

Branches on the Vine

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

MARCH 28 - APRIL 3, 2026

Guilford Parish Offers Support for Those Living with *Mental Illness*

- Story by Joe Pisani

Almost 25 years ago, Deacon Adam Michaelae was moved by a heart-breaking situation when a young woman had her engagement broken and lost her friends because of mental illness.

"She had nothing and no one to go to, and we knew we had to do something," he recalls. That's when he and his wife Rose began a mental health ministry to offer people suffering from loneliness to depression, stress, autism and anxiety a place to turn for support. Since then, they have assisted dozens of people, most of whom had nowhere to turn.

The Mental Health Ministry Spiritual Support Group is hosted by St. George Parish in Guilford and has members from the shoreline parishes. Meetings are held on the campus of St. George Church.

"People in the group offer support for each other"

"The group offers a safe and confidential environment where people who live with mental illness can meet and share their experiences, their concerns and their faith," says Deacon Michaelae. "It is not group therapy, and behavioral health professionals are not involved, but through support, prayer and reflections, members can grow closer in their relationship with our loving God."

Deacon Adam is a certified Catholic mental health minister with a master's degree in spiritual and pastoral care. He was a founding board member of the Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers, and three years ago received the Archdiocese of Hartford's social justice award for his work.

Rose Michaelae provides spiritual accompaniment and previously facilitated a group for caregivers.

"My wife Rose has been there every step of the way and offers a gentle touch and womanly perspective that I cannot provide," Deacon Michaelae says.

"People in the group offer support for each other, and a camaraderie has built up," Rose says. "Some of them live alone and don't have family, some can't drive, and older members are lonely and feel their vulnerability. Many suffer from the stigma associated with mental illness and don't want to speak about it because they're afraid of being ostracized."

Meetings begin with a prayer, and Deacon Michaelae asks them to share their experiences while members offer suggestions when someone has a problem. Later, they discuss a spiritual reading or the Gospel. The meetings end with a blessing, and Rose gives them treats to take home. The Michaelaes also take members to events, such as the St. George Thanksgiving Day dinner and the parish annual carnival.

"We support them and try to get them out so they're not home alone," Rose says. "Sometimes we treat them to lunch and a movie, which they look forward to."

Members are required to adhere to certain rules.

"We have rules about confidentiality," Deacon Michaelae says. "If they have a therapist, they can't abruptly stop treatment without having a plan to get another one. They also can't abruptly stop their medication."

During the week, the Michaelaes make themselves available to members.



Deacon Adam Michaelae and his wife Rose oversee the Mental Health Ministry Spiritual Support Group hosted by St. George Parish, Guilford. They are members of St. John Bosco Parish in Branford.

"Anyone can come in any time and sit with us if they have a problem," Deacon Michaelae says. "We get calls and support them with our prayers and understanding. The door is always open."

The Mental Health Ministry Spiritual Support Group meets the second and fourth Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Ruiz Center on the campus of St. George Church, 33 Whitfield St., Guilford. For dates and more information, contact St. George Parish, 203.453.2788.



Upcoming Events



MARCH 29 @ 11:30AM
PALM SUNDAY BREAKFAST AND EGG HUNT
 St. Mary Church, Derby

Free Breakfast of egg sandwiches, pastries, coffee after Mass. Bring your own basket!



MARCH 30 @ 7PM
DIVINE MERCY TALK WITH MEG BAILEY
 St. Mary Church, Derby

Come and hear about the extraordinary graces Jesus has promised when we honor His Divine Mercy. In this special PowerPoint presentation we will be introduced to the message of Divine Mercy. Following there will be adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and confession.



MARCH 31 @ 11AM
CHRISM MASS
 Cathedral of Saint Joseph, Hartford

Archbishop will bless holy oils for use in sacraments throughout the year. All are invited to join in celebrating in this special Mass.



APRIL 11 @ 8:30AM \$75
CONTEMPLATIVE ENRICHMENT DAY
 Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center, West Hartford

Inspired by Rilke's "Sonnets to Orpheus," this retreat explores themes of transformation and the courage to "live the questions." Join us to practice "heart-work" and discover how to belong to "the Whole." In-person and online via Zoom. Two Centering Prayer sessions and lunch. Visit www.holyfamilyretreat.org/calendar.



April 11 @ 10AM - 4PM \$75
SPRING WREATH MAKING
 Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center, West Hartford

Make yourself a decorative wreath for Springtime. Using colorful paper, you will create a beautiful wreath to take home and use on front door or inside the house. You will need no experience in wreath making to complete this special wreath and you can hang it year after year! Supplies and Lunch provided. Visit www.holyfamilyretreat.org/calendar.



APRIL 17 @ 6:30PM
YOUNG ADULT 21+ GROUP
 Our Lady of Knock Parish, St. Patrick Church, Farmington

Candlelight Mass will be held at 6:30 PM with Trivia, Tacos, Drinks, and Social following the Candlelight Mass.



APRIL 17 - 19
INTERNATIONAL EXHIBIT OF EUCHARISTIC MIRACLES
 St. George Church, Guilford

Fri, 17 April, 4:30 - 9 pm | Sat, 18 April, 10 am - 8:30 pm | Sun, 19 April, 9:30 am - 3 pm
 Talks on St. Carlo Acutis & St. Manuel Gonzalez Garcia. 1st class relics of both St. Carlo and St. Manuel will be available for veneration. For more information, contact Donna Yatcko at **203-453-2788**.



MAY 1 - 3 @ ALL DAY
RETOUVAILLE MARRIAGE WORKSHOP
 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. Visit www.HelpOurMarriage.org.



APRIL 27 @ 7PM
SPEED NETWORKING AND MENTORING
 Holy Angels Center, Meriden

Join Young Catholic Professionals Central Connecticut and meet inspiring professionals, connect with other young adults, and walk away with practical insight for your career and faith. Food and drink will be provided. We will be having Stations of the Cross and prayer at 7pm, and the speed networking and mentoring will start at 7:45.



MAY 8 @ 6PM
SEEN: A NIGHT OF HOPE & HEALING
 The Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Waterbury

All are welcome for a night of prayer and support for those experiencing infertility or pregnancy/child loss, whether you are personally carrying this cross or desire to intercede and accompany others. We will have welcoming remarks, Mass, a reflection, Adoration with Praise and Worship, and a reception to follow with light refreshments, veneration of relics, resources, community, and opportunities to meet with Religious Sisters and Prayer Teams.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Amanda at Hello@waterburybasilica.org. Use www.tinyurl.com/3832yxtz to RSVP.



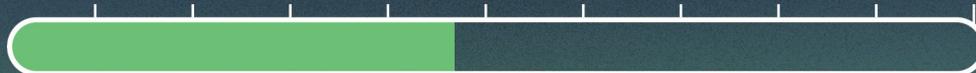
MAY 10 @ 10AM Adults \$50
MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH
 Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center, West Hartford

Children 4-12, \$15 | Children under 4, Free
 Let us help take care of Mom on her special day. Come celebrate Mother's Day with a special Mass for mothers and families, and then enjoy a delicious gourmet brunch prepared by our chef. Visit www.holyfamilyretreat.org/calendar.

2026 ARCHBISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

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

10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%



Total Goal: \$10M 46.62% as of 3/17/26

\$4,662,276.10 pledges from 12,802 generous donors

WE ARE ONE



www.archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal