Branches on the Vine

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD NOVEMBER 7 - 13, 2026

Sacred Heart Statue Linked to Blessed McGivney *Finds New Home in Terryville*

- Story by Karen A. Avitabile



A statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus may have been acquired by Blessed Michael J. McGivney during his time at the Immaculate Conception Mission in Terryville. PHOTO BY KAREN A. AVITABILE

An old statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that may have been purchased by Blessed Michael J. McGivney in the 19th century now holds a prominent spot outside of Immaculate Conception Church in Terryville.

In late spring, the statue was found in storage and is thought to have been the one purchased by then-Father McGivney. The priest served as pastor of St. Thomas Church in Thomaston, which included the Immaculate Conception Mission, from 1884 until his death in 1890. This past Oct. 31 marked the sixth anniversary of his beatification. The priest needs another confirmed miracle to be canonized a saint.

The statue has been mounted on a rebuilt pedestal and has been placed on the right side of Immaculate Conception Church. On the left side of the church is a statue of Mary. Today, the churches of St. Thomas, and Terryville's Immaculate Conception and St. Casmir, make up St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish.

A historical church ledger maintained by Blessed McGivney, which still exists today, confirms that he purchased a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. His 1886 entry reads: "Purchase of Sacred Heart statue for the church."

This past June, Archbishop William Lori, supreme chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, blessed the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus outside Immaculate Conception Church. Blessed McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus in 1882 when he served as parochial vicar of St. Mary Church in New Haven.

The Knights of Columbus have long believed that Blessed McGivney was devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through materials he left behind. These objects are on display in the Blessed Michael McGivney Pilgrimage Center in New Haven.

One item is an ornate devotional plaque of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that was present in Blessed McGivney's childhood home in Waterbury. The plaque was purchased by the Knights of Columbus in the 1970s.

Another item on display is a cloth image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus sewn inside vestments that Blessed McGivney was buried in.

Other evidence of Blessed McGivney's devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was recorded in an 1881 letter penned by the priest to his favorite professor at his alma mater, St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, Md. He signed it, "Yours in the Sacred Heart, Michael J. McGivney."

The priest also gave a badge of the Sacred Heart to James "Chip" Smith, a prisoner on death row in New Haven. Blessed McGivney ministered to Smith before his execution on Sept. 1, 1882.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus gained prominence in the 17th century through the divine revelations to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, a French Catholic nun. The Sacred Heart of Jesus was officially recognized and approved in 1765 by Pope Clement XIII.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus honors the physical heart of Jesus Christ and his boundless love for mankind. It teaches the faithful to let go of anger, rejection and sins of humanity, and follow his example love and gratitude in return.

Today, the entire month of June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart and the next feast day, a major solemnity in the Catholic Church, will be marked on June 4, 2027.

Upcoming Events

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 15 @ 7PM
YOUNG CATHOLIC PROFESSIONALS 3RD YEAR ANNIVERSARY MASS CELEBRATED BY THE MOST REV. BISHOP BETANCOURT
St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish, St. Bartholomew's Church, Manchester

Join YCP (professionals from ages 18-39) to celebrate its 3rd year in the Archdiocese! Come join us for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in Thanksgiving to God, celebrated by His Excellency Bishop Juan Miguel Betancourt. After Mass, join us as we continue the celebration with food and fellowship! Come celebrate 3 years of YCP Central CT, bringing young adults together to work in witness for Christ!
Email **info@ycpcentralconnecticut.org** to learn more.

NOVEMBER 21 @ 9:30AM - 2:30PM
35TH ANNUAL FRANCISCAN CHRISTMAS FAIR
Franciscan Life Center, Meriden

Admission is free! Enjoy the Spirit of Christmas on this joy-filled day with something for the whole family. A wonderful Living Crèche Franciscan breads, pottery, food, handcrafted items, Merry Miscellaneous; fresh cut Christmas trees, raffles, Franciscan animals, and children's arts and crafts.

Visit **franciscanchristmasfair.org** for more info.

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

JANUARY 15-17
RETROUVAILLE MARRIAGE RETREAT WEEKEND
Windsor

If your marriage has become distant, troubled, unloving or uncaring; if you are divorced or separated but want to try again, Retrouvaille can help. Retrouvaille provides tools to communicate better, resolve conflicts fairly, and re-discover why you fell in love in the first place.

Our next Marriage Workshop Weekend is January 15-17, 2027 in Windsor, CT. Contact us today for information or to register: **helpourmarriage.org** or **(860) 837-0447**.

2026 ARCHBISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

As of today, 16.85% 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 ONE

www.archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal