

Branches on the Vine

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

OCTOBER 24 - 30, 2026

During Men's Conference, Catholic Men Called to *'Rebuild My Church'*

- Story by Joe Pisani

Eight hundred years ago, Jesus spoke to a young Francis of Assisi from the cross in the rundown Chapel of San Damiano and said, "Francis, go repair my house, which as you can see is falling completely to ruin."

Six hundred men from throughout the state, from high school students to senior citizens in their 80s, were recently encouraged to ask, "Lord, what are you calling me to rebuild?"

The theme of the 19th annual Connecticut Catholic Men's Conference, held at Holy Cross High School in Waterbury, was "Rebuild My Church," recalling the mission of the young saint.

In his homily at the Vigil Mass, Auxiliary Bishop Juan Miguel Betancourt of the Archdiocese of Hartford told the men to respond to God's invitation with charitable acts in family and parish life and not to procrastinate in responding, until "life settles down."

"In this Franciscan year, these words 'Rebuild my Church' should stir something seriously generous within us, so we hope to respond," Bishop Betancourt said. "We want our families to flourish, our parishes to be alive, and our communities to know the goodness of God. And today, we place that renewed desire before Jesus and ask him to give us direction: 'Show me where you are calling me to love more faithfully. Once more, Lord, show me the good I can begin to do when I leave this place.'"

Father Declan Gibson, director of the Most Holy Eucharist Foundation, said the first step in accepting Christ's invitation to rebuild the Church is "to allow Christ to rebuild us" and then to bring that deeper faith into the home and make Jesus visibly present in family life because the domestic church will strengthen the Catholic Church.



Auxiliary Bishop Juan Miguel Betancourt of the Archdiocese of Hartford sends men forth after Mass during the 19th annual Connecticut Catholic Men's Conference held at Holy Cross High School, Waterbury. PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

This transformation, Father Gibson said, does not come from personal strength but rather through surrendering to Jesus by putting aside the distractions of the world and developing "a deep personal relationship with him in the Holy Eucharist" through weekly attendance at Adoration.

"Have an appointment with Jesus Christ, a private audience," Father Gibson said. "Brothers, go to Adoration. Sit before your Lord. There is no greater choice. Do not worry about doing everything perfectly or having the right words. Just go, and if you don't know what to say, don't speak. Just be with the Lord. Look at him as he looks at you. Let him capture your heart."

Father Glenn Sudano, a founding member of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, called the men to a deeper holiness sustained by God's grace and said that like the saints, they should strive for "greatness" in their faith, rather than settling on merely being "good." They are a part of "the most wonderful religion in the world," and while it is not perfect, it is the Mystical Body of Christ.

He encouraged them to strive for self-knowledge and practice daily prayer, regular confession and frequent attendance at Mass. They should also avoid distractions, such as politics, and focus on the Gospel.

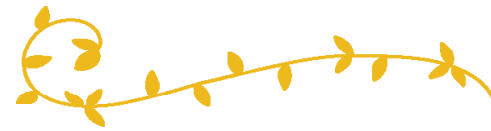
Other speakers included Karlo Broussard of Catholic Answers and Jeanne Mancini, former president of the March for Life, whose talk, "Rebuilding a Culture of Life and Love," stressed the importance of "good, holy, masculine men" in shaping a culture that respects human dignity.

The conference offered opportunities for confession, veneration of 30 first-class relics and a Eucharistic procession with Bishop Richard Reidy of the Diocese of Norwich.

Conference director Ken Santopietro said, "Our goal is to help men increase their faith and to build themselves up from the inside ... and sometimes that happens through a speaker, a priest or fraternity with other men."



Upcoming Events



OCTOBER 25 @ 4PM
AWARD WINNING CATHOLIC COMPOSER & SINGER, IVÁN DÍAZ, WILL BE PERFORMING WITH THE SAINT ANN CHOIR
St. Ann Church, Milford

Iván Díaz will be performing as the guest artist with the Saint Ann Choir. In 2025, Iván received the Catholic Music Award in Rome for Best Liturgical Song for "Pan del Cielo, (Bread From Heaven)," which appears in the Breaking Bread/Music Issue hymnal. And in 2024 Iván was honored by the Association of Catholic Publishers as "Distinguished Catholic Composer of the Year." Iván has performed at the 2019 & 2023 World Youth Day celebrations. For tickets and more information, call the parish office at: **203-874-0634**.



NOVEMBER 1 @ 3PM
FROM BROADWAY TO THE MET: A BENEFIT CONCERT FOR HAITI
St. James Church, Rocky Hill

You are warmly invited to an uplifting afternoon of music. Admission is free, and donations will be gratefully accepted to support our sister parish, St. Anne in Saintard, Haiti. Our program spans Broadway favorites, Classical masterpieces, and Sacred music.

Approximately 50 singers from various parishes across our diocese, as well as professional soloists Rochelle Bard and Daniel Juarez, will present beloved classics including The Prayer, Bring Him Home from Les Misérables, For Good from Wicked, Nessun Dorma, and much more. Bring your family and friends to experience this musical celebration for a wonderful cause!



NOVEMBER 2 @ 10AM
ALL SOULS' DAY CELEBRATED BY THE MOST REVEREND CHRISTOPHER J. COYNE
All Saints Cemetery Mausoleum, North Haven

The Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne, Archbishop of Hartford, will celebrate All Souls' Day Mass on Monday, November 2, 2026, at 10AM at All Saints Cemetery Mausoleum, 700 Middletown Avenue, North Haven.

Immediately following Mass, Archbishop Coyne will preside over a special Rite of Committal, during which unclaimed cremated remains will be reverently placed in a permanent resting place within the mausoleum.

All are welcome to join us for this sacred occasion of remembrance and prayer.



NOVEMBER 7 @ 1PM - 4:30PM \$45
STARRY NIGHT SILK SCARF PAINTING
Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center, West Hartford

What is the perfect accessory for your Advent prayer table, backdrop for your nativity set, or item to wear or give as a gift? A silk scarf in blues and purples, highlighted in gold! Painting on silk is enjoyable for all ages. Everything will be provided. All you need is to wear old clothes and bring a spirit of adventure. Children under 12 should be accompanied by an adult.

This retreat is sponsored by The Monastery Gallery of Art.

Offering: \$45, includes supplies.
Register using the QR code.



NOVEMBER 14 @ 10AM - 3PM
GINGERBREAD FAIR
St. Patrick Church, Collinsville

Come celebrate the season at our annual Holiday Gingerbread Fair! Try your luck at our popular teacup auction and browse an incredible selection of beautifully curated gift baskets—perfect for holiday gifting. After shopping, step into our café to enjoy delicious food and refreshments, featuring our famous homemade gingerbread topped with fresh whipped cream. Bring your family, friends, and holiday spirit! Admission is free!



NOVEMBER 27 @ 5PM
MEN'S EVENING OF REFLECTION
St. Paul Parish, St. Paul Church, Berlin

Young Men of Faith - this night is for you!

Join us for a free evening of fellowship and renewal!

We'll start the evening by gathering in the church hall for great food and fellowship. It is always a special time to reconnect, catch up on one another's busy lives, and enjoy the gift of friendship. Then, the Franciscan Friars of Our Lady of the Angels Province will lead us in an inspiring time of learning more about St. Francis and his joyful way of following Christ. This event is hosted by the St. Paul Church Young Men's Group.

Register using the QR or contact:
EveningOfReflectionRegister@gmail.com



2026 ARCHBISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

As of today, **16.81%** 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!!



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www.archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal