

Branches on the Vine

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

AUGUST 22 - 28, 2026

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Society in Enfield Marks *Historic Milestone*

- Story by Karen A. Avitabile

Enfield's Our Lady of Mount Carmel Society, which is deeply devoted to the Blessed Mother, is marking its 100th anniversary this year.

"We believe we can get closer to God through Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Blessed Mother, as she appeared to St. Simon Stock," says Carl Sferrazza, president of the society and a member since 1999.

On July 16, 1251, the Blessed Mother appeared to St. Simon Stock and gave him a set of scapulars on Mount Carmel in the Middle East. Scapulars are small brown bands that have two icons, or holy pictures, of Mary and the infant Jesus. Catholics worldwide honor Our Lady of Mount Carmel each year on July 16, her feast day.

And the local society celebrates Our Lady of Mount Carmel by annually hosting an Italian festival on its five-acre fairgrounds, at 93 Park Ave., in the Thompsonville section of Enfield.

This past July 30 through Aug. 2, the 100th festival took place and featured entertainment, carnival rides, a Mass, a procession and a variety of Italian cuisine, singers and dancers. At Mount Carmel Chapel, on the fairgrounds, visitors were able to light a candle to ask Our Lady for prayers or to remember someone who has passed away.

Founded in 1926, the nonprofit Our Lady of Mount Carmel Society was started by Italian immigrants who settled in Thompsonville to honor their homeland, preserve traditions, provide aid to one another and encourage prayer to the Blessed Mother. Today, membership in the society predominantly comprises descendants of Italian immigrants who arrived in town decades ago.



A statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was the centerpiece of a procession along streets in Enfield.



Carl Sferrazza, president of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Society in Enfield and one of the organizers of Italian festival, spends some quiet time in the chapel dedicated to the Blessed Mother.

"They brought a blueprint on how to live their life with faith in God and belief of the family," Sferrazza says of the immigrants. "And they embraced hard work to become good citizens of this country."

On the final day of the festival, Archbishop Christopher J. Coyne was the main celebrant of an outdoor Mass on the fairgrounds. Following the Mass, participants carried a statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel along the streets of Thompsonville. Holy cards, medals, rosaries and scapulars of Our Lady of Mount Carmel were given out to spectators along the way.

Proceeds from the festival, hall rentals and fundraisers allow the society to award scholarships and make donations to St. Jeanne Jugan Parish in Enfield, the town's soup kitchen and local organizations.

The hall is regularly offered at no cost to multiple community groups and the town of Enfield.

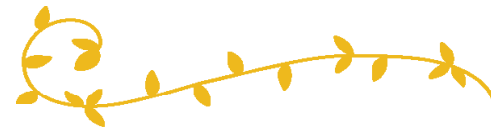
On Mondays, the women's auxiliary of the society opens its doors for community bingo. Every third Thursday of the month, the society serves a home-cooked Italian dinner that attracts local families and beyond.

"The society is an opportunity for people to come together and enjoy camaraderie with one another and to work together for the betterment of the community," Sferrazza says. "This is a way to give back and to make my parents from Sicily proud of me."

For more information about Our Lady of Mount Carmel Society, fundraisers or to join the organization, visit mtcarmelenfield.org.



Upcoming Events



AUGUST 24 @ 6:30PM - 8:30PM
ENCOUNTER AND MISSION AT THE HEART OF EVANGELIZING CATECHESIS
Archdiocese of Hartford Pastoral Center, Bloomfield

Join us for an evening Workshop presented by Dr. Stella Marie Jeffrey and hosted by the Office of Missionary Discipleship. Register before August 21 to Jason.Rinaldi@aohct.org to reserve your seat! Parish groups welcome! We hear the importance of having an encounter with the Lord. All of us are meant to encounter the Lord and allow this encounter to change and shape us, thus we become children of God, his disciples sent on mission to share this divine love. This workshop will include an exercise in evangelization.



SEPTEMBER 9 @ 6PM **\$25**
OPEN DOORS, OPEN HEARTS WITH FR. RAY KELLY | A BENEFIT CONCERT FOR IMMACARE
Northwest Catholic High School, West Hartford

Join Ireland's beloved Singing Priest, Fr. Ray Kelly, for his only CT performance! Enjoy an unforgettable evening of inspiring music, laughter, and heartwarming stories while supporting ImmaCare's mission to serve individuals experiencing homelessness. Inspired by Fr. Ray's Open Road, Open Heart tour, this special concert celebrates hope, compassion, and new beginnings. 100% of proceeds benefit ImmaCare.

Tickets start at \$25. Doors open at 6:00 PM.
For tickets or information contact Teresa Wierbicki at [860-580-5644](tel:860-580-5644) | twierbicki@immacare.org or scan the QR Code.



SEPTEMBER 15 @ 7PM
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PRESENTATION
St. Paul Parish Hall, Kensington

All are invited to a human trafficking awareness and prevention presentation sponsored by the Culture of Life and Social Action Ministries at St. Paul Parish. A member of the Human Trafficking Task Force of the Archdiocese of Hartford will provide an overview of human trafficking and introduce a prevention framework for engaging parishioners in this important work. Participants will learn about key elements of prevention and practical steps that parishes, ministries, and individuals can take to reduce vulnerability and strengthen their communities.

The evening will include a Q&A session and opportunities to speak with members of the Task Force about how to get involved in the Archdiocese's efforts to prevent human trafficking and support those affected by it.



SEPTEMBER 22 @ 10AM - 11:30AM
FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT, THE HEART OF JOHN'S GOSPEL
Archdiocese of Hartford Pastoral Center, Bloomfield

Join us for a mini course on the Gospel of John - Tuesday mornings at the Pastoral Center in Bloomfield beginning September 22. Email Dayanee.Olivieri@aohct.org to register. The spirituality of this Gospel unfolds gradually as each character encounters Jesus, whose mission is sustained by the abiding presence of the Spirit - a presence that strengthens us in our own daily struggles with the world.



SEPTEMBER 8 @ 7AM - 9AM
CATHOLIC CHARITIES HELP AND HOPE BREAKFAST
Cathedral of St. Joseph, Hartford

Join Catholic Charities for the 2026 Help & Hope Breakfast featuring UConn Coach Dan Hurley. This inspiring morning celebrates hope, resilience, and the power of community while supporting Catholic Charities' mission of providing help and creating hope. Visit www.ccaoh.org/hope for info and sponsorships availability.



SEPTEMBER 12 @ 9AM - 3PM
LOURDES IN A DAY PILGRIMAGE
Cathedral of Saint Joseph, Hartford

Experience the grace and healing power of Lourdes right here in CT! Join Archbishop Coyne, Bishop Reidy, Bishop Rosazza, and Fr. MacNeill for a day of prayer and renewal. The event is fully handicap accessible, and a complimentary lunch will be served. Please RSVP by September 2. Register with Mark Sullivan at lourdesinaday@gmail.com or scan the QR Code.



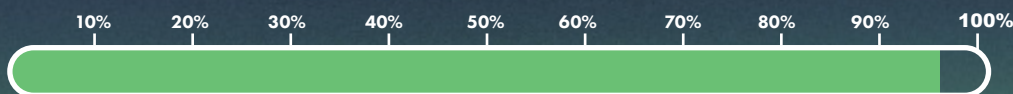
AUGUST 24
FORE FACS GOLF CLASSIC
TPC River Highlands, Cromwell

Join the Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools for a day on the green driving for impact! Honoring the legacy of Archbishop Henry J. Mansell, this annual event unites business leaders, families, and community partners to support Catholic education and fund scholarships for children in need. Net proceeds power the FACS mission to transform lives through education. Visit FACSHartford.org or scan the QR code to learn more, register, or sponsor today!



2026 ARCHBISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

Scan the QR code to learn how you can make a lasting impact!



Total Goal: \$10M 98.41% as of 8/11/26

\$9,840,798.03 in pledges from 27,263 generous donors

WE ARE
ONE

*This figure does not include bequests given to
the Archbishop's Annual Appeal

www.archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal

