

Branches on the Vine

OCTOBER 4 - 10, 2025



Ewa Lotkowska, a member of Young Catholic Professionals of Central Connecticut, weeds the asparagus in the Franciscan Sisters' garden in Meriden.
PHOTO BY SHELLEY WOLF



Sister Faith Marie Woolsey, of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, and volunteer Matthew Ennis work together to prune an apple tree.
PHOTO BY SHELLEY WOLF

On a Saturday in August, nearly 20 members of the Young Catholic Professionals of Central Connecticut gathered in Meriden for a "service day" to help the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist tend their orchards and gardens.

The young adults joined the sisters in picking peaches, pruning the apple trees, weeding around the asparagus and beets, weeding the flower beds and sweeping the walkways.

"We could have spent the day somewhere else, but this was the best way for us to spend a Saturday," says Joe Luchene, a member of the group, as he gathered tree branches into a wheelbarrow. On weekdays, Luchene is employed as a life coach and as a substitute teacher.

After four hours of outdoor labor, the young people prayed with the women religious and were treated to a lunch, breaking bread with the Franciscan Sisters on their patio behind the John Lateran Center in Meriden.

With the tagline "Working in Witness for Christ," Young Catholic Professionals of Central Connecticut, or YCP, is a local chapter of a national organization that seeks to help young working adults to live their Catholic faith in the workplace and out in the world.

"One thing I really like about Young Catholic Professionals is that it encompasses a lot of different aspects of life. From the title itself you'd think it's just a work-related group, but

it's very wholistic," says Sister Faith Marie Woolsey, a member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist and an assistant chaplain for the young adult group.

"The purpose of Young Catholic Professionals is to help young adults connect their faith and their work," says Natasha Hagan, president of the Central Connecticut chapter, who works as an engineer at Pratt & Whitney. "How do you live an undivided life? How do you show up as your full Catholic self, not shying away from talking about faith?"

Those questions get answered, she says, over time during the group's monthly gatherings. Those gatherings encompass the Executive Speaker Series and Panel Discussions at various local churches throughout the Archdiocese of Hartford, the Networking Happy Hour at the Twelve Percent Beer Project in North Haven, and various special events.

The group's primary offering, the Executive Speaker Series, involves talks by senior professionals on development topics, such as leadership in the workplace. Invited speakers often share their own faith journey, providing

YOUNG CATHOLIC PROFESSIONALS WITNESS FOR CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

insights on how to navigate as people of faith in a secular world. Panel Discussions explore a single virtue, applying it to everyday life.

Over the past two years, the young adults have heard from business owners and professionals working in the fields of law, accounting, marketing, sales, engineering and information technology at companies such as Travelers, Fairfield University, Aetna, Pratt & Whitney, the Knights of Columbus and Santopietro Brewing Company, to name just a few.

Upcoming events: In October, the group will gather for a St. Joseph Saturday Half-Day Retreat on Oct. 4, from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Sacred Heart Academy, 265 Benham St., Hamden. The retreat includes breakfast, lunch, Mass, confession and Adoration.

In November, the chapter will celebrate its second anniversary with a Mass of Thanksgiving & Reception celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop Juan Miguel Betancourt on Nov. 6 at 7 p.m. at St. Bartholomew Church, 45 Ludlow Road, Manchester.

All young adults and newcomers are welcome to attend. For more details, visit youngcatholicprofessionals.org/chapter/central-connecticut.

Story By Shelley Wolf



Upcoming Events

Been

ARCHDIOCESE of HARTFORD
Office of Faith Formation and Parish Life

*A Mass of Remembrance and Healing
from miscarriage, still birth or infant loss*

Friday, October 17, 2025
6:00 p.m.
Saint Francis Church
1755 Stanley Street, New Britain

All are welcome to attend this Mass of Remembrance and experience the profound peace, love and mercy of Jesus Christ. A special invitation is extended to parents, grandparents and siblings who grieve the death of a child as a result of a miscarriage, still birth or infant loss. These losses may be recent or extend over many years.
A reception to follow the Mass. Scan the QR Code to register.

If you have any questions, contact:
Valerie St. Jean, Associate Director of Adult Faith Formation & Parish Life
Valerie.StJean@aohct.org - 860-541-6491 ext. 2678



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Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish Presents
*International Exhibit of
Eucharistic Miracles*

October 11-13, 2025
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
785 Highland Ave
Waterbury, CT

The exhibit will be open
in the Church Hall:
Sat, Oct. 11 - 10 am - 6 pm
Sun, Oct. 12 - 9 am - 5 pm

Talk on Eucharistic Miracles and
St. Carlo Acutis
The 1st Millennial Saint!

Sunday, October 12
3:00 pm
(lower church)

Saint Carlo Acutis lived in Italy from 1990 -2006. During his short 15 1/2 years, he was always joyfully sharing the faith, especially his love of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. At the age of 11, as part of his work as a catechist, he created a website which catalogued many of the principal Eucharistic Miracles which have taken place throughout the world and have been recognized by the Church.

1st class relics of both St. Carlo and St. Manuel will be available for veneration

Coffee and talk on
St. Manuel González García
Bishop of the Abandoned Tabernacle

Monday, October 13
8:30 am

Manuel González García was born in Seville, Spain in 1877 and ordained a priest in 1901. He was assigned his first parish mission in the little town of Palanques del Río. It was there, where Our Lord spoke to him from an abandoned tabernacle, that was a defining moment in his life and clarified the direction for the rest of his priestly ministry.

For more info, call the rectory at (203) 756-8981


