

Branches on the Vine

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

MAY 16 - 22, 2026

Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center Celebrates *75th Year of Spiritual Renewal*

- Story by Shelley Wolf

In 1951, Holy Family Monastery and Retreat House opened its doors in West Hartford, on a hill with a lighted cross, as is the Passionist tradition. On Feb. 2 of that year, the retreat center welcomed 95 men from St. Thomas the Apostle Church in West Hartford for the first weekend retreat, striving to grow their spirituality and connect them more deeply to God.

What is now known as Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center in West Hartford is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year with a slate of activities that will be open to the general public.

"We're so proud of all that we've achieved and all that we've become over the years," says Father David Cinquegrani, a Passionist priest and the leader since 1999, "and we're beyond thrilled to be celebrating this milestone anniversary.

"We're proud of our history as a place of peace and an instrument of spiritual growth and transformation for so many people," he says, "and we hope to continue on that path for many years to come."

Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center's roots go back far longer than 75 years — to 1720. It was then, in Italy, that St. Paul of the Cross founded the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ (Passionists) with the goal of teaching people how to pray and meditate on Christ's Passion.

The Order arrived in the United States in the 1800s, and in 1945, Bishop Henry J. O'Brien of Hartford invited the Passionists to establish a monastery and retreat house for Catholic men in Connecticut.

Under the leadership of Father Joseph Leo Flynn, a Passionist priest, the Passionists purchased 69 acres of farmland in West Hartford, and in 1951 the monastery and retreat house opened for men. In 1986, it added retreat programs for women, and in the 1990s added youth programs and programs for those in recovery.

Today, Holy Family is the largest parish-based Catholic retreat center in the United States, offering a wide variety of retreats and programs. According to Luke Giroux, director of administrative operations, between 4,000 and 5,000 people visit for retreats and other programs each year.

To celebrate its anniversary, Holy Family has a number of activities planned for 2026. So far, two special anniversary events have been scheduled.

A Summer Concert will be held **July 8** at 7 p.m. at the outdoor pavilion.

"A collection of talented vocalists and musicians from Holy Family's music ministry will be performing a mix of Broadway numbers and jazz hits," Giroux says. All are welcome to this free event. No registration is required.

On **Sept. 13**, an Anniversary Celebration is set for 3 p.m., beginning with an outdoor Mass and a reception immediately following. The event will offer music, food and an array of speakers. It is free and open to the public. No registration is required.

"Holy Family welcomes all who seek to deepen their relationship with God and with one another," Giroux says. "We encourage all seekers to come be at peace on our 48 acres, to enjoy the labyrinth, to walk the outdoor stations, and to discern their relationship with God as we take steps into the next 75 years."

For updates on these and other anniversary events, visit holyfamilyretreat.org/calendar-of-events.

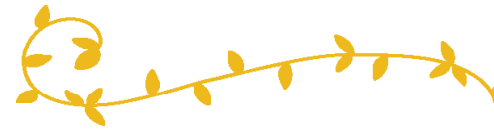


Priests and Catholic retreatants gather for the very first retreat Feb. 2 to 4, 1951, at the Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center in West Hartford.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLY FAMILY



Upcoming Events



MAY 21 @ 9:30AM - 3PM **\$12**
NEW DAY SEMINAR FOR THE BEREAVED
Sacred Heart on the Lake Retreat Center, Higganum

This seminar helps those who have lost a loved one with the tasks of grieving. The cost of the book is \$12. Reservations required. Call Sr. Patricia Cigrand **203-606-4830** or email cigrandpatricia@gmail.com. A free will offering will be welcomed.



MAY 23 @ 9AM - 2PM
ANNUAL TAG SALE
St. Raphael's Parish, St. Ann Campus, Milford

Come on down for some amazing deals on many unique finds! We have everything from: Tools & Hardware, Furniture & Décor, Clothing & Shoes, Home Appliances, Books, Games & DVDs, Toys... and more. Stop by to see what you can discover!



NOW UNTIL MAY 22
DISCOVER YOUR CALLING!
NECBS OPEN HOUSE
New England Catholic Biblical School

Curious about Bible school? Come experience it for yourself at our Open House! All Month through May - Restarting in September! Sit in on a live class, meet our teachers, and see what real biblical training looks like. In-person or virtual. We'll personally connect you with the right teacher and make sure you have everything you need. Contact Class Coordinator dayanee.olivieri@aohct.org for more information.



JUNE 12 - 13 @ 8PM
ALL NIGHT VIGIL
St. Joseph Church, Winsted

Vigil begins at 8PM with opportunity for Confession until 8:45PM. Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at 9PM. Each hour throughout the night will have some structured prayer time as well as time for quiet reflection. Vigil concludes with 8AM Mass in honor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Coffee and water will be available throughout the night. Homemade Bread will be shared after the 8AM Mass in honor of St. Anthony's Feast Day, June 13.



MAY 27 @ 6:30PM - 8:30PM
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS EVENT
Cathedral of St. Joseph, Lower Cathedral Hall, Hartford

Please join us for an interactive educational event to learn about human trafficking. This program, offered by the Partnership to End Human Trafficking (PEHT), features "In Her Shoes", an exercise designed to walk participants through a day in the life of a human trafficking survivor. Following the exercise, you will learn how trafficking happens in our communities and what you can do to help. PEHT has partnered with Order of Malta American Association and the AOH Human Trafficking Task Force to bring you this unique experience designed for adults and teens 16+. There is no charge for this event, but we ask that you register www.tinyurl.com/2f3p7k96 at this link.



MAY 31 @ 10AM
100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
St. Joseph Church, Ansonia

Saint Joseph Church of Ansonia will commemorate its 100th anniversary with a centennial celebration on May 31, honoring a century of faith, community, and fellowship. The celebration will begin with Mass at Saint Joseph Church with Archbishop Christopher Coyne serving as principal celebrant.

Mass will take place at St. Joseph Church, Ansonia, and Dinner at 12PM will take place at Warsaw Park, Ansonia.

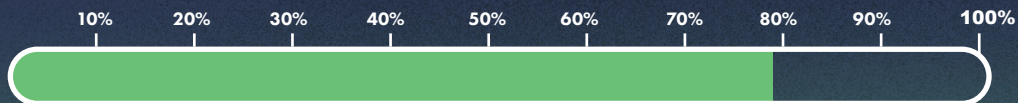


JULY 9 - 11 @ 5PM - 9PM
SUMMER FOOD FESTIVAL
Our Lady Queen of the Apostles Parish, St. Mary Church, Derby

Our Summer Food Festival brings our parish and our community together for a joyful celebration held right in our church parking lot. Featuring delicious food tents, special evenings with live music, family-friendly games for children, and the excitement of announcing our annual raffle winners, the festival is a highlight of the summer season! Come join us — menu/poster can be seen on our Facebook events [@StMarysChurchDerbyCt](https://www.facebook.com/StMarysChurchDerbyCt) or on our website www.OLQAderby.org.

2026 ARCHBISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

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



Total Goal: \$10M 78.92% as of 5/5/26

\$7,892,438.53 in pledges from 21,802 generous donors



WE ARE
ONE

www.archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal