

The Associates World

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Northern Ireland: The Peace Process

by Mary Sullivan

"The Troubles" — decades of violent conflict in 6 counties of a land which the Irish poet W.B. Yeats termed a "Terrible Beauty" in his poem entitled *Easter 1916*. The 6 are those remaining under British rule after Ireland was partitioned in 1920. The Republic of Ireland (the remaining 26 counties) is self-governing.

Participants on both sides — the British and the Irish — originally divided by religion and yet speak the same language, can't even agree on what to call the place. To the majority British Protestants, it is "Northern Ireland". To the minority Irish Catholics, it is the "North" or "the north of Ireland". The Protestants want to remain part of Britain, the Catholics want a united Ireland.

Their conflict is no different from others — deep prejudices absorbed by the very young, poverty, delusions of superiority, humiliations, hollow resentments — it's all there and then some. Add bombs, soldiers and other weapons and the result is nothing but death, pain and tears ... and yet, by signing an Agreement in 1998 on Good Friday (coincidentally, the day on which Jesus enabled us to be reconciled with God), the opposing leaders moved to establish a power-sharing government that was subsequently ratified by a public election. Things did not go particularly well at first. For example, an Irish group known as the "Real IRA" strongly opposed the Agreement and detonated a bomb, killing 29 people (mostly Protestant women and children) and the mechanics of actually trying to establish such a government almost fell apart more than once.



Eighteen years later, the Peace Process continues. "Why", I've always wondered. Apparently, so have a few others. In May of 2016, I was part of a small tour group sponsored by *The New York Times* assembled to learn about this very Peace Process. Ten of us were led by a local guide who lived through those years in Derry (a/k/a Londonderry — same issue as above) and a *New York Times* journalist who covers Northern Ireland. Our guide took us to places where, as a boy, he watched some pretty violent events. He wept as he told of the British soldiers firing upon the unarmed Irish civil rights marchers in his

neighborhood on what became known as Bloody Sunday. It is interesting to note that the marches for civil rights in America during the sixties inspired many of these Irish marches. The journalist provided us with fascinating context. In addition, he knew many of the players involved in the conflict and arranged for them to speak with us. At lunch one day, I sat next to a man who fought in the Irish Republican Army (the "IRA"), went to prison, was released, became a member of Sinn Fein (the political party of the IRA) and is now an elected member of the Northern Ireland Parliament. One day we heard from both Catholic and Protestant soldiers who were on scene at a bombing by the IRA in a local fish shop.

So, I am asked, why is this Peace Process working? I have no sure answer but I do believe it was critical that both sides were willing to accept outside help, particularly from the United States in the person of Senator George Mitchell who managed to get both sides to agree to be in the same room at the same time (sounds simple but it had never happened before). If pressed, I think the strongest reason is that *both sides just could not stand the violence for one more day*. They were willing to talk to the other (albeit through clenched teeth) to save the future. They accepted that they had "hit bottom" and there was nowhere to go but up. Would that others in conflict "hit bottom" soon.

Facebook Stats

Angie Barbieri, a Paulist Associate from Toronto who serves on the Paulist Associates Board, has taken the lead on promoting the Associates on Facebook ... and her efforts are paying dividends with increased number of posts and hits.

With 113 members registered for this closed group, we continue to learn more about what Paulists and Paulist Associates — individuals as well as the Paulists as a group — are doing.

The posts that gain the highest number of hits are stories about the work of the local Associates groups and updates from the recent regional retreats. It seems that those who are not present at the retreats are finding a way to pray and learn along with the retreatants.

All in all, our posts are averaging 40 views per post. The top three highest spikes in post viewings were:

- Fr. Rich Andre, CSP posted about celebrating a Mass with the Handmaids of the Precious Blood, and more than half of our Facebook group, 63, viewed this post
- The post of Dr. Ruth Queen's Smith's retirement followed with 61 hits
- The retreat in Malibu posts averaged 49 views.

Going forward, Angie has plans to expand the group page which may include quotes from Fr. Isaac Hecker, an item entitled "Did You Know" to encourage dialogue among the Associates, and Paulist interest stories.

Please continue to contribute your posts to the group page, and view the posts and comment on others. Should you have any questions or recommendations for the Facebook page, please feel free to reach out to Angie.



Additional Retreat Reflections from Malibu

by Shirley Bianco

On June 3, 2016, almost twenty Paulist Associates from Southern California, Arizona, Texas, and Boston gathered at the beautiful Serra Retreat House staffed by the gracious Franciscan Friars. Perched on a hill above Malibu with a stunning view of the Pacific Ocean, the center seemed to fill each participant with feelings of peace and serenity.

"How Am I Attentive to the Holy Spirit" was the theme and focus of the weekend. In our four sessions aptly guided by Fr. Frank Desiderio, CSP, we Associates followed the major events of Isaac Hecker's life that were instrumental in influencing his conversion and in impacting the found of the Paulist community. During Fr. Frank's talks and presentations, the integrity and mystery of the Holy Spirit challenged us to listen and respond to the Spirit's directions in individuals, the community, and history. "How Do We Attend to the Holy Spirit?" became our mantra in group discussions and individual reflections.

In another session, we were blessed to have Fr. Joe Scott, CSP call us to see the Holy Spirit as one who binds us together while working toward unity. He emphasized the importance of displaying the love of Christ and his Church to all people we encounter. I began to feel empowered to respond to the nudges and the gifts of the Spirit in an exciting and more meaningful way. The presence of the Holy Spirit was truly evident in my life, as well as the lives of all present.

Now, what really worked for me, and what did I perceive in my interactions with others? The feeling of community and bonding with my fellow Associates energized me to grow in my faith as a Paulist Associate. By listening to one another and respecting other's viewpoints, my sense of being an individual follower of Christ has been heightened. I feel comfortable in my skin and want to continue to grow in my faith and in my outreach and encouragement of others.

As I shared prayer, Mass, meals, dialogues, social times, smiles, laughter, and a movie with my fellow Associates and Paulists, I knew that I was, in the words of a Herman's Hermits' lyric, "into something good."

ISAAC SAYS ...

Rules. Personal perfection by the practice of those virtues without which it cannot be attained. Mortification, self-denial, detachment, etc.

Second, labor for the conversion of this country to the Catholic faith by apostolic works.

— From "Stray Thoughts", Lake George, August 7, 1882

Proposed Program for August

(This is a suggested format; each group may select another outline or topic.)

Theme: Conversion

OPENING PRAYER

The Paulist Prayer Book, select the day on which you meet

READING (IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING)

From Isaac T. Hecker, the *Diary: Romantic Religion in Ante-Bellum America*

June 11, 1844: This morning [Tuesday] I returned from Boston having gone there on Saturday to see Bishop Fenwick of the R.C. Church. I saw the bishop and his coadjutor Fitzpatrick. The latter I spent some time with yesterday afternoon and inquired particularly as to the preliminary steps in entering the RC Church. My mind is made up to join the C. Church, and this soon ...

My highest convictions my deepest wants lead me there and should I not obey them? This permits no room to harbor a doubt in. My friends will look upon it with astonishment and probably use the common epithets - delusion, fanaticism, and blindness— but so I wish it to appear to minds. As they are otherwise to me, this would not be satisfactory. Men call that superstition that they have not the feeling to appreciate and that fanaticism that they have not the spiritual perception to perceive.

June 11 [1844]: This is a heavy task; it is a great undertaking; a serious, sacred, sincere, and solemn step; it is the most vital and eternal act, and as such do I feel it in all its importance, weight, and power. O God! Thou who hast led me by Thy heavenly messengers, by Thy divine grace, to make this new, unforeseen, and religious act of duty, support me in the day of trial. Support me, O Lord, in my confessions; give me strength and purity to speak freely the whole truth without any equivocation or attempt at justification. O Lord, help Thy servant when he is feeble and would fall.

One thing that gives me much peace and joy is that all worldly inducements, all temptations toward self-gratification whatever, are in favor of the Anglican Church and in opposition to the Catholic Church. And on this account my conscience feels free from any unworthy motive in joining it. The Roman Catholic Church is the most despised, the poorest, and, according to the world, the least respectable of any; this on account of the class of foreigners of which it is chiefly composed in this country. In this respect it presents to me no difficulty of any sort, nor demands the least sacrifice. But the new relations in which it will place me, and the new duties which will be required of me, are strange to me, and hence I shall feel all their weight at once.

June 13, 1844: I feel very cheerful & at ease in perfect peace since I have consented to join the Catholic Church. Never have I felt the quietness the immovableness and the permanent rest that I now feel. It is inexpressible. I feel that essential and interior permanence which nothing exterior can disturb and that no act that it calls upon me to perform will in the least cause me to be moved by it. It is with perfect ease and gracefulness that I never dreamed of that I will unite with the Church. It will not change but fix my life. No exterior relations events or objects can disturb this unreachable quietness nor no event can break this deep repose I am in. I feel centered deeper than any kind of action can penetrate feel or reach.

August 1, 1844: This morning we were baptized by Bishop McCloskey. Tomorrow we attend the tribunal of Confession. We know not why it is we feel the internal necessity of making use of the plural pronoun instead of the singular. It has come to a bad pass when we cannot perform miracles nor work in good earnest with our hands. Why is this, is it because we stop and have not the valour to procede? We cannot stop long on the mystic bridge between Earth and Heaven if we once have started on our journey. There is no half-way-house, it is either onward or backward.



Fr. Isaac Hecker, CSP reading Goethe
sketch by John LaFarge

CONVERSATION CATALYST

- The word “conversion” is derived from the Latin “convertere” meaning to turn altogether. There is a sense that the individual has turned away from something in his/her and replaced it with a life-giving event or presence. An individual may empty him/herself of what ties them to the past and then is filled up with a renewed life. The word “conversion” has come to mean the act or process of changing from a belief (religious or secular) to another. The convert often abandons a previous way of living or behavior and embraces a different one. Reflect on a time in your life when you experienced such a conversion.
- Hecker was assured in his desire to become initiated in the Catholic Church. When you have a major decision in life, how do you test the options and choose the best path?
- The following is an excerpt from the documents of Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, (*the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*): "Catechumens who, moved by the Holy Spirit, desire with an explicit intention to be incorporated into the Church are by that very intention joined to her. With love and solicitude mother Church already embraces them as her own." What more can your worship community do to become more attentive to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING PRAYER

O Beauty Ever Ancient by St. Augustine of Hippo

Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you!

You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you.

In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things which you created.

You were with me, but I was not with you.

Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not been in you they would have not been at all.

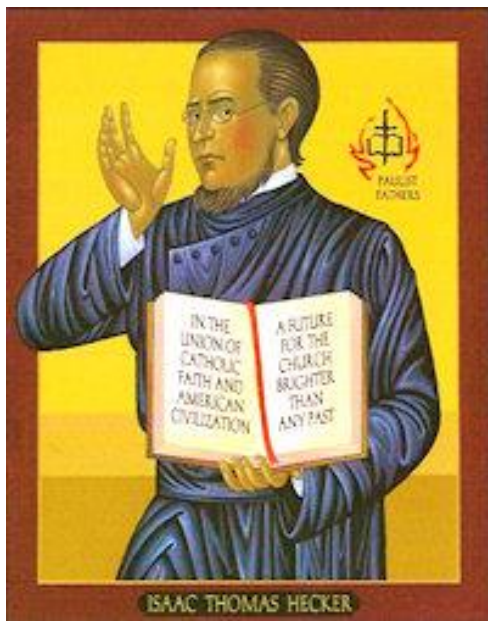
You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness.

You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness.

You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in breath and now I pant for you.

I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for your peace.

Prayer for the Intercession of Father Isaac T. Hecker



Heavenly Father, you called your servant Isaac Thomas Hecker to preach the Gospel to the people of North America and through his teaching, to know the peace and the power of your indwelling Spirit. He walked in the footsteps of Saint Paul the Apostle, and like Paul spoke your Word with a zeal for souls and a burning love for all who came to him in need.

Look upon us this day, with compassion and hope. Hear our prayer. We ask that through the intercession of Father Hecker your servant, you might grant us (state the request).

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, Our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit. One God, forever and ever. Amen.

When you pray this prayer, and if you believe that you have received any favors through Hecker's intercession, please contact the Office of the Cause for Canonization of Servant of God, Isaac Hecker at heckercause@paulist.org. Visit the web site: <http://www.isaachecker.org/> to learn more about his life and the cause for his canonization.

Contacts

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<http://www.paulist.org/associates/paulist-associates>

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ARE YOU ABLE TO NAME ANY ASSOCIATES WHO DO NOT LIVE NEAR AN EXISTING PAULIST ASSOCIATES GROUP?

Imagine that Fr. Isaac Hecker, Servant of God and founder of the Paulist Fathers, could visit us today. He'd marvel at the many technologies and ways to give voice to the Word. Picture him at the Genius Bar learning all of the functions of an iPhone, an iWatch, an iPad, and some suped up version of a laptop. Envision him reaching out across the United States and beyond to evangelize via his social media posts, texts, and emails. He might also be impressed with what we consider old school means of communication — radio, television, films, YouTube, and yes, even by phone.

These means of communication help us to grow our community beyond our own neighborhood and town. Thus, Associates from around the United States, Toronto, and Rome have formed a bond through their dedication to the Paulist mission and spirituality of the Paulist Founder, Servant of God, Isaac Hecker. Our efforts to increase our presence on social media, to publish a monthly newsletter, The Associates World, and to spread the word of the Associates on the revised Associates pages on the recently rebranded paulist.org website are signs of that resolve.

Our next endeavor is to reach out to those Associates — past or present — who no longer live near a local Paulist Associates group. Some call these individuals "Paulist Associates in the Diaspora," and others refer to them as expatriates or expats. We want to invite them to re-introduce themselves to the Associates and to offer them ways to remain in touch with us — and us with them.

We also want to make available to them a monthly meeting, where they can join together for prayer, spiritual conversation, and community as Paulist Associates. Beginning in October, the Board will host a monthly teleconference for these Associates spread far and wide so they too may participate in a meeting using the technology at hand.

In order to identify them and become reacquainted with them, we need your help. **Please email Paula Cuzzo the name and email address of anyone you know who was or currently is a Paulist Associate and no longer lives near an existing Paulist Associates group. Her email address is paulacuozzo@aol.com.** She will collect the names and then send them an email, inviting them to the virtual meetings in October as well as notifying them of the other ways of staying in touch with the Paulist Associates.

Thanks for your help in this task. We will be all the richer with all Associates involved.

PAULIST ASSOCIATES PROMISE

*I believe that I am drawn by the Holy Spirit to the spirituality and qualities of the Paulist Community.
I have discerned both by prayer and study that God calls me to become associated with the Paulists.
I promise that I will pray for the works of the Paulist Society, meet with others,
who are also members of the Paulist Associates, for spiritual sharing and formation;
and I seek to embody the apostolic qualities of the Paulists in my daily life.*

*Attentive to the Holy Spirit and faithful to the example of St. Paul and the charism of Father Isaac Hecker,
I commit myself for one year of membership in the Paulist Associates.*