



Branches on the Vine

AUGUST 2 - 8, 2025



Members of the St. Trofimena Society of St. Michael Church carry a statue of the saint through the Wooster Street neighborhood of New Haven during a procession on her feast day.
PHOTO BY JOE PISANI



The St. Catello Society participated in the first procession in 70 years, along with other Italian-American religious societies from St. Michael and St. Anthony.
PHOTO BY JOE PISANI

Several hundred Italian-Americans marched in a procession three blocks long in honor of St. Trofimena, a fourth century virgin martyr, whose statue was held aloft on a platform and carried through New Haven's Wooster Street neighborhood of Little Italy.

The procession, held on the saint's feast day, July 13, was sponsored by the St. Trofimena Society and was preceded by a Mass at St. Michael Church.

It included a marching band, a Knights of Columbus honor guard and representatives from the St. Catello Society and other Italian-American organizations from St. Michael and St. Anthony churches, which are part of the Blessed Michael McGivney Parish in the Elm City.

David Kelley, one of the organizers, said it was the first time in 40 years there has been a procession for the saint, who is patron of Minori, Italy, and the first time in 70 years for the St. Catello Society.

Kelley, who is co-president of the St. Trofimena Society with his cousin, Richard Biondi, says, "This is beyond belief. This is more than we ever anticipated or dreamed of doing." Only two years ago, the co-presidents revived the society, which was founded in 1908. It now boasts some 120 members.

"The Mass and procession mean a great deal to me and the members of the societies," Biondi says.

PROCESSION IN NEW HAVEN CELEBRATES CATHOLIC FAITH, ITALIAN-AMERICAN CULTURES

"For the older members to celebrate a Mass in Italian brings back cherished memories of their youth and family members who are no longer alive."

Biondi adds that the procession was also an opportunity for unity among the Italian-American religious organizations in the New Haven area and "an occasion to celebrate our Catholic faith, as well as our Italian-American culture and traditions." The procession included delegations from societies that honor St. Trofimena, St. Catello, St. Anthony, St. Andrew, St. Anne and St. Maria Maddalena.

Father Joseph MacNeill led the procession and celebrated Mass in Italian earlier that morning. The priest, who is chaplain of St. Thomas More Chapel & Center at Yale in New Haven, traces his ancestry on his mother's side to the Abruzzi region of Italy.

"I'm here to continue to give witness to our passion, faith, culture and saints for the next generation of Italian Americans," he says. Founded in 1901, members of the St. Catello Society carried a statue of the ninth century bishop of Castellamare di Stabia, a city southeast of Naples.

Gene Avino, whose grandfather began the society to help immigrants from his home, says the group will celebrate its 125th anniversary next year.

The president, Paul Criscuolo, says there has been a renewed interest in Italian heritage and that 14 new members have enrolled, some of them from Ireland, Italy, California and Florida. Around the turn of the century, immigrants established Italian societies at St. Michael's, the oldest Italian church in Connecticut, to offer assistance to one another, honor their traditions and share their devotion to the patron saints of their hometowns.

According to tradition, St. Trofimena was a young woman who was killed by her father for refusing to marry a pagan because she was Christian.

Kelley said the day was a testament to the enduring presence of Italian-American culture and faith.

"I grew up at St. Michael's Church as a child and spent a lot of time with my grandparents," he recalled. "I love our Italian traditions, so we hope this is a kind of revival."

- Story by Joe Pisani



Upcoming Events



08/5 - 9/9 TUESDAYS 6PM
ROSARY WALK 2025 FOR WORLD PEACE
All Saints Cemetery, Main office,
700 Middletown Ave, North Haven

Join the Legion of Mary every Tuesday evening until Sept. 9th for a peaceful Rosary Walk for World Peace. This outdoor gathering offers prayerful reflection through the Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. In the event of rain, the group will meet in front of the Mausoleum.

Please wear comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing. A limited supply of rosaries is available, but participants are encouraged to bring their own. Prayer programs will be provided. Free parking available.

Questions? Call Barbara at 203-605-9845.
To receive updates, leave a message with your clearly stated and spelled email address.



10/13 MONDAY
2025 CONNECTICUT GOLF CLASSIC
The Hartford Golf Club, 134 Norwood Rd,
West Hartford

Join us for the 2025 Connecticut Golf Classic, co-presented by the Connecticut Catholic Foundation and Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Hartford. Individuals and foursomes are invited to enjoy a day on the course in support of a great cause.

Proceeds benefit the CCF grants program and Catholic Charities' Early Childhood Education program, addressing critical needs in Hartford, Litchfield, and New Haven counties.

Register at: www.ctcatholicfoundation.org/2025-ct-golf-classic

Contact:
Randee Gileau, CCF, 860-242-5573 ext. 1054 or
Randee.Gileau@aohct.org

David Sellery, Catholic Charities, 860-728-2564 or
dsellery@ccaoh.org

Bereavement Facilitators Enrichment Workshop

For those who provide pastoral care in parish setting.

Learn from Jennifer Siefert, author of *When Words Disappear*, how poetry can help the grieving process by tapping into a range of feelings – from sadness to despair to hope and healing.

When Jennifer's mother was diagnosed with corticobasal syndrome, a rare, progressive brain disease similar to early-onset Alzheimer's, she wrote poetry to help her cope.

When Words Disappear is Jennifer's vivid chronicle of caregiving and grieving for her mother. Told through poems and reflections, it takes the reader on an intimate journey and beyond bereavement.

Join us

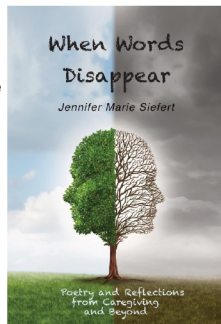
When: Tuesday, August 5, 2025
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Location: Pastoral Center
467 Bloomfield Avenue
Bloomfield, CT

Register by scanning the QR Code:

Schedule of the Morning:

9:00 a.m. - Check in and Coffee
9:15 a.m. - Author Presentation
10:30 a.m. - Catholic Teachings on Death with Fr. Dolan
11:15 a.m. - Bereavement Facilitator Discussion Panel

For more information, email Valerie St. Jean, Associate Director of Adult and Family Life Ministries: Valerie.StJean@aohct.org.



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Archdiocese of Hartford
467 Bloomfield Ave, Bloomfield, CT 06002
860-541-6491

