego, el orgullo, el egoísmo y el narcisismo— y vuelve a centrar nuestras vidas en Cristo y en su llamada a la alegría!

¡La Palabra de Dios no puede ser encadenada por el pecado, la guerra, el terrorismo, el racismo, la injusticia, la pobreza,² ni por el desprecio de la santidad y la dignidad de la vida humana!

¹ See Bishop Barres' Pastoral Letter *God's Word is Living and Effective* available at www.drvc.org.

² See Pope Leo XIV's 2025 Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexit Te (On Love of the Poor)* available at www.vatican.va.

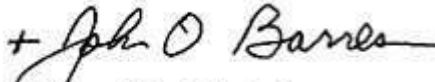
¡La Palabra de Dios no puede ser encadenada por usos no éticos de la Inteligencia Artificial!³

¡La Palabra de Dios no puede ser encadenada en la misión global de la Iglesia católica, independientemente de las persecuciones y martirios que ella sufre en el siglo XXI!⁴

Como Sucesor de los Apóstoles en Long Island, y en comunión y misión con nuestro Santo Padre el Papa León XIV, agradezco a cada uno de ustedes la manera en que «prenden fuego en la tierra» (Lc 12,49) mediante su lectura diaria, su meditación, su oración, su contemplación y su vivencia de las inspiradas Sagradas Escrituras.

Tengan la certeza de mis oraciones para que vivan una santa y bendecida Cuaresma.

Sinceramente en Cristo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John O. Barres". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Reverendísimo John O. Barres
Obispo de Rockville Centre

³ See *Antiqua et Nova*, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery for Culture and Education's January 14, 2025, *Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence* available at www.vatican.va.

⁴ See Robert Royal, *The Martyrs of the New Millenium: The Global Persecution of Christians in the Twenty-First Century*, (New York: Sophia Institute Press, 2025).

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education Office Hours are:
Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday
9am to 5pm
631-288-4188

A PRAYER FOR FEBRUARY

Dear Lord,
Thank you for the gift of a new month and the opportunities it brings. As we begin this February, we pray that you will fill our hearts and homes with your Joy. May we embrace the beauty of each day, finding delight in the little things. Help us to cultivate gratitude for all you have given us. Let our spirits be uplifted, and may we spread joy like a warm light in the world. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*This is my commandment:
love one another as I love you.
~ John 15:12*

DATES TO REMEMBER FOR FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 28

Level 8 Retreat - PC

INTRODUCTION TO THE LITURGY OF THE DAY

During the forty-day journey through the desert that we make each Lent, again and again we will find ourselves tempted to do the wrong thing, to overindulge, to lie, to take the easy way out. Fortunately, the Holy Spirit accompanies us to guide us along the right path and lead us back after we lose our way. We recall that filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus was able to resist temptation on his journey, even when the devil offered him the whole world. May we be strengthened regularly by his Body and Blood while on our holy pilgrimage.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Through the saving death and resurrection of Christ, all the baptized are summoned to this holy table to offer a prayer of endless thanksgiving. We lift up heart and voice to our God, who calls us out of darkness and into light.

PRAY FOR OUR SICK

Jeffrey Davis, Jake Ekhart, Millie Ferrin,
Eve McNeil, Fay Mack, & Nancy Ruffell

Please call the Parish Office (631-288-1423) to add/delete a name to the sick list. This list will be cleared occasionally.

REFLECTIONS

Living Stewardship

During Lent, we are called to practice prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Your parish and Diocese have many opportunities for you to grow in your Faith this season. Also consider making a gift to the Catholic Ministries Appeal as one way to practice almsgiving.



Bulletin Reflection

In today's Gospel, Jesus goes into the desert, fasts and is tempted by the Devil.



SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday: First Sunday of Lent

Monday: St. Polycarp

Friday: St. Gregory of Narek; Abstinence

QUESTION OF THE WEEK



How do I resist temptation? Can I remember to look ahead to the long-term consequences before I choose what to do?

PRAYER REQUESTS

There is a great power in prayer. It is our lifeline to God. Through it we communicate with God, and people are strengthened, helped, and made whole.

Do you know of some concern, or of some person with a special need for whom we ought to pray? We have 29 prayer warriors praying, please call Charles Schmidt at 631-288-4243 and leave a message with your prayer request.

PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY



FOOD PANTRY

Some items our Food Pantry needs are: TOILETRIES, HEARTY-TYPE SOUPS & JELLY. But ANY food/toiletry is welcomed!

eGIVING OPPORTUNITIES

eGiving makes it easy to give, anytime, anywhere. To continue lifesaving ministries and outreach in our parish community, we depend on generous online donations from our church family. We prayerfully invite you to use eGiving from your computer, smartphone, or tablet to set up a recurring donation or make a one-time gift.



FAITH DIRECT/PARISH SOFT

Enrolling with Faith Direct will provide Immaculate Conception with consistent support and simplify your giving without the use of envelopes. Visit:

<https://membership.faithdirect.net/NY66>

Thank you for your continued support!

PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY

NAVY: Ethan Bentley, Julia Blake, Michael J. DiLeo, William Robesch, RJ Ruggiero, Matthew Worden, & Cameron Worden

MARINES: Christopher Fencel

AIR FORCE: Joseph Ferraro III

USSF: Thomas Hellman

Please contact the Rectory @ 631-288-1423 to add a loved one to the military list

MEDITATION with Deacon Joe

Tuesdays at 2pm in the Parish Center
Try this spiritual practice, it will surprise you!

SACRAMENTALS

The ALTAR BREAD & WINE

this week are in honor of

Michael Merlo

There are many opportunities to have the Sanctuary Lamp burn a week in memory of ... or perhaps having the Bread & Wine in someone's honor for a week. We also have Altar Flowers that can be admired in your loved ones name for the week. Visit the Parish Office to arrange yours today!

Available Dates:

Sanctuary Lamp: March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Bread & Wine: March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Altar Flowers: April 26, May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

Please contact the Parish Office for more information.

TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION



In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in various forms of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Some people suggest that this recovers an ancient tradition in the church, when in fact the practice belongs to a later time. The custom of showing the consecrated host to the people, encased in a vessel called a monstrance, developed in a period of history when even very pious people received Communion only rarely. The opportunity to see the host raised high above the head of the priest at Mass, or to see the host exposed outside of Mass, was thought by many to be a form of spiritual Communion. Without question, our Catholic practice of reserving the consecrated host both for adoration and Communion of the sick and dying is a cherished tradition.

Over the next few weeks, we'll look at how these traditions developed and how the Church envisions reservation and adoration today. We do this by the light of the liturgical reforms that have restored a heightened appreciation for how receiving the Body and Blood of Christ is central to our worship. "Perpetual Adoration," "Reservation," "Benediction," and "Reposition" are all part of the Catholic vocabulary. Often the terms are misused, and a tangled history—as well as widely varying practices in our parishes—adds to the confusion. Many Catholics today have never participated in Benediction, or even spent time in adoration on Holy Thursday night. There's plenty of interesting history, much of it surprising and challenging, and we will do our best to inform you along the way.



LENT

Join us
during this
season
of Lent.



LENTEN REGULATIONS FAST AND ABSTINENCE

There is a limit of one full meal on Good Friday for all between the ages of 18 and 59 inclusive. All who have reached their 14th year are bound to abstain totally from meat on that day and ALL Fridays in Lent.

EASTER DUTY OBLIGATION

After they have received their First Holy Communion, Catholics are bound by the obligation of receiving Holy Communion at least once a year. This precept should be fulfilled during the Easter Season. Catholics are also bound to confess serious (mortal) sins at least once a year, but this is not limited to the Lenten/Easter Season.

EASTER FLOWERS

Easter Flowers can be dedicated to or in memory of your loved ones. Their names will be printed in the bulletin after Easter. A minimum suggested offering is \$25. You may use the envelopes you receive in the mail or use envelopes you may find in the lobby of the Church and you can place them either in the collection baskets during Mass or drop off at the Parish Office. Thank you!

RECONCILIATION

Every Saturday from 4-4:45pm

Special Day of Reconciliation

Monday, March 30th
2-4pm & 6-9pm

GOOD FRIDAY COLLECTION

Our Collection on Good Friday supports the Christian communities in the Holy Land. Thank you for your generosity.

LENTEN SUGGESTED PENANCE

Fasting

- Give up a specific food or habit that genuinely costs you something (sweets, snacking, soda, alcohol).
- Fast from complaining, gossip, or negative self-talk.
- Limit screen time after a certain hour.
- Skip one meal a week and offer it for someone who needs prayer.
- Choose a "digital fast" one day a week - no social media.



ENGLISH:

Every Friday at 4pm during Lent

SPANISH:

Every Friday at 7:30pm during Lent



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

at
**Immaculate Conception Church
in Our Lady's Hall**

We begin Thursday, February 26th
9:30am Chat/Coffee/Tea
10:00am Study begins promptly
Zoom is also available for those unable to attend in person

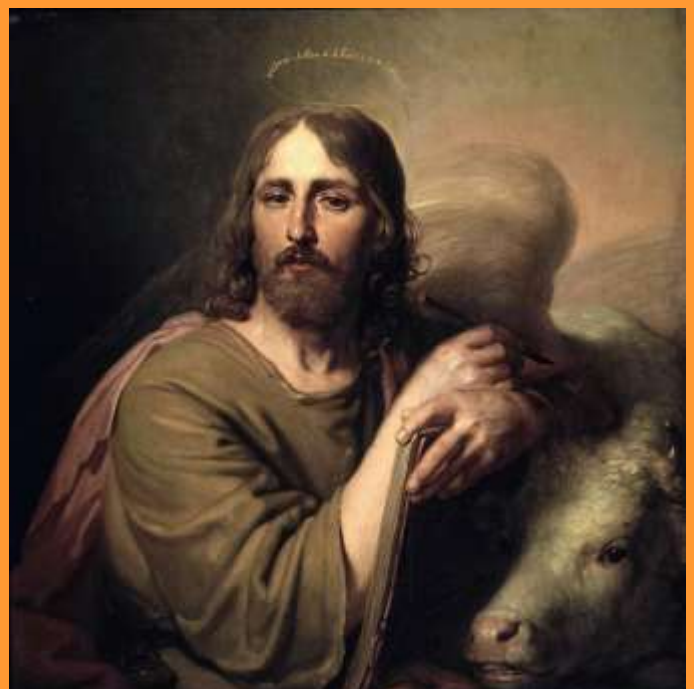
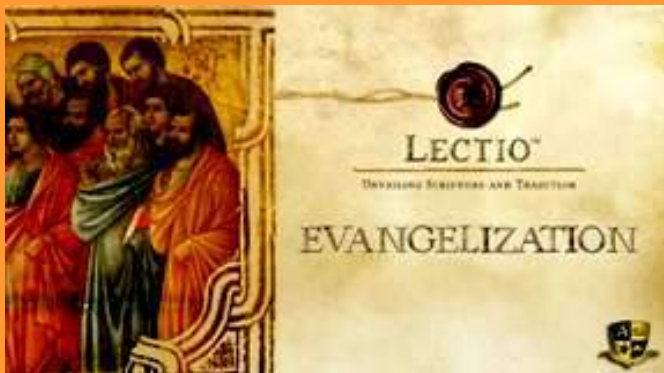
"EVANGELIZATION – AND THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES"

All are Welcome ... Join us on this journey, which will involve us in learning about St. Luke, the Evangelist, his New Testament Gospel and Acts of the Apostles. ACTS, "written as a sequel to Luke's Gospel, tells the story of the birth and spread of the Church starting in Jerusalem, and how today, each one of us has a role to play in the 'New Evangelization.'"

On this journey with St. Luke in the Spring and the Fall of 2026, we study the Acts of the Apostles, discuss magnificent Religious Paintings, learn about St. Luke's life and journey with St. Paul, discuss Pentecost and it's significance, and meditate with Lectio Davina. All designed to inspire, and to enhance our understanding of the role the first Evangelists played proclaiming and spreading the Gospel of Christ.

We hope you will decide to join us on Thursdays for our ICC Women's Bible Study. It is a wonderful way to engage with amazing women who want to learn, to discuss Scripture, share ideas, find comfort in shared life stories, and enhance your knowledge of the The New Testament/St. Luke's writings, his role, and the role of the Annunciation, St. Peter, St. Paul and other Evangelists in spreading the Gospel.

NOTE: To Register and reserve a copy of the Bible Study book, or have any questions, please email:
mtpilo.esq@gmail.com or Kris0330@optonline.net





20 CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL 26 DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

"Together, as one people, as brothers and sisters, let us walk towards God and love one another."
- Pope Leo XIV

SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH OTHERS

Almsgiving in Lent

During the Lenten Season we are asked to pray, fast and give alms.

