



Branches on the Vine

JANUARY 31 - FEBRUARY 6, 2026



Members at their monthly meeting at St. Agnes Church.
SUBMITTED PHOTO

Thirty years ago, when Deacon Nick Genovese and his friends approached the now-deceased Father Francis X. Callahan about starting a men's group at St. Agnes Church, he asked half-jokingly, "What do you guys want to do? Play cards?"

Of course, that was never part of the plan, Deacon Genovese recalls, laughing. Today, the St. Joseph Men's Society of Precious Blood Parish, made up of St. Agnes and St. Mary churches in Milford, is known for its service to the church and the community, which includes everything from an annual golf tournament to a Lenten dinner, a parish picnic, a Communion breakfast, 'coffee and' after Mass, and a St. Patrick's dinner.

The list also includes occasional chores and repair work, such as replacing the padding on the kneelers at St. Agnes, all done in the spirit of their patron, St. Joseph the Worker. Deacon Genovese, the group's president, says some 20 members willingly volunteer as the occasion requires.

"We named it for St. Joseph the Worker because the guys do work," he says. "If there's anything that needs to be done or if the men can help with projects in the parish, they are there."

The group meets the first Monday of the month from September to June, 5:30 p.m., in Father Callahan Hall at St. Agnes Church. The men begin with a prayer and then a Scriptural reading, followed by a reflection

MEN'S GROUP INSPIRED BY ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER

by Deacon Genovese. Then, they have dinner and a business meeting to discuss upcoming activities and the distribution of funds to groups they help. A parish priest, including Father Aidan Donahue, the pastor, usually attends the meetings. The monthly meal is a tradition that goes back almost to the beginning. Deacon Genovese recalls it was Father Callahan's idea to boost membership; and it worked. Thomas Maguire is the resident chef who prepares everything in the kitchen at the church hall.

The biggest event the men's society sponsors is the annual golf tournament, held on the last Monday in July. Proceeds from the tournament, which is organized by Jerry Farina, who succeeded his father as golf chairman, are used to benefit charitable organizations, including the pro-life group for unwed mothers, Ronald McDonald House®, the Boys and Girls Club, veterans organizations, and the homeless.

"We've been very successful over the years, thanks to all the support we got," Deacon Genovese says. "It's a great bunch of guys, and now we have some from St. Mary's since we combined with them to form Precious Blood Parish." Dues are still \$5 a year.

He credits the other founding members -- the late Bill McMullen, Lou Elmo and Richard Carnaval -- for their vision in starting the society.

"Jack Jansen has been our treasurer for 30 years, since the organization started, and he recently turned 90 and still plays golf," Deacon Genovese said. "We had a party for him and honored him with a plaque. Fundamental to the group's success all these years is their patron, St. Joseph the Worker. "Think about it. St. Joseph was the protector of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He was a model father and a model worker. We all look up to him and respect him as a saint," Deacon Genovese says.

He also tells a story about the annual golf tournament and St. Joseph: "When you play golf, you want good weather, and in the 25 years of the tournament, it has never been rained out," which is a blessing he attributes to their patron.

For more information about the St. Joseph Men's Society of Precious Blood Parish, contact Deacon Nick Genovese at nicholasgenovese@sbcglobal.net.

- Story by Joe Pisani



Upcoming Events



02/9 MONDAY 7PM

HOLY HOUR TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

St. Bridget of Sweden Church, 175 Main St,
Cheshire

Around the world, an estimated 27.6 million people (women, children and men) are exploited for labor, services and commercial sex. What is our response to this crime against humanity? Let us go to Christ, present in the Eucharist, who is the source of our hope and strength, and pray together. The Human Trafficking Task Force of the Archdiocese of Hartford invites you to join us on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 7:00 pm at St. Bridget of Sweden Parish in Cheshire (175 Main Street) for a Eucharistic Holy Hour to pray for an end to human trafficking. After the service, meet members of the Task Force to learn how you can get involved in this important work.



02/6 FRIDAY 6PM

MASS OF HEALING

St. Peter Church, 99 East Main St,
Torrington

Experience the Power of Healing — In these challenging times, many of us carry burdens – be it physical ailments like cancer and kidney disease, emotional struggles like depression, anxiety, PTSD and grief, or spiritual battles. YOU'RE NOT ALONE. Reconnect, find solace, and embrace the healing powers of our divine physician, Jesus Christ. A special Healing Mass with anointing of the sick will be celebrated by Rev. Emmanuel Ihemedu, pastor of St. John Paul the Great Parish in Torrington. The evening begins with the Divine Mercy Chaplet followed by the Mass. Let's come together, share our stories, and experience the transformative power of faith. Remember, Jesus is still in the business of healing.



02/21 SATURDAY 9AM

MAKING PREEMIE HATS | KNITTING RETREAT DAY


Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center,
303 Tunxis Rd, West Hartford

Welcome to our annual Knitting or Crocheting Day! This year we are giving our work to the Hospital of Central Connecticut in New Britain. When you register, pick a pattern of your choice to knit or crochet, and bring at least one premie hat to the retreat (more if you can!). While at the retreat we will make more...the joy of handmade items is in giving them to folks who appreciate them.

Offering: \$75, includes lunch

To register and learn more, visit:
www.holyfamilyretreat.org/calendar/knitting-retreat

SATURDAY
FEB
7



YOUTH ADORATION

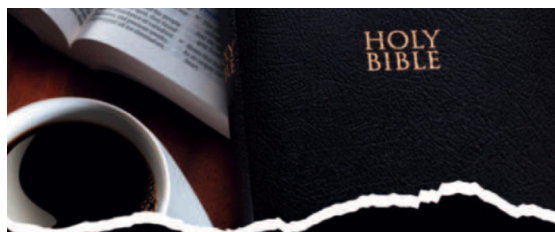
AND
Winter Dance

Adoración juvenil y baile de invierno
Młodzieżowa Adoracja i Zimowy Bal

GRADES 7-12

St. Mary Church, 5 Hillhouse Ave
5:30PM Adoration | 6:30-9PM Winter Dance

RSVP by February 1 by scanning the QR Code or visit
tinyurl.com/mcgivney-youth-adoration-Feb7
Tickets are \$5 per child or \$10 max per family



HOLY BIBLE

BIBLE STUDY

Hosted by the Young Adult Ministry

Fridays, 630-730pm
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church Hall Library
2819 Whitney Ave. Hamden
Bring your Bible, notebook and pen!

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Led by Father Tiano

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Please RSVP by emailing m.ricci@hamdencatholic.org
or calling the parish office 203 248 0141.