



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

EASTER 2017

The Power of the Risen Christ and Dramatic Missionary Growth

in the Church of Rockville Centre

Dear Friends:

As we celebrate Easter with our families and our parish families, we ask the Risen Lord for a true resurrection of our belief that *dramatic missionary growth* of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Rockville Centre can and will happen.

The courageous Cardinal Van Thuan, who witnessed powerfully to his Catholic faith while locked for years in a Vietnam prison, described the logic of Christ's resurrection in our lives in this way: "Jesus cast fire on the earth and He desires the earth to be set ablaze with its brilliant light. You must be the bright flame kindled by apostolic zeal; from your bright light other torches must be kindled until the whole world is a vast sea of living flame".

Together, let's each one of us be instruments of the Risen Lord who start that "vast sea of living flame" here in the Church of Rockville Centre, a vast sea of living flame that spreads throughout the Church in the Northeast, around the country to the whole world.

Consider Katie, a Senior at an Oyster Bay area public high school. She was recently accepted to Notre Dame University in South Bend and will most likely major in Finance. Notre Dame connects incoming students by Social Media so that they can interact and get to know each other a bit before they ever set foot on campus. Through a series of online conversations, Katie eloquently witnessed in a natural way to the cosmic power of the Catholic Mass streaming through every dimension of her life and was able to convince in a gentle and effective way an incoming freshman from Wyoming to come back to Mass.

When Katie told me this story, I was so deeply moved that this winning and charismatic young woman had heard Pope Francis' call to be a missionary disciple and was setting an example for both her peers and every generation of Catholics of how to reach out in faith and in the spirit of the Divine Mercy to others. She was also living the power of Christ's resurrection by being the instrument of spiritual resurrection in a young man's life. I can imagine Katie and her classmate from Wyoming saying a prayer and lighting a candle together – being part of the "vast sea of living flame" at Notre Dame's mystic Grotto at the center of campus sometime in August when they both arrive on campus.

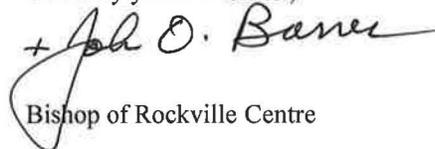
The story of Katie and her Notre Dame classmate is a moving and inspiring challenge to each one of us to ask people to come home to their Catholic faith and to invite others to consider the Splendor of Truth and Mercy of our Catholic faith.

This Easter, you and I rediscover the power of Christ's Resurrection in a new and fresh way. A renewed love and confidence in the power of the Risen Christ refreshes and strengthens our marriages, our family relationships and every friendship we experience in the course of our lives. A rediscovery of the power of Christ's resurrection helps our families become part of the "vast sea of living flame" that transforms the world and history.

This Easter 2017 we pray together that the light of the Divine Mercy that streams from the glorified wounds of the Risen Lord may touch the wounds of our families and the wounds of poor families, immigrant and refugee families separated by long distances and upheaval, families living in the midst of war, oppression and persecution, and families struggling with drug abuse and the opioid crisis.

Know that as your Shepherd and a Successor of the Apostles what an honor it is to be the servant of each one of your families as together we embrace the Holy Spirit's call to *dramatic missionary growth* in the Church of Rockville Centre.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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Bishop of Rockville Centre