

Branches on the Vine

OCTOBER 18 - 24, 2025



The fourth archdiocesan Celebration of Our Lady of the Americas and All Nations began with the holy rosary being prayed. Father Alexander Avendano, rector of the Shrine of Maria Reina de la Paz in Hartford, leads the group outside St. Lawrence O'Toole Church.

PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH



As the celebration moves indoors, each participating group processes into the church with a representative image of the Blessed Mother and the flag of their country with their national anthem playing the background. Archbishop Christopher J. Coyne blesses the images of Our Lady as they are presented to him.

PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

More than 800 people representing 12 countries came together for the fourth annual Mary of the Americas celebration in a display of faith, unity and cultural pride. There was prayer, there was pageantry and there was a festival of Latin American food.

The archdiocesan celebration for the Blessed Mother Mary of the Americas and all Nations was held at the Shrine of Maria Reina de la Paz at St. Lawrence O'Toole Church in Hartford on Oct. 4 and will be held here in years to come.

It began with an international rosary in English, Spanish and Brazilian, which was followed by Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin with Archbishop Christopher J. Coyne as the principal celebrant.

"It is wonderful for us to gather under the devotion of our Blessed Mother because she always points us toward her Son," the archbishop told the packed church. Father Alexander Avendano, rector of the shrine, gave the homily and petitions were presented for people of the Americas and the Caribbean.

The delegations wore colorful traditional dress of their countries. Before Mass, they processed into the shrine, singing their national anthems and waving flags of their native countries, while carrying images of the Blessed Mother, which they venerate under her different titles.

They sang and they clapped as their voices filled the shrine in a joyous display of pageantry.

HONORING THE BLESSED MOTHER OF THE AMERICAS AND ALL NATIONS

The delegation representing the United States of America entered as the Star Spangled Banner was sung and carried an image of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception.

For Father Avendano, it was more than a cultural celebration; it was a demonstration of the compassion of "momma Mary," for Latinos far from their homes and their biological mothers who turn to the mother of Jesus for hope and consolation.

"Some are separated from their mothers and cannot return to see them, maybe because of immigration situations or because they have lost their mothers and cannot grieve properly or say goodbye," Father Avendano says. "So there is pain in the people's hearts, and this event lets them know that mama Mary assures them she is here for people, especially for suffering people and for orphaned people. Although they cannot see their natural mothers, their supernatural mother is here for them no matter what happens. This celebration is a message of compassion and companionship and love."

The priest, who comes from Colombia and was appointed rector of the shrine in August, says "mama Mary is the reason for my priesthood, the reason for my work, the reason for my existence."

She is everything and more, and Jesus is OK with that. On this day, we honor her, our cultures and our ancestors as well."

At the conclusion, he thanked Archbishop Coyne for celebrating Mass at the event. "We know you are here for us, and we appreciate that so much."

Among those represented were St. George Church in Bridgeport (Mexico – Our Lady of Guadalupe); St. Mary Church in New Britain (Chile – Our Lady of Mount Carmel); North American Martyrs Parish in East Hartford (El Salvador – Our Lady of Peace); St. Augustine Church in Hartford (Guatemala – Our Lady of the Rosary); and The Shrine of Maria Reina de la Paz in Hartford (Honduras – Our Lady of Suyapa) (Peru – Our Lady of Mercy) (Colombia – Our Lady of Chiquinquirá) (United States – Immaculate Conception) (Costa Rica – Our Lady of the Angels) (Dominican Republic – Our Lady of High Grace) (Puerto Rico – Our Lady of Divine Providence) (Cuba – Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre).

Mass was followed by a festival of food and displays of different cultures.

- Story by Joe Pisani



Upcoming Events



ARCHDIOCESE of HARTFORD

Office of Faith Formation and Parish Life

Catholic Committee on Scouting

The Archdiocese of Hartford, Catholic Committee on Scouting is recruiting new members. This Committee supports Catholic scouts in the Archdiocese as they learn more about their faith within the scouting programs (both Scouting USA and Girl Scouts - includes Campfire). The committee meets four times a year, creates a yearly Retreat for scouts, trains Religious Emblems Coordinators (REC), and hosts an Archdiocesan Award Ceremony each spring. If you are interested in learning more, or how you can use your gifts and talents in service to our shared mission, contact Jennifer McClintock at Jennifer.McClintock@aohct.org.



Upcoming Catholic Scouting Events:

Catholic Religious Emblems Training - Saturday, November 15, 2025

This training is for all Scouts BSA Leaders who want to run a religious emblem program in their Troop/Pack. The training will review the following emblems: Light of Christ, Parvuli Dei, Ad Altare Dei, Pope Pius and Adult Awards. We will be meeting at the Pastoral Center, 467 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield in the 2nd floor conference room, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Registration is required:



Catholic Scouting Retreat - Saturday, November 8, 2025

Join other scouts from around the Archdiocese to learn about the Jubilee Year at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph, Hartford. We will learn about the Holy Door, what a Jubilee Year is, participate in a service project and more! Registration is required:



Questions? Contact:

Jennifer McClintock, Coordinator of Faith Formation Programs & Technology,
Jennifer.McClintock@aohct.org or 860-242-5573

MOST ITEMS \$3

GENTLY USED

CLOTHING SALE

OCT 24 4 - 7 PM \$5 FEE
OCT 25 9 AM - 2 PM

Huge Selection of Children's, Women's & Men's Clothing. Outerwear, Jewelry, Purses, & Accessories
Special BOUTIQUE Items

St Ann Church Hall, 289 Arch Rd, Avon

Carolyn's Place

PREGNANCY CARE CENTER

Presented By Dr. Richard and Carol Gruszka

33rd Anniversary Dinner

Sunday, November 2, 2025 | 3:30 PM

La Bella Vista
380 Farmwood Road Waterbury, CT

2025 Awardees -
Bill O'Brien, Sr. Mary Richards, F.S.E.,
Terri Moriello & Kathy Durgy-Concepcion

5 Course Meal

Scan for Reservations

Award Presentation

Reservations Required
Respond by October 24, 2025
Reservations Available:
www.carolynsplace.org
or 203.597.9080

Silent Auction

Dinner
\$60
per person

Council 1090

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Archdiocese of Hartford
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