DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

August 10, 2026
Feast of St. Lawrence, Deacon and Martyr

Dear Brothers:

On this great feast of Saint Lawrence, deacon, martyr, and patron of Rome, we raise grateful hearts to Almighty God for the evangelizing witness and ministry of charity of our permanent deacons in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

Along with your pastors and the People of God in the parishes and ministries you serve, I thank you, your wives, and your families, for your dedication to the Word of God and your dedication to charity expressed in the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy that you live, pray, and practice so faithfully.

Yesterday, on the 19th Sunday of Ordinary Time, I asked Deacon Art Candido to preach the 11:00 a.m. Catholic Faith Network Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Agnes, which I celebrated and at which, in front of our large CFN audience, I expressed gratitude for you and your ministry, and for the powerful way you, your wives, and families impact and influence the mission of the Church on Long Island.

Art preached powerfully about the power of Our Lord to guide us through the storms of life and the Church through the storms of history.

Bishop Sheen writes: "The Church is not a continuous phenomenon through history. Rather, it is something that has been through a thousand resurrections after a thousand crucifixions. The bell is always sounding for its execution, which, by some great power of God, is everlastingly postponed. The world is ready to chant a requiem over its grave, and it rises to chant a requiem over their graves."[1]

As a martyr and a deacon, Saint Lawrence understood and lived in the third century Bishop Sheen's Paschal Mystery logic of the twentieth century.

As carefully documented in Bishop Robert Barron's What Do Their Deaths Demand? Christian Persecution Today and Robert Royal's The Martyrs of the New Millennium: The Global Persecution of Christians in the Twenty-First Century, the Church continues to experience the

[1] Bishop Sheen, *Three to Get Married*, (New York: Scepter Publishers, 1951 originally, 1996), 154.

"thousand resurrections after a thousand crucifixions" that keeps her evangelizing missionary presence in the world focused on Our Lord's Cross and Empty Tomb.

As we prepare to celebrate the Beatification of Bishop Sheen in Saint Louis on September 24th, I thought of a permanent deacon I first got to know as a seminarian at Saint Francis de Sales parish in Salisbury, Maryland.

Deacon Carl Beers was a veteran of the Korean War and as his 2009 obituary says: "He was there at Pork Chop Hill and Heartbreak Ridge." He and his wife Mary were so dedicated to the parish's wide range of apostolic ventures. They were incredible missionaries on Maryland's Eastern Shore - where our beloved Bishop William Koenig now serves as Bishop.

Deacon Carl always ended his homilies with the signature phrase of Bishop Sheen, "God love you!" As I look back, it was this zealous deacon's way of paying tribute to this great Catholic American Bishop, a contemplative meteor of Catholic global worldwide mission.

As we remember those deacons and deacons' wives who have entered eternal life, we pray, too, for Deacon Carl's soul and join him in preparing for this great moment of American Catholic Church history and global Catholic Church history on September 24th in Saint Louis.

So, in tribute to both Deacon Carl and Bishop Sheen, "God love you!"

Sincerely in Christ,

+ John O. Barres

Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre