

Branches on the Vine

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

SEPTEMBER 19 - 25, 2026

Religious Sister Visits Four Parishes, Offering Monthly *Scripture Reflections*

- Story by Shelley Wolf

On the first Thursday in September, nearly 20 parishioners gathered in the parish hall of St. Peter Claver Parish in West Hartford, where Sister Maryann Cantlon, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry, stood at the podium, posing a few intriguing questions about sacred Scripture.

"Where is the truth?" Sister Maryann asked. "In the facts? In the interpretation?" Remarking on the Gospel writers in particular, she said, "They knew, without interpretation there is no understanding. We need the interpretation, but we also need faith."

And with that — as well as with excerpts from Scripture, quotations from doctors of the Church, personal anecdotes to bring home key points, and a touch of humor — Sister Maryann began to explain the Catholic Church's overarching understanding of sacred Scripture and tradition, as handed down from the Apostles, from those who knew them, and from the Early Church Fathers.

This helpful context was the start of Sister Maryann's "Monthly Scripture Reflections," which just returned to St. Peter Claver Parish, St. Justin-St. Michael Parish in Hartford, St. Gianna Beretta Molla Parish in West Hartford, and Christ the King Parish in Wethersfield.

She began these parish-based reflections seven years ago, after returning from service in California, starting with St. Peter Claver Parish and then adding others.

"Even when I was younger, I always loved sacred Scripture," Sister Maryann



Sister Maryann Cantlon, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry, delivers one of her Monthly Scripture Reflections in the parish hall of St. Peter Claver Church in West Hartford. PHOTO BY SHELLEY WOLF

explains, "perhaps because it was open to interpretation and not limited to Catholics. But I prefer to stay with the Catholics and hope the Protestants get converted," she says with a laugh.

Confident in the Catholic Church's view on Scripture, Sister Maryann points out that Jesus promised its leaders would be guided by the Holy Spirit. For her part, Sister Maryann looks to the teachings of the Church and has a master's degree in theological studies from the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, Calif., with a concentration in sacred Scripture.

Of course, people can simply read the Bible at home alone, she says. But attending Monthly Scripture Reflections in the parish is an easy way to start reading the word of God with a little help.

"You can sit at home and read the Bible but not get the deepest meaning. You have to go to school for that. You have to have some type of advanced instruction," she says, "and that's what I try to give."

Sister Maryann strives to provide greater insight by discussing that fuller meaning in an informal and approachable way. Running once

a month for 30 to 45 minutes, her sessions include time for questions and comments.

Offered all year long at St. Justin-St. Michael Parish, the reflections are offered only during the school year at the three other parishes.

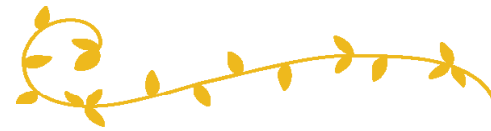
"We start again in September," Sister Maryann says, "and since we're close to year B in the liturgical calendar, and it will be the year of Mark, I'm going to focus this year on the Gospel of Mark."

Fall start dates for the Monthly Scripture Reflections are: at St. Peter Claver Church, West Hartford, the first Thursday of the month (Sept. 3) at 1:00 p.m.; at St. Mark Church, West Hartford, the second Tuesday (Sept. 8) at 7 p.m.; at St. Justin-St. Michael Church, Hartford, the third Thursday (Sept. 17) at 5 p.m.; and at Incarnation Church, Wethersfield, the fourth Thursday (Sept. 24) at 6 p.m.

Anyone who missed their parish's start date is welcome to begin the following month.



Upcoming Events



SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER DATES
THE POWER OF A PRAYING PARENT
St. Catherine of Siena, West Simsbury

Do you worry about your children or grandchildren? Join us for a four-session retreat to discover the power of a praying parent who creates a sacred space for God in their home. "Come" (Matt. 14:29). Email kostelni@cua.edu or scan the QR code to register. Morning session offers a light lunch; evening session offers hors d'oeuvres and small plate meal.



Sept. 23, 30, Oct. 7, 14 @ 10AM – 12:30PM OR
Sept. 26, Oct. 3, 10, 17 @ 6:15PM – 8:30PM



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 20 @ 7:15PM
FOR HUMANITY'S SAKE: POPE LEO XIV AND THE AI REVOLUTION
St. Thomas More Golden Center, New Haven

A public discussion of Magnifica Humanitas, the pope's long anticipated response to the breakneck advance of artificial intelligence and the implications for human flourishing. Join us for this multi-sided conversation with a panel of distinguished experts about the document's premises, arguments, and response thus far, as well as its potential influence on the most consequential technological development of our time. Visit stm.yale.edu to reserve a spot.



OCTOBER 3 @ 5PM
TRANSITUS OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI READING
Prince of Peace Parish, St. Teresa of Avila Church, Woodbury

Join the Rosa Mystica Fraternity of Secular Franciscans for the beautiful Franciscan tradition following the 4PM Mass at St Teresa of Avila Church. The Transitus is a reading of St. Francis's passage from Earthly Life, through Death, into Eternal Life. A celebration of hope, resurrection, and the promise that our lives are merely changed, not ended. Following the reading, all will be treated to almond cookies St. Francis's favorite treat! Contact Prince of Peace Parish for more information at **203-263-2008** or prin



SEPTEMBER 25 @ 7PM
MORE THAN MONEY: WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE GENEROUSLY
St. Thomas More Chapel, New Haven

Come join Young Catholic Professionals Central CT (All professionals from 18-39) for our next Executive Speaker Series Event! Enjoy light refreshments and networking along with a talk by Scott Zuffelato the Vice President of Philanthropy of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. We look forward to meeting you there! Email info@ycpcentralconnecticut.org to learn more.



OCTOBER 17 @ 4PM
MARY OF THE AMERICAS / MARÍA EN LAS AMÉRICAS
The Shrine of María Reina de la Paz, Hartford

Mary of the Americas is an Archdiocesan multicultural Marian celebration that brings together Hispanic Catholic communities and participating parishes from across the Archdiocese of Hartford. The event will include the Holy Rosary and a bilingual Holy Mass, followed by cultural and gastronomic presentations representing various countries of the Americas. Through prayer, faith, music, and cultural traditions, the celebration honors the Blessed Virgin Mary while highlighting the unity and diversity of the Church. All are welcome!

2026 ARCHBISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

As of today, **16.47%** of all Archdiocesan parishioners raised **\$10 million** for our Archdiocesan ministries. Imagine the difference if one in four parishioners joined in. Help us reach **26%** participation in 2026!!



WE ARE  NE

www.archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal