

Branches on the Vine

AUGUST 23 - 29, 2025



Blessed Michael J. McGivney set out to improve the plight of people he ministered to during the 19th century and bring people closer to the faith.
Painting by Antonella Cappuccio/Photo
COURTESY OF KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS



People can invoke the intercession of Blessed McGivney at his tomb in St. Mary Church in New Haven, part of Blessed Michael McGivney Parish. His remains are placed in a sealed, double bronze coffin within a polished granite sarcophagus at the rear of the church.
PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

Auxiliary Bishop Juan Miguel Betancourt recounts the life of Waterbury native son and priest Blessed Michael J. McGivney, whose patronal feast in the Archdiocese of Hartford was marked on Aug. 13. Blessed McGivney, who founded the Knights of Columbus, demonstrated how to live a life of service and faith. Pray for his intercession and for a second miracle that will lead to his canonization as a saint. Read more about Blessed McGivney in the upcoming issue of the Catholic Transcript.

These days, I am re-reading the biography of Blessed Michael McGivney. I am sure you agree that he shines as a champion of the Gospel's works of mercy. In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus presents a powerful image of the final judgment, separating the righteous from the unrighteous based on acts of mercy: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and visiting the imprisoned. "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me," he says. This Gospel passage is not merely a list of good deeds, but a roadmap to holiness, a path that Blessed Michael McGivney, as an example to all, walked among us with quiet courage and deep conviction.

As many of us know, Father McGivney, born in 1852 in Waterbury to Irish immigrant parents, was a highly skilled yet humble parish priest

BLESSED MCGIVNEY: AN OUTSTANDING WITNESS

whose ministry reflected the corporal works of mercy through everyday acts. During a time when many Catholic families especially widows and orphans—faced social prejudice, economic hardship, and spiritual marginalization, he shared their pain, recognizing in them the suffering face of Christ. A bright man, rather than furthering his priestly career due to his many talents, Father McGivney dedicated his priesthood to being present, compassionate, and proactive in caring for his flock.

Founding the Knights of Columbus in 1882 serves as a concrete expression of this mercy that he had already demonstrated in his pastoral assignments in New Haven and Thomaston. He recognized the vulnerable position of Catholic men, many of whom died young due to harsh labor conditions, leaving their families destitute. The Knights began as a mutual aid society, providing financial and spiritual support to widows and orphans. In this initiative, Father McGivney reflected the very heart of Matthew 25: loving Christ in the "least" among us.

Moreover, his mercy extended beyond material assistance.

As a parish priest, he acted as a shepherd, offering counsel, encouragement, and sacramental grace to those who suffered.

He made himself available to his parishioners, as well as to the poor, the unemployed, and the young men tempted by crime or despair. His compassion was not sentimental; it was active, personal, and rooted in the Eucharistic love of Christ.

Today, the witness of Blessed Michael McGivney speaks urgently to our times. In a society marred by division, indifference, and isolation, he calls us to rediscover mercy as the defining characteristic of Christian life. His legacy is not confined to statues, museums, or badges; it lives on in every act of compassion inspired by faith.

To honor this local saint means to take seriously the words of Christ in Matthew 25, not only as a future judgment, but also as a daily calling. Blessed Michael McGivney shows us that holiness is possible in ordinary life and that mercy is the most reliable path to Christ.



Upcoming Events



09/5-7 WEEKEND

RETRouvaille MARRIED COUPLES WEEKEND

Hotel in CT (address given at registration confirmation)

Does your marriage get the attention it deserves in the busy world we live in? Could you use tools and support to make it a priority? Would you like that "loving feeling" back? Sign up for our upcoming weekend in September 5-7, 2025. www.tinyurl.com/mrypks8k or email us Connecticut-WMass@helpourmarriage.org We are happy to answer questions and provide further details.

Retrouvaille is a marriage help program that gives couples the opportunity to get away and examine their lives together. It provides couples with tools to improve their communication skills and rekindle their love. It also provides monthly opportunities for couples enrichment.


It's never too late to build a fulfilling marriage.

18TH CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE


2025 JUBILEE YEAR

PILGRIMS OF HOPE


SEPTEMBER 27TH




Michael O'Neill



Fr. Jason Brooks



Fr. Anthony Federico




Dr. Ray Guarendi

New Location:
Holy Cross High School
Waterbury, CT

Vigil Mass
with Archbishop
Christopher Coyne


Spes Non Confundit
"Hope Does Not Disappoint"

Homily
by Bishop
Richard F. Reidy



SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 27
DOORS OPEN AT 7:30AM
EVENT STARTS AT 8:30AM

REGISTER TODAY
CTCATHOLICMEN.ORG



THE OFFICE OF MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP PRESENTS


THE HOUSING & HOMELESS CRISIS

BREAKING THE CYCLE

Join us for an informative and inspiring evening on the current housing and homelessness crisis, and learn how the Church and lay ministry can help restore dignity and break the cycle in our communities. The evening will conclude with a panel of experts answering your questions.

Monday,
September 22
6:30-8:30 PM

St. Bridget of Sweden Parish
175 Main St.
Cheshire, CT



FEATURED SPEAKER: JERED BRUZAS
Chief Impact Officer, United Way of Greater Waterbury

With over a decade of leadership in housing, homelessness, and community impact, Jered has worked on the front lines, helping individuals and families stabilize housing, gain financial independence, and access vital services. His work has shaped programs and policies that make a lasting difference.

Reserve Your Seat Today! Email: Ana.plaza@aohct.org

2025 ARCHBISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

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



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Total Goal: \$10M

91.17% as of 8/12/25
\$9,117,486.38 pledges from
27,425 generous donors

www.archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal

