

HOLINESS AND MISSION

REMARKS FROM THE

Joe Lapchick Character Award Foundation Luncheon

YALE UNIVERSITY CLUB, NEW YORK CITY — SEPTEMBER 20, 2019

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It is a great honor to be with you today and to support the noble goals of the Joe Lapchick Character Award Foundation. I too offer my congratulations to Verne Lundquist, Coach Chris Dailey and Coach Bobby Cremins for the way they model for us the character and virtue lessons of Coach Lapchick and his successor at St. John's University, Coach Lou Carnessecca.

I have been asked to offer a few words before I offer our grace this afternoon.

Two years ago, at this luncheon, I shared with you the impact of my CYO coach and former Iona basketball player Joe Gallick on my life as a Catholic Bishop.

He taught our seventh and eighth

grade teams the John Wooden UCLA full court press which has connected to my call to be a missionary Catholic Bishop on Long Island on a 24/7 full court press of Catholic Evangelization.

Today, I'd like to share how my Princeton basketball experience in the Coach Pete Carril era has been critical to my service as a Bishop and Successor of the Apostles on Long Island.

I grew up in Larchmont, New York in Westchester County on the 1969-70 Knicks and Dollar Bill Bradley. I marveled at this Princeton Rhodes Scholar and was inspired by John McPhee's book on Bradley at Princeton, *A Sense of Where You Are*, still one of the great pieces of sports non-fiction.

I loved the pictures of Bradley in his

Princeton uniform shooting a jump shot at Dillon gym on one page and then standing at Princeton's iconic Blair Arch as a student holding his academic books on another page.

My friends and I rocked in rhythm with Knicks announcer Marv Albert in the great 1969-70 Knicks Championship season: "Frazier dribbles into the forecourt. He sees Bradley in the corner. Side jump - Yes!"

Then in ninth grade, I remember watching Princeton's run of upsets in the 1975 NIT at Madison Square Garden and seeing Coach Pete Carril and his players celebrate on the court after their final upset victory over Providence.

I was mesmerized by an Ivy League team finishing the season at number 12



BISHOP JOHN O. BARRES is the fifth bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre. Follow him on Twitter, @BishopBarres



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in the nation. Anyone remember some of the great Princeton players of the NIT Championship team - Armond Hill, Mickey Steurer, Barnes Hauptfuhrer, Timmy van Bloomestyn and Rockville Centre's own Peter Molloy?

Little did I know, watching the Madison Square Garden celebration as a ninth grader that I would one day become part of this Princeton basketball family filled with strong lifelong friendships and that Coach Carril, a past Lapchick Character award honoree in 2011, would become a friend and mentor in my future life.

I was a JV basketball point guard at Princeton from 1978 to 1981 and then went up to the WPRB radio broadcast booth in my Senior year to announce the Varsity games.

My JV coaches were Bob Dukiet (who would go on to be the head coach at St. Peter's Marquette University and Gannon University), Mickey Steurer and Eddie Reilly. I celebrated Coach Dukiet's funeral Mass in June of 2009.

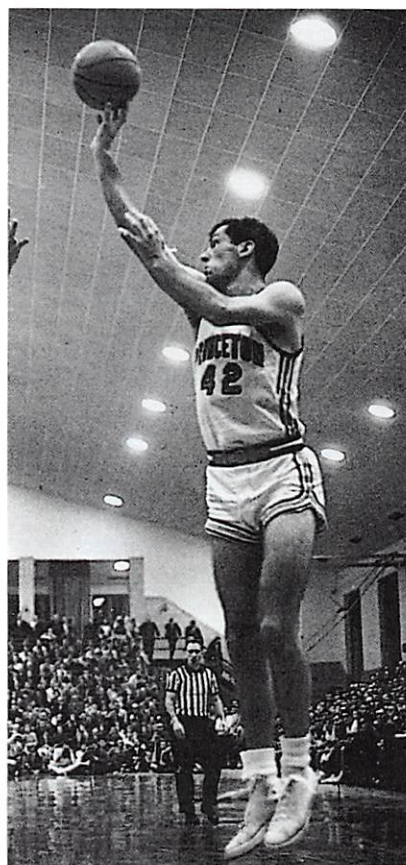
Princeton basketball was a critical dimension of my character formation

and my growth as a human being. As we all know, Princeton basketball is a beautiful blend of the building up and execution of fundamentals, such as precise chest passes (which raise shooting percentages), the setting up and timing behind effective picks, and the timing and execution of backdoor cuts and layups mixed with high percentage three point shooting and tenaciously intelligent defense.

To this day, Princeton basketball is an art form that involves intuitional team chemistry built on the foundation of sharply honed fundamentals and radical unselfishness.

Not only has Princeton basketball resulted in some major David vs. Goliath college basketball upsets such as the 1996 First round Princeton upset over defending national champion UCLA, it has had a strong impact and influence in the NBA especially during the years when Coach Carril served as an assistant coach for the Sacramento Kings.

What impact did the Princeton JV basketball point-guard experience



GETTY IMAGES/ Collegiate Images / Contributor

PRINCETON, N.J.- CIRCA 1961-65: BILL BRADLEY #42 OF THE PRINCETON UNIVERSITY TIGERS GOES UP FOR THE JUMP SHOT IN PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY. (1964)

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have on my future life as a Catholic priest and bishop?

First, I am convinced that the Holy Spirit prepared me to be a point guard in the Catholic Church as a priest and bishop through the experience of being a Princeton JV point guard.

Just as the Apostles were called from their fishing nets, I was called to serve as a priest and bishop from the basketball nets of Jadwin Gym at Princeton.

We all know that in any leadership context it's all about sacrifice, chemistry, discipline, generosity, selflessness and seeing the entire floor as a point guard whether that floor is at Jadwin Gym or that floor is the global mission of mercy of the Church and world I love and serve as a Catholic Bishop.

I draw on the lessons of Princeton basketball every day in my life as a Bishop – whether that means getting the fundamentals of prayer, holiness and mission right and finely tuned as Coach Carril and his assistant coaches always insisted on sound and sharp fundamentals in basketball or whether that means springing up immediately from the floor after taking the charges or diving for the loose balls of life.

I share with the young people of Long Island a unique card. On one side is my formal picture as a Catholic bishop, and on the other side is a picture of me as Princeton JV player at Jadwin Gym, going above the rim for a layup. You can tell it is a JV game because there are absolutely no fans in the stands!

My teammate trailing me on the layup is Bobby Doar. His father, civil rights attorney John Doar, courageously walked the first African American student, James Meredith, into the University of Mississippi on October 1, 1962.

I think the card helps young people to understand how God works lovingly

and intimately in their lives and in their destinies. It also helps cultivate a new harvest of vocations to the priesthood!

One of my favorite stories about the card involves meeting the mother of a seventh-grade student who had installed my basketball card on his room wall right between posters of Michael Jordan and LeBron James.

We had a great laugh together and I laughed even more later when I imagined myself being dunked on, “posterized,” and “facebookfriended” by Michael and LeBron simultaneously on that wall!²

Each of our lives and how they unfold are unique but what we have in common and what we celebrate today in Coach Lapchick, Verne Lundquist, Coach Daily and Coach Cremins is that the game of basketball, its lessons and its virtue building has helped direct and influence our lives, our characters and our destinies.

GOD OUR CREATOR,

Thank you for the gift of being together today and the gift of sharing together the character-forging and virtue-driven history, stories and dimensions of the game of basketball that we all love. Help us all to be instruments of social justice and instruments of your Mercy. Bless us Lord and these thy gifts that we are about to receive from thy bounty. Amen. †

LOCAL NEWS

Diocese of Rockville Centre names new vicar for Hispanic Ministry and Evangelization

ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NEW YORK – December 16, 2019 – The Diocese of Rockville Centre (drvc.org) announced that Idente Missionary Father Luis Miguel Romero, pastor of the Church of Our Lady of Loretto, Hempstead, has been appointed vicar of Hispanic Ministry and Evangelization, Diocese of Rockville Centre. Father Romero will continue to serve as pastor of Our Lady of Loretto.

“Father Luis Romero is a global Churchman who lives the Idente Missionary charism in an inspirational way,” said Most Reverend John O. Barres, Bishop of Rockville Centre. “His pastoral, formational and evangelizing leadership at Our Lady of Loretto will translate well into his diocesan leadership as the vicar for Hispanic Ministry and Evangelization. He also has an exceptional capacity, with his extensive academic background in religion and science, to address how the truths of our Catholic faith in regard to the Gospel of Life, Catholic Social Justice teaching and the Church’s advocacy in the history of ethical scientific development need to be brought directly and compellingly into the public square.”

The vicar for Hispanic Ministry and Evangelization cooperates with the Bishop of Rockville Centre to promote the full participation of the Hispanic Faithful in the life of the Church. The office serves as a resource to all pastors and people serving the Hispanic Catholic community.

“I am so grateful to Bishop Barres for this special assignment in serving the Hispanic community of our diocese,” said Father Romero. “With a humble spirit, I thank our bishop and repeat what Christ said about himself: ‘I did not come to be served, but to serve.’”

ABOUT FATHER LUIS MIGUEL ROMERO FERNANDEZ

Luis Miguel Romero Fernandez was born in Palencia, north of Spain in 1954, and grew up in Andalusia. He recalled as a young man seeing a monument in Huelva, a city in southern Spain, of Christopher Columbus looking at America and embracing a cross.

“At that time, I did not imagine that my life would be a replica of it – look at America and embrace the cross,” said Father Romero.

While studying philosophy and theology at the International Seminary of the Idente Missionaries, Father Romero also completed bachelor’s and master’s degrees in biological science at the University of Seville. He continued his education with bachelor’s and master’s degrees in philosophy and letters from Autonomous University of Madrid and a doctorate (equivalent to a Ph.D.) in medicine at the University of Saragossa.

Father Romero was ordained on September 11, 1981, in Tenerife, Spain, and served in spiritual and academic roles in Spain, Bolivia, Chile and Ecuador, including

¹ For Bishop Barres’ own reflections on the relationship between Catholic Faith and athletic experience, see the following: 1) “Ya Gotta Believe!”, A September 2019 Pastoral Letter to the People of God of the Diocese of Rockville Centre celebrating the October 16, 2019, 50th Anniversary of the 1969 Amazin’ Mets winning the World Series, September 2019 *Long Island Catholic*; 2) April 2019 *Long Island Catholic* column entitled “A Wink from God: An Epilogue to *Apostolic Athletes*,” 3-5; 3) *Apostolic Athletes: 11 Priests and Bishops Reveal How Sports Helped them Follow Christ’s Call* (collected by Trent Beattie). (Stockbridge, MA: Marian Press, 2017), Bishop Barres’ chapter “From College Point Guard to Point Guard for the Church,” 85-106. Note: These remarks at the September 20, 2019 Joe Lapchick Character Award Foundation Luncheon draw extensively from this chapter; 4) February 2018 *Long Island Catholic* column entitled “A Tribute to my CYO Basketball Coach Joe Gallick – and to all CYO Coaches on Long Island,” 3-5; 5) March 2017 *Long Island Catholic* issue which explores key dimensions of Bishop Barres’ life.

² A substantial portion of these remarks are directly quoted or adapted from Bishop Barres’ chapter in *Apostolic Athletes: 11 Priests and Bishops Reveal How Sports Helped Them Follow Christ’s Call* (Collected by Trent Beattie), (Stockbridge, MA: Marian Press, 2017), 85-106.