Lent is a perfect time for us to pray for those in need - whether it is for their material, emotional or spiritual needs. And when you practice fasting and abstinence during these forty days, please remember those of our neighbors who reach out to us for help.

One way to do this is by making a gift to the **Catholic Ministries Appeal**, which supports programs that help people in our community each year through Catholic Charities and our Parish Outreach programs.



For more information about the Catholic Ministries Appeal, please visit CatholicMinistriesAppeal.org or call 516-678-5800 ext. 296.



20
26

**CAMPAÑA DE APOYO A LOS
MINISTERIOS CATÓLICOS**

DIÓCESIS DE ROCKVILLE CENTER

"Juntos, como un solo pueblo, todos como hermanos y hermanas, caminamos hacia Dios y animamos los unos a los otros"
-Papa León XIV

COMPARTIENDO EL EVANGELIO CON LOS PIEDÁS

Dar limosna en Cuaresma

En cuaresma se nos pide hacer oración, ayuno y dar limosna.

La Cuaresma es tiempo propicio para orar por nuestros hermanos más necesitados, sea su bienestar material, emocional o espiritual. Durante estos cuarenta días, cuando usted haga ayuno y abstinencia, por favor recuerde a aquellos que necesitan nuestra ayuda.

Una forma de hacerlo, es mediante un donativo a la **Campaña de Apoyo a los Ministerios Católicos** -que a través de Caridades Católicas y las oficinas de Alcance Social de nuestras Parroquias- cada año apoyan programas que ayudan a los más necesitados de nuestra comunidad.



Para más información sobre la Campaña de Apoyo a los Ministerios Católicos visite www.CatholicMinistriesAppeal.org o llame al 516-678-5800 ext. 296.



**11th Annual Run
for Tomorrow's Hope**
Saturday, March 14, 2026
St. Joseph School, Garden City

The 1-mile Fun Run begins at 8:30 AM, and the 5K begins at 9:00 AM, rain or shine! This beloved community event brings together runners, families, school spirit, and a shared commitment to support Catholic education.



The mission of Tomorrow's Hope Foundation is to ensure the excellence as well as the continuance of Catholic schools on Long Island by increasing awareness and by providing scholarship and program funding for the needs of students and schools.

Since 2005, Tomorrow's Hope Foundation has provided **more than \$37 million** in scholarship support to **approximately 26,000 students** within our network of **35 Catholic elementary schools** on Long Island.

50 Charles Lindbergh Blvd., Suite 500
Uniondale, NY 11553
516-745-7611



Women's Retreat

St. Joseph Villa, Hampton Bays

Friday-Sunday, March 20-22, 2026
Arrival Friday after 3pm, (dinner at 5:30 pm) Ends Sunday by noon.

"Women Beneath the Cross"

Our focus will be on the mystery of suffering. We will explore the journey of Mary Magdala and Mary, the Mother of Jesus as they painfully and helplessly stand beneath the Cross of Jesus. As you experience being with a loved one or friend as they passively walk into their last stage of life, ask yourself: Is this the same as being beneath the Cross of the Suffering Jesus? If you experience moments of struggle to understand cognitive impairment or terminal/chronic illness, in what way do you feel accompanied by Jesus in your suffering or perhaps a crisis of faith? Our time together as a community at prayer will be the support and consolation we need to say, "Yes, Your will be done!"

Presenters: Beth Barker, S. Peggy Conway, CSJ, S. Josephine Daspro, CSJ,
& Jean Lynch

Offering: \$250.00
\$50 non-refundable deposit with registration.
Please make checks payable to Sisters of St. Joseph

Registering for **Women's Retreat "Women Beneath the Cross"** at St. Joseph Villa, Hampton Bays, Friday – Sunday, March 20-22, 2026

Please return your registration form and deposit to:

Spiritual Direction Formation Office - Attn: Linda S.
La Providencia Center - 1725 Brentwood Rd.- Brentwood, NY 11717

OR register on our website: brentwoodcsj.org/events/

Name _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone#: _____

Email _____

Dietary Restrictions: _____

Special Needs/Requests: _____

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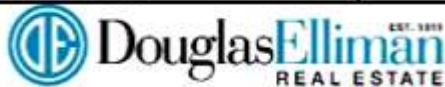
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