

History of the Diocese of Rockville Centre

Section A: Brief History

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre (Latin: Dioecesis Petropolitana in Insula Longa) comprises the territory of Nassau and Suffolk counties (regionally known as Long Island) in New York state, USA. Founded in 1957, this diocese was created from territory that once belonged to the Diocese of Brooklyn. It is the sixth-largest Catholic diocese in the United States, currently serving approximately 1.5 million people in 134 parishes. The diocese is named for the village where its cathedral, St. Agnes Cathedral, is located, Rockville Centre in Nassau County.

Most Reverend Walter P. Kellenberg served as first bishop of the diocese from 1957-1976. Kellenberg was followed by Bishop John McGann, who retired in 2000 and died in 2002. The diocese was led briefly by Bishop James T. McHugh, who died of cancer on December 10, 2000.

The Most Reverend William Murphy served as the diocese's fourth bishop from 2001 to 2016. Murphy arrived in Long Island from his native Archdiocese of Boston, where he served as the archdiocese's vicar general. He will be succeeded by Bishop John Barres.

Section B: The Coat of Arms of the Diocese of Rockville Centre

The Coat of Arms was designed and adopted when the diocese was erected. The arms of the Diocese of Rockville Centre is divided per saltire and is bordered by a bordure composed of wavy lines. The colors of the field within the bordure are gold and blue. Three of the four partitions formed by the saltire are emblazoned with a scallop shell. The top partition is filled with a lamb's head. A black roundel in the center of the shield with the three stones or rocks is present. The arms is based on the history of Long Island and the etymology of the name Rockville Centre. The colors of the field within the bordure, gold and blue, appears on the coat of arms of King William III of the House of Nassau and on the arms which the county of Suffolk in England has used at times, these arms being those of Ipswich. Although there are more than 12 names for Long Island, the name generally preferred by the Indians of the mainland was Seawanhacky or "Island of Shells." The scallop shell is also truly heraldic, and a symbol which is often used to signify the flowing of water in the Sacrament of Baptism.

The wavy silver bordure is the heraldic equivalent of water and surrounding, as it does, the other charges, signifies the insular nature of the diocese. The lamb's head is the symbol of St. Agnes, virgin and martyr, the titular of the Cathedral of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. St. Agnes has been represented with a lamb, the symbol of her virginal innocence, since the Middle Ages.

The black roundel in the center of the shield with the three stones or rocks affords canting arms for Rockville Centre. The black roundel is in the exact center of the shield. The three rocks or stones are derived from the coat of arms of Pope Pius XII, who established the new Diocese of Rockville Centre in April, 1957. The roundel is tinctured in black to represent the seventeenth century name of Brooklyn, from the diocese from which the See of Rockville Centre was

separated. The black tincture represents the marshes, which recalled to the Dutch their homeland in Breuckelen in the Province of Utrecht. The Dutch who first settled Brooklyn called it "Breuck-Landt" meaning "broken land," or "marshland," inasmuch as a great deal of the land was broken up by patches of water.

Section C: The History of the Bishops of the Diocese

The Most Reverend Walter P. Kellenberg, D.D. First Bishop of Rockville Centre



Bishop Kellenberg was a native New Yorker, born in New York City in 1901. He was ordained a priest by Patrick Cardinal Hayes in St. Patrick's Cathedral on June 2, 1928. He was made an auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of New York in 1953 and in 1954 he was appointed as the Bishop of Ogdensburg in upstate New York.

Bishop Kellenberg was appointed Bishop of the newly formed Diocese of Rockville Centre on April 16, 1957 and formally installed on May 27, 1957. He served as diocesan bishop of Rockville Centre until May 3, 1976 and as Bishop Emeritus until his death on January 11, 1986.

Walter Kellenberg was born in the Bronx, New York, to Conrad and Elizabeth (née Kern) Kellenberg. He received his early education at the parochial school of St. Anthony's Church, and attended Fordham Preparatory School and Cathedral College. He made his theological studies at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers. He also took special courses in real estate, insurance, and business administration at Columbia University.

He was ordained to the priesthood on June 2, 1928. His first assignment was as a curate at St. Mary's Church in the Rosebank neighborhood of Staten Island, where he remained for six years. In 1934, he was transferred to St. Paul's Church in New York City and appointed to the archdiocesan curia. Within a year he became a curate at St. Patrick's Cathedral, and was named assistant chancellor and secretary of the Archdiocesan Commission for Real Estate and Insurance in 1939.

He was temporary administrator of St. John the Baptist Church in Staten Island and St. Nicholas Church in Manhattan, and became vice-chancellor in 1942. He was named a papal chamberlain in 1943, and served as secretary to Cardinal Francis Spellman from 1947 to 1950. He was later made chancellor (1947), domestic prelate (1948), and moderator of the coordinating committee of the Archdiocesan Catholic Lay Organization (1951).

On August 25, 1953, Kellenberg was appointed auxiliary bishop of New York and titular bishop of Ioannina by Pope Pius XII. He received his episcopal consecration on the following October 5 from Cardinal James Francis McIntyre, with Bishops William Scully and Joseph Francis Flannelly serving as co-consecrators. Three months later, following the transfer of Bishop Bryan Joseph McEntegart to the Catholic University of America, he was named the sixth Bishop of Ogdensburg on January 19, 1954. He remained in Ogdensburg for three years, when he was appointed the first Bishop of the newly erected Diocese of Rockville Centre on April 16, 1957.

From 1962 to 1965, he attended all four sessions of the Second Vatican Council. Shortly before reaching the mandatory retirement age of 75, he resigned as bishop on May 3, 1976. Kellenberg died from a heart attack at Mercy Hospital in Rockville Centre, aged 84.

Kellenberg Memorial High School in Uniondale is named in his honor.

The Most Reverend John R. McGann, D.D. Second Bishop of Rockville Centre



Bishop John Raymond McGann was born on December 2, 1924 in Brooklyn, NY, the son of the late Thomas and Mary Ryan McGann. He graduated from Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish Elementary School in June, 1938. He pursued studies for the priesthood at Cathedral College Preparatory Seminary, Brooklyn (1938-44) and Immaculate Conception Seminary, Huntington, NY (1944-50).

Ordained to the priesthood on June 3, 1950, by the Most Reverend Thomas E. Molloy, third Bishop of Brooklyn, Father McGann was assigned to St. Anne's Parish, Brentwood, New York, where he served as assistant pastor from 1950 to 1957. During that period, Father McGann also served as assistant chaplain at Pilgrim State Hospital, Brentwood, and from 1950 to 1954 as a faculty member of St. Joseph's Academy, Brentwood.

Shortly after the Diocese of Rockville Centre was established in 1957, Bishop Walter P. Kellenberg appointed Father McGann an assistant chancellor and, in 1959, as his assistant personal secretary. Father McGann was named Secretary to Bishop Kellenberg in 1959. That same year, Pope John XXIII appointed him a papal chamberlain with the title Very Reverend Monsignor. From 1957 to 1971 Monsignor McGann resided in the rectory of St. Agnes Cathedral Parish, Rockville Centre, where he also assisted with the parish work.

Monsignor McGann assumed additional duties in October of 1967 as a vice-chancellor and secretary to the Board of Consultors -- a group of priest/advisors to the diocesan bishop -- and retained those positions until his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop in November, 1970. From that time until his appointment as Ordinary in 1976, Bishop McGann remained a member of the Board of Consultors. During this period he also served on several other diocesan boards.

In 1969, the then Monsignor McGann became one of 10 diocesan priests chosen from around the country to be named to the then newly formed National Advisory Council to the U.S. Bishops, a fifty-member body made up of clergy, religious and laity. He was nominated for this post by the Priests' Advisory Council of the Diocese and he served from 1969 to 1970.

On November 12, 1970, Pope Paul VI appointed Monsignor McGann Titular Bishop of Morosbisus and Auxiliary to Bishop Walter B. Kellenberg. He was ordained bishop on January 7, 1971 and in November of that year was appointed vicar general of the diocese and episcopal vicar of Suffolk County. Subsequently, in 1976, he was named Ordinary of the Rockville Centre Diocese in succession to Bishop Walter P. Kellenberg, the founding bishop, who had retired on May 3, 1976. Bishop McGann was installed on June 24, 1976.

Bishop McGann has served on various committees of the New York State Conference of Catholic Bishops. In November, 1984, he was elected to the office of treasurer of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) for a three-year term. He assumed the chairmanship of the board of directors of the Catholic Telecommunications Network of America for the period from May 1, 1990 to December 31, 1992. In November, 1993, Bishop McGann was elected chairman for the NCCB's Region II, which is made up of the eight dioceses of New York State.

Over the years, Bishop McGann has been awarded numerous honorary degrees, including a Doctor of Laws degree from St. John's University, Jamaica (1971); a Doctor of Humanities degree from Molloy College, Rockville Centre (1977); a Doctor of Ministry degree from Immaculate Conception Seminary, Huntington (1990); and a Doctor of Humane Letters from Long Island University, C. W. Post College, Brookville (1997).

Bishop McGann was invested as Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Sepulchre of Jerusalem in 1970 and as a member of the American Association of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in 1985.

On December 4, 1993, Bishop McGann received the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council's Theodore Roosevelt Award for Outstanding Service in recognition of his efforts to serve the health care needs of Long Islanders. St. Mary's Children and Family Services in Syosset awarded him its 1997 Humanitarian Award. In anticipation of his retirement in 1999 at the age of 75, numerous institutions honored Bishop McGann. He was awarded Molloy College's Lifetime Achievement Award, the Long Island Association's Lifetime Achievement Award and St. Charles Hospital's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Upon receipt of the Holy See's acceptance of his resignation on January 4, 2000, Bishop McGann retired. He died in 2002.

The Most Reverend James T. McHugh Third Bishop of Rockville Centre



Bishop James Thomas McHugh was born in Orange, New Jersey on January 3, 1932, the son of Caroline Scavone McHugh and the late James T. McHugh. He attended Saint Venantius School and Our Lady of the Valley High School, both in Orange, and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Classical Languages at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey.

He entered Immaculate Conception Seminary in Darlington, New Jersey, and was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Newark at Sacred Heart Cathedral on May 25, 1957.

Father McHugh's first assignment was as assistant pastor at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Newark; followed by Holy Trinity Church, Fort Lee. During this time, he did graduate work in Sociology at Fordham University.

In 1965, Father McHugh joined the staff of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference (NCCB/USCC) where he was named Director of the Family Life Bureau (1965-1975) and Director of the NCCB Office of Pro-Life Activities (1972-1978). He became Director of Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning (NFP) in 1978. During his stay in Washington, DC, he did further study in Sociology at Catholic University of America.

In 1971, Father McHugh was appointed papal chamberlain to His Holiness by Pope Paul VI with the title Monsignor; he was elevated to the rank of prelate of honor by Pope John Paul II in 1986.

Also during the 1970's, Msgr. McHugh was visiting lecturer at Princeton Theological Seminary (1974), Immaculate Conception Seminary, Newark (1976) and American College, Louvain, Belgium (1976).

From 1978 to 1981, he studied Moral Theology with a concentration in medical ethics at Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, earning a doctorate in Sacred Theology, and in 1982 was visiting lecturer in Theology at Pontifical Lateran University, Rome.

Appointed titular bishop of Morosbisus and auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Newark on November 20, 1987, he was ordained January 25, 1988. A little over a year later, on May 13, 1989, Bishop McHugh was appointed Bishop of Camden and installed on June 20, 1989.

On December 7, 1998, Bishop McHugh was appointed coadjutor bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. He took canonical possession of that office on February 22, 1999. Shortly after, he was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Camden Diocese, overseeing that diocese until July, 1999, when Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio became that diocese's sixth bishop.

On January 4, 2000, upon the acceptance by the Holy See of Bishop John R. McGann's resignation, Bishop McHugh became the third bishop of Rockville Centre; he was welcomed into his cathedral on January 21, 2000.

Bishop McHugh belonged to several professional associations including the National Council on Family Relations, the American Sociological Association, the Catholic Theological Society of America, the Population Association of American and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was invested into the American Association of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in January, 2000.

Bishop McHugh died of cancer on December 10, 2000.

Most Reverend William Francis Murphy, S.T.D., L.H.D. Fourth Bishop of Rockville Centre



William Francis Murphy was born May 14, 1940 in West Roxbury, Massachusetts to Cornelius and Norma Murphy. He attended Boston Public Schools, including Boston Latin School for Harvard College, and pursued studies for the priesthood at St. John's (Major) Seminary in Boston and the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where he earned a doctorate in Sacred Theology. He was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston at Saint Peter's Basilica, Vatican City, on December 16, 1964.

Father Murphy returned to Boston after his ordination. Over the next ten years there he served as an assistant pastor in Groveland, Winchester and East Boston while also teaching at Emmanuel College and Pope John XXIII Seminary.

In 1974, Father Murphy was called back to Rome where he became a member of the Pontifical Commission Jusititia et Pax. He was appointed Under Secretary in 1980, a position he would hold for seven years. He authored various publications for the commission, including *Person, Nation and State* in 1982 and *True Dimensions of Development Today* a year later. While in Rome, Father Murphy was also a lecturer in Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University and the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas.

Father Murphy returned to the Boston Archdiocese in 1987 to serve in several capacities, including Secretary of Community Relations, Director of the Office of Social Justice, Director of Pope John XXIII Seminary, and Administrator of Sacred Heart Parish, Lexington, Massachusetts. Father Murphy was named Chaplain of Honor to His Holiness in 1979, with the title of Monsignor and elevated to the rank of Prelate of Honor in 1987 by Pope John Paul II. In 1993, Monsignor Murphy was named Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the Archdiocese of Boston. He was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Boston and Titular Bishop of Saia Maggiore on November 21, 1995 and consecrated a month later on December 27, 1995.

Pope John Paul II appointed Bishop Murphy to succeed the late Bishop James T. McHugh to head the Diocese of Rockville Centre on June 26, 2001. He was installed as the Fourth Bishop of Rockville Centre on September 5, 2001.

Bishop Murphy has served several times as a member of a Holy See Delegation for United Nations conferences, and as a member of the Third United Nations Special Session on Disarmament in 1988. He has been a member of three Presidential Delegations to Haiti (1987, 1990 and 1991), and was appointed to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom by President George W. Bush in 2001.

His service to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) included a position on the Board of Directors, as well as a member of the Committees on International Justice and Peace, Latin America, Ad Hoc Committee on Health Care Issues as well as an adjunct to the Committee on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the USCCB Committee on Migration. He serves as a representative to the Orthodox Union and the Orthodox Rabbis of the RCA.

Bishop Murphy served as Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice, Peace and Human Development. In addition, Bishop Murphy served on the USCCB Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, and the Committee on International Policy. He is currently a member of the Administrative Committee as well as the Committee on Priorities and Plans. In addition, he has been elected to membership on the Board of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association.

Earlier in 2007, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Bishop Murphy to serve as a member of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. In 2008, Bishop Murphy was appointed a consultant of the Commission for Religious Relations with Jews of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

Bishop Murphy is fluent in English, Italian, French and Spanish, and has written numerous articles, and currently writes a column that appears weekly in *The Long Island Catholic*, the Rockville Centre diocesan newspaper. Bishop Murphy has a new program called *Porta Fidei* on Telecare, the diocesan television station. Bishop Murphy uses this program to help viewers to belong more deeply to the Church and the life of faith.

Bishop Murphy has been awarded a Doctor of Theology, *Honoris Causa*, from Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1999 and a Doctor of Humane Letters, *Honoris Causa*, from Salem State College, also in Massachusetts, in 1999. He received the Rabin Peacemaker Award from Merrimack College in Massachusetts in 2002 as well as a Doctor of Laws from St. John's University in New York in 2002. Bishop Murphy served as a member of the Board of Trustees of The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.

Bishop Murphy is a Knight Commander with Star of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, Ecclesiastical Commander of Grace in the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St. George, and was invested as Assistant Chaplain of the American Association of the Sovereign Order of Malta in 2002.

The Most Reverend John Barres Fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre

Pope Francis accepted the retirement of Bishop William Murphy on December 9, 2016 and named Allentown Bishop John O. Barres the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

Bishop Barres was born on September 20, 1960 and is a native of Larchmont, New York. His late parents, Marjorie (Catchpole) Barres and Oliver Barres (a native of Bethlehem), were Protestant ministers who met each other at the Yale Divinity School, and subsequently converted to Catholicism, entering the Catholic Church in 1955. The story of their conversion is told in Oliver Barres' book, *One Shepherd, One Flock*. Bishop Barres is the fifth of six children and has seven nephews and four nieces.

Bishop Barres is a graduate of Princeton University (BA in English Literature), where he played three years of junior varsity basketball during the Coach Pete Carril era, and the New York University Graduate School of Business Administration (MBA in Management). His theological education includes an STB and an STL in Systematic Theology from the Catholic University of

America (where he received seminary formation at Theological College), and a JCL in Canon Law and an STD in Spiritual theology from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome.

Bishop Barres was baptized by Bishop Fulton Sheen in 1960 while his father was working for the Bishop at the Propagation of the Faith in New York City. He was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Wilmington on October 21, 1989 by Bishop Robert Mulvee. He began his priesthood as an associate pastor at churches in Newark and Wilmington. After further study in Rome he served as Vice-Chancellor and then Chancellor of the Wilmington Diocese.

Pope John Paul II named him a "Chaplain to His Holiness" in July 2000 with the title of "Monsignor." Pope Benedict XVI named him a "Prelate of Honor" in November 2005.

Bishop Barres was ordained a Bishop and installed as the fourth Bishop of Allentown by His Eminence, Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia at the Cathedral of Saint Catharine of Siena in Allentown on July 30, 2009.

Bishop Barres will be installed as the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre on January 31, 2017.

Section D: Auxiliary Bishops

The Office of Auxiliary, or Assistant, Bishop came into the Church around the sixth century. Before that time, only one bishop served within an ecclesial province as sole spiritual leader of that region. Those clerics who hold this dignity are properly entitled Titular Bishops whom the Holy See has simultaneously assigned to assist a local Ordinary in the exercise of his episcopal responsibilities. The term Auxiliary refers to the supporting role that the titular bishop provides a residential bishop but in every way, auxiliaries embody the fullness of the episcopal dignity.

The current Code of Canon Law defines an auxiliary bishop as one who does not possess the right of succession of that place. It likewise stipulates that all auxiliaries of a diocese be simultaneously appointed as either Vicars General or as Episcopal.

Auxiliary Bishops of the Diocese of Rockville Centre

- Most Rev. Nelson J. Perez, M.Div, M.A., Vicar for the Eastern Vicariate, Vicar for Hispanic Apostolate
- Most Rev. Robert J. Brennan, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia
- Most Rev. Andrzej Zglejszewski, Vicar for the Western Vicariate
- Most Rev. John C. Dunne, D.D. (Retired)
- Most Rev. Emil A. Wcela (Retired)

Section E: The Diocese Today

We in the Diocese of Rockville Centre make up the Roman Catholic Church on Long Island. As a sacramental community, we are one with the Catholic Church throughout the world, while here at home we are united under our bishop to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ as one family of faith and to celebrate this life in our liturgy, sacraments, prayer and service.

- Formed from the Diocese of Brooklyn in 1957, the Diocese of Rockville Centre by reason of population, is the eighth largest diocese (inclusive of archdioceses) in the United States. Total Catholic population in the Diocese is 1,455,644. Total population in the Diocese of Rockville Centre is 2,908,917.

- The single largest outreach to the People of God on Long Island is through its media outlets. Telecare, the diocesan television station broadcasts 24/7/365 to over 1.5 million homes; The Long Island Catholic Magazine, the official diocesan print publication is mailed 10 times per year to over 17,000 subscribers; the weekly LICatholic E-newsletter is emailed to 8,000 recipients. The diocesan website drc.org averages approximately 18,000 unique visitors each month; *Fe Fuerza Vida*, the official Diocesan Spanish-language newspaper has a circulation of 11,000 and is printed ten times each year.

- The Roman Catholic Church on Long Island is comprised of 133 parishes (plus one campus parish) in 115 towns as well as the Diocesan corporation, housed at the Pastoral Center in Rockville Centre.

- The Diocese is blessed with 351 priests in active ministry: (208 incardinated, 89 externs, 54 religious), 980 religious women, 67 brothers and 292 permanent deacons are in ministry.

- The Diocese of Rockville Centre, with its parishes, schools and other Diocese-associated institutions is the second largest non-governmental employer on Long Island with approximately 19,800 lay employees.

Liturgical and Sacramental:

- Last year (2015) in our Diocese:

- Receptions into the Church:

- 14,287 infant baptisms

- 738 minor baptisms

- 932 adult baptisms

- 512 received into Full Communion

- 15,312 First Holy Communions

- 15,195 Confirmations

- Marriages:

- 2,710 Catholic

- 557 Interfaith

- Catholic clergy and community provided consolation to families and loved ones of 9,880 deceased Catholics.

Education:

- 16,047 students in 47 Catholic elementary schools (14,691 students in 43 parish or regional schools and 1,356 students in 4 private schools).
- 11,470 students educated in 10 Catholic high schools (4013 students in 3 diocesan and 2 parish schools and 7,465 students in 5 private schools) by over 1,800 dedicated educators inclusive of clergy, Brothers, Sisters and the laity.
- 99 percent of our Catholic high school graduates go on to college.
- One Catholic College – Molloy College with 4400 undergraduate and graduate students.
- We are a Diocese with over 12,000 parish catechists educating approximately 102,353 elementary and high school students in religious education.
- Total number of students under Catholic instruction: 134,360.
- 12 Diocesan seminarians in formation.

New Evangelization:

- Hundreds of thousands are brought to a closer relationship with God through the work of the ministries of the office of new evangelization, including: Ministry to Catholics of African Ancestry, Haitian-American Apostolate, Hispanic Ministry, the Diocesan Mission in the Dominican Republic, Renewal, Youth, Young Adult and Campus ministries, the Pontifical Mission Society and Catholic Scouting.

Faith Formation:

- Through the ongoing efforts of pastoral staff and volunteers, we prepare engaged couples for marriage and parents for the Baptism of their children.
- We work for the inclusion of persons with special needs in faith formation and parish life.
- Parish and diocesan programs provide ongoing formation in the faith for our adult members.

Social Services:

- In 2015, Catholic Charities provided more than one million caring, face-to-face services to more than 60,000 people of every faith and background.

Health Care:

- Catholic Health Services of Long Island (CHSLI) comprises six hospitals, three skilled nursing home facilities, a home nursing service, hospice network and a community-based agency

serving individuals with special needs. It is staffed by approximately 17,000 employees, more than 4,600 medical staff and 3,000 volunteers.

Bereavement Ministry:

- More than 3,431 interments were performed in 3 Diocesan and 20 parish cemeteries.
- 68 parishes offer bereavement support groups and programs for the bereaved (37 in Nassau County, 31 in Suffolk County).