



Branches on the Vine

MARCH 8 - 14, 2025



NEW HAVEN PARISHIONERS CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN MUSICAL STYLE

Story by Shelley Wolf

Yale trombonist Naomi Wharry plays an unexpectedly quiet instrumental meditation piece, accompanied by parishioner Leonardo Melendez on the drums. Photo by Shelley Wolf

There was no yawning in the pews at the 10 a.m. Mass on Sun., Feb. 23 at St. Martin de Porres Church in New Haven, as the parishioners of Blessed Michael McGivney Parish came together to celebrate the fourth week of Black History Month.

In addition to a full Mass celebrated by their parochial vicar, Father Joseph MacNeill, parishioners were treated to lively hymns by the St. Martin de Porres Gospel Choir as well as trombone accompaniment and a solo by Naomi Wharry, who is currently pursuing a classical trombone degree at Yale.

"I Found It All in the Word of God," sung by the choir during the collection, had parishioners swaying in their seats to the rousing gospel hymn. Later, Wharry mesmerized the congregation with an unexpectedly quiet and reflective instrumental meditation on the trombone.

Prior to the close of the Mass, parishioner Patricia Mason lauded a number of accomplished members of the St. Martin de Porres Church community.

Wharry, the guest trombonist, is an Oklahoma native who grew up in a family of eight. In addition to studying classical music at Yale, she plays in a professional jazz quartet.

Nelson Tamakloe, who directs the choir and accompanies on organ and piano, studied music theory at Yale and is the former director of the Yale Gospel Choir. According to Mason, Nelson, who lives in Massachusetts and had car trouble one day, took the train to New Haven and walked to St. Martin de Porres Church rather than miss a rehearsal days before the choir's Christmas Eve performance.

Calling him "committed, enthusiastic, faithful and devoted," Mason said, "You are a quintessential example of dedication."

Mason also praised the drummer, longtime parishioner Leonardo Melendez, who was baptized in the parish and attended St. Martin de Porres School. Known for bringing his own drum set wherever he plays, he drummed away at the special event, accompanying the choir and trombonist.

"It's wonderful," Father MacNeill said, "to be able to celebrate two of our parish musicians."

During the Mass, Father MacNeill delivered a homily on the weekly readings, offering spiritual and practical advice on Jesus' challenge of loving one's enemies. He advised the use of "tough love" when necessary, and at other times "killing them with kindness."

In his reflection he recommended using kindness, mercy and compassion to turn the tables on those who express hate; blessing one's enemies; and praying for a conversion of heart for those who mistreat us.

"Only then can we truly say we are doing our best every day to be good and faithful Christians," the priest said. During the prayer intentions, Father MacNeill also asked the congregation to pray for Pope Francis.



Upcoming Events



03/13 THURSDAY 10AM - 4PM

LENTEN BAKING RETREAT: MEDITERRANEAN BRAIDED LOAFS, WITH PAM HARDIMAN

Holy Family Retreat Center, 303 Tunxis Rd,
West Hartford

Join us in making a braided Easter loaf decorated with colored eggs, found in Italy, Greece, and around the Mediterranean. In keeping with the egg theme, we will make egg cards decorated with Pam's hand painted silk scraps. \$75, includes lunch. 860-760-9705.



03/9 SUNDAY 3PM - 4PM

HOLY HOUR OF HOPE

Mount Sacred Heart Chapel,
295 Benham Street, Hamden

Join the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for prayer and meditation on the theme of hope. Evening will include exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, chaplet of Divine Mercy, a reflection from Pope Francis, and a reading from a letter by Blessed Clelia Merloni (foundress of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus). All are welcome! No RSVP required. For questions, call 203-248-4225.



03/22 - 03/27

TOLTON: FROM SLAVE TO PRIEST LIVE PERFORMANCE - FREE ADMISSION

03/21 St. John Paul the Great Academy, 360
Prospect St, Torrington 10AM

03/22 St. Therese Church, 120 W Granby Rd,
Granby 10AM

03/23 St. Agnes Church, 400 Merwin Ave,
Milford 2PM

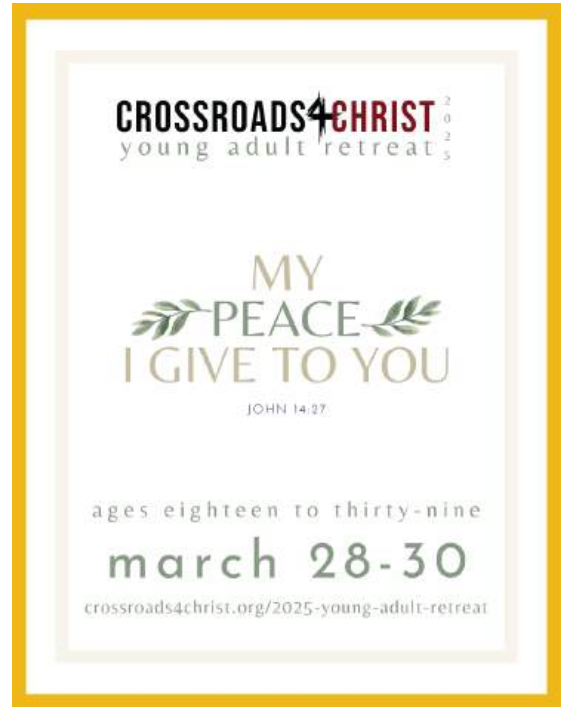
03/24 St. Patrick's Cathedral School,
211 Broadway, Norwich 10AM

03/25 Kolbe Cathedral High School,
33 Calhoun Pl, Bridgeport 10AM

03/26 Our Lady of Mount Carmel School,
645 Congress Ave, Waterbury 10AM

03/27 St. Patrick's Cathedral School,
211 Broadway, Norwich 10AM

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212 Elizabeth Street, Derby

March 10 - 7 PM Mission Preaching
March 11 - 7 PM Mission Preaching
March 12 - 7 PM St. Jude Mass

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Presented by Fr. Mike Ford, OP
of The Dominican Shrine of
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