



Branches on the Vine

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EVENING ONLINE PRAYERS BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Story by Karen A. Avitabile



PHOTO BY KAREN A. AVITABILE
Father George Couturier sets up his laptop to record a daily evening prayer on Facebook.

Several parishioners of St. Josephine Bakhita Parish in Rocky Hill are participating in meaningful online evening prayer broadcasts through Facebook to stay connected to God and their parish.

“Facebook makes it easy to do,” says Father George Couturier, pastor of St. Josephine Bakhita, who leads the evening prayer streams during the week on Facebook. “I just set up my laptop (in the rectory) and aim it at my face.”

The priest’s broadcasts can be viewed at 5 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, by following facebook.com/saintjosephinebakhita.

Some people join Father Couturier when the broadcasts first air on Facebook; others watch it later in the evening. The broadcasts also include the actual text of the priest’s spoken words.

Father Couturier launched the prayer service on Facebook in March 2020 after public Masses were suspended during the coronavirus pandemic.

“The pandemic hit,” he says. “It was the perfect time to do it. We were planning to do something before the pandemic.”

After in-person Masses resumed in June 2020

Father Couturier’s online prayer broadcasts had a captive audience.

The parishioners, who make up St. Elizabeth Seton and St. James churches, asked the priest to continue the broadcasts.

“We received positive response,” Father Couturier says, adding the prayers have been uplifting for many of the viewers. “Some are shut-ins and some just want to hear a calm voice. It’s just an opportunity to pray together.”

The online evening prayer broadcasts reach about 200 people consistently, says Lisa Orchen, parish communications coordinator. For many people, she adds, the broadcasts have become an essential part of their own “spiritual routine.”

“Couples share that they participate in evening prayer together with Father George leading them every evening,” Orchen says. “Similar to daily Mass, evening prayer participants post words of deep appreciation for Father George’s nightly ritual consistency and for offering this daily prayer practice for all to follow and join with.”

Father Couturier says he prefers to broadcast his daily prayer messages on Facebook in the evening after people have settled in at home from a long day.

“They seem to touch the heart,” he says of the broadcasts. “People need to unload, rest and go to sleep. People prefer to go to bed with those prayers in mind.”

Currently, Father Couturier’s broadcasts include Lenten messages using “Give Us This Day,” a prayer resource that aids in fostering a deeper connection with God. Viewing spikes for the broadcasts usually occur during Lenten and Advent seasons when more people are tuning in.

In addition to the online evening prayer broadcasts, livestreams of Masses take place each Sunday morning from one of the Rocky Hill churches.

“We have strong consistency with our real-time livestream participants,” Orchen says. “The majority of these participants are folks who are deeply connected to our parish but are home or assisted living/nursing homebound due to health and age. We also have folks who are longtime parishioners who now live geographically distant for all or part of the year, and stay connected to the parish through the livestream.”



Upcoming Events



04/13 - 16 MONDAY - WEDNESDAY
**BUSY PERSON DIRECTED RETREAT:
HOLY WEEK, WITH BRENDA MCLAUGHLIN**
in person or online, Holy Family Retreat
Center, 303 Tunix Rd, West Hartford

Take an opportunity to deepen your prayer amid the busyness of everyday life. This program begins with a group session on Palm Sunday, followed by individual one-hour spiritual direction sessions on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week.
\$150. 860-760-9705.



04/25 FRIDAY 7PM
**ST. ANTHONY SOCIETY'S 46TH ANNUAL
NIGHT OF PRIZES**
St. Anthony Parish Center, 70 Washington Ave,
New Haven

Doors open at 6:15 pm. Food and beverage available for purchase or you can bring your own. Admission ticket is \$10.00 which includes coffee, Italian pastry and chance for door prizes. Raffle tickets for sale for fantastic prizes and there will also be a 50/50 raffle. For information or tickets please call Anna Simeone 203-710-5004. No admission tickets will be sold after Tuesday, April 22, 2025.



05/5 - 7 WEEKDAYS 7PM
**ARRAY OF HOPE: BEHOLD, A
EUCCHARISTIC REVIVAL
A LIVE 3 NIGHT ENCOUNTER**
St. Francis of Assisi, 318 Church St,
Naugatuck

The nights include talks, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and music provided by AOH Music.

Monday May 5th, 7:00pm
Tuesday May 6th, 7:00pm
Wednesday May 7th, 7:00pm
Mass 7:45pm

www.arrayofhope.org



RSVP HERE!



04/4 - 6 WEEKEND
TARZAN THE MUSICAL
St. Paul Catholic High School Auditorium,
1001 Stafford Ave, Bristol

Join us for Tarzan: The Musical at St. Paul Catholic High School! Experience the thrilling adventure of Tarzan as he discovers his true identity and navigates the jungle's challenges. With stunning choreography, live music, and an amazing cast, this show is a must-see for the whole family.

Friday April 4th, 7:00PM
Saturday April 5th, 7:00PM
Sunday April 6th, 2:00PM
To purchase tickets, visit: www.spchs.com

2025 ARCHBISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

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



SCAN ME

Total Goal: \$10M

35.67% as of 3/18/25
\$3,567,052.42 pledges
from 10,366 generous
donors

www.archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal

