

The Associates World

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Voting Is a Moral Act

On September 6th, the Paulist Fathers issued a document entitled: "Paulist Fathers Statement on Moral Issues in the 2016 Presidential Election." You may read this document at the Paulist website. A PDF version is also available to download.

<https://www.paulist.org/paulist-fathers-statement-on-moral-issues-in-the-2016-presidential-election/>

This Statement begins with a quote from Servant of God, Isaac Hecker, founder of the Paulists:

"The American people may rest assured that when ever a question arises involving fundamental principles, Catholics will always be found on the side of liberty, fair play and equal rights."

The Paulists are clear to assert from the beginning that this document is not a vehicle for endorsing any political party or candidate. Rather, they emphasize the moral underpinnings of the issues at hand and, in particular, five areas of concern.

1. A New Rise of Bigotry and Xenophobia
2. Acts of Violence
3. The Sacredness of All Human Life
4. Economic Uncertainty, the Middle Class, and the Poor
5. Care for Our Common Home

Each section is based on Scripture, various church teachings, and the words of Pope Francis, and they focus on mercy, justice, and peace as well as promoting the common good. Prayer is a vital component of these reflections.

The Paulists also published "Paulist Fathers Commentary on Civic Participation in the 2016 U.S. Election" (<http://www.paulist.org/paulist-fathers-commentary-on-civic-participation-in-the-2016-us-election/>) to accompany the Statement on Moral Issues. You may also download a PDF. Again, relying on similar resources, this Commentary also draws on the Hecker tradition of dialoguing with society.

Contemplation on political principles, social and economic issues, and policies that shape our country is outlined.

This Commentary encourages all citizens to pray, study, reflect on, and discuss pertinent ideas to help shape a well-formed conscience, so the individual will be well-informed when entering the voting booth.

We, as Catholic Christians, have a solemn duty to cast a ballot for candidates whom we believe will represent our values and strive to create policies that will build a society where justice and peace flourish.

This Commentary ends with suggestions for personal discernment and conversation in the community.

QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION AND GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Do I vote regularly? Do I consider it my duty to do so? Why?
2. Do I identify with a particular political party? Has my party allegiance been lifelong or has it changed over time? Why?
3. What issues in the current campaign concern me most? How does my Catholic faith and experience affect my judgments about those issues?
4. What issues in public life does my Catholic faith highlight for me that I feel the current campaign is neglecting?
5. How do my political beliefs, values, and preferences relate to Catholic language about solidarity, the common good, and care for our common home? Do I consider these Catholic principles relevant and helpful for my own political decision-making?
6. Without endorsing particular candidates, what political issues would I like to hear my parish priests, my bishop, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops speak more about? How would their guidance assist me in my own thinking about such issues?

Liaison to the Paulist Associates, Columbus

by Carol Wagner Williams — Associate from Columbus

Fr. Vinny McKiernan, CSP was the third oldest of six siblings. His mom was a stay-at-home mom and his father worked as the superintendent of the Bronx building where they lived. He met the Paulists at his childhood parish, Good Shepherd, in New York. There, he was an altar server at Mass.

On May 11, 1957, Fr. Vinny was ordained as a Paulist priest. Since that time, he has had many assignments. He is well-known among the Paulists and the communities he has served for over 59 years for his love for people and his enjoyment of using puns. He has even put some of his wise words to paper, through the publication of his “Vin-A-Mins,” bits of wit and wisdom, meant to be a “spiritual vitamin.”

**Justice
is about more than
just us!**

**Heaven begins on earth
when we become
eternally grateful.**

**Watch your demeanor!
You could be found guilty
of a mis-demeanor.**

He joined the staff at the Newman Center in 1990. Paulist Associates, like Fr. Vinny, strive to live the Paulist charisms. He demonstrates them daily through his work with the Paulist Associates, university students and the resident community of St. Thomas More Newman Center, and the Central Ohio community at large. He does this through his “outside the box thinking.” The following are a few examples of how he expresses the charisms in his life and ministry:

Evangelism

- Encouraging Mass attendees to proclaim the gospel with their lives
- Celebrating successes with Paulist Week Celebrations
- Conducting retreats at Lake George and throughout the community
- Participating in the circle of life with Newman Center [for example, presiding at weddings of students; baptizing children and now having those children attend the university and St. Thomas Newman Center]

Reconciliation

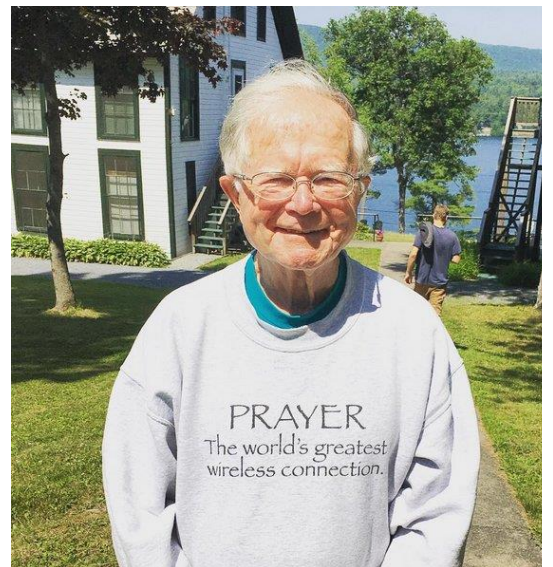
- Assisting individuals in the annulment process
- Conducting prayer services on healing
- Instituting weekday Reconciliation in addition to the existing weekend service and Reconciliation by appointment
- Conducting memory services for people feeling the loss of a loved one

Ecumenism and Interfaith Dialogue

- Writing a journal with reflections on the Scriptures for Lent
- Serving as founding member of the Faith Community Uniting for Peace [during the Iraq War]
- Facilitating prayer services on the anniversary of the Iraq War
- Leading various ecumenical prayer services
- Preaching at a Baptist church
- Developing a spiritual connection with all people of all religions
- Planning/conducting interfaith prayer services/discussion using centering prayer
- Lecturing about and teaching centering prayer to people of all faiths in many churches in Central Ohio

Active in both the community and university as well, several groups have recognized him for his efforts, presenting him with awards. These include: *Hope for the Present* — presented by the Spirituality Network; *President's Award* — presented by the Metropolitan Church Council; *Outstanding Service to Graduate and International Students Award* — presented by the Council of Graduate Students; and *Biomedical Sciences Review Board Award* — presented by The Ohio State University for services from 1991-2002.

Fr. Vinny's guidance, input, advice and presence have been valuable to the Paulist Associates in Columbus as well as the community at-large. The Columbus Associates are very blessed to have him as their liaison!



Pastoral Associate at the St. Thomas More Newman Center, Fr. Vinny McKiernan, CSP has been serving as the Paulist liaison to the Columbus Paulist Associates group since Fr. Frank Desiderio, CSP established the role in 2014.

About the Associates in Austin

by Kathleen Lossau — Associate from Austin

The Austin Paulist Associates started the formation process with about 18 people in 2000 and finished with 12 making their commitment on the Paulist Feast Day in January 2001. Fr. Bob Scott, CSP called us “the 12 apostles.” The formation processes involved most of the resident Paulists. Over ten months, each took turns addressing an aspect of the Paulists (e.g. the Charisms, Paulist History, or related topic). It was a process and discernment new to all of us — lay people and Paulists alike. Only a few other Paulist Associate groups existed then (either formed or in formation), so there was not much past experience to rely on.

Fortunately, Austin had a fairly large number of Paulists that support the University Catholic Center, St. Austin’s (only a few blocks apart) and Horseshoe Bay, less than an hour away. In the beginning, we had people from all three foundations during the beginning years and visits and talks by a different Paulist each month.

A few years later, Horseshoe Bay formed their own group. We in Austin went through a number of growing pains as new members trickled in and a few others moved away or left for various reasons. We also lost two dear longtime associates over the years: Barbara Emerson who provided us with our local Associates prayer Beverly as well as Fr. Bob Scott.

PRAYER FOR OUR JOURNEY

Heavenly Father, bless our group with your grace.
 Give us wisdom, understanding and patience on our journey.
 Let us have the appreciation for the special sharing and growing we do together.
 May we be true to ourselves and respectful of our differences and encourage personal growth.
 Help us to recognize Your will.
 Holy Spirit be with us when we meet to guide us, to open our eyes, ears, minds and hearts
 so that we may know how to pray and that we may be closer to you in love.
 Let us go out and live what you reveal to us each time we meet, study, and pray together in Your name.
 Only then can we do Your work together and find a common path.
 Let us remember where our real living is going on, in our thinking, in our reacting, in our heart of hearts.
 This is where our walk with God begins.
 Let us trust in God. Let us be still and pause and see if we are living in God’s love
 reflecting it in all that we do, say and are. Amen

by Barbara Emerson

This prayer became part of our group and often prayed during or right after prayers from *The Paulist Prayer Book*.

In the early days, our group maintained the global Paulist Associates email list, website and communication (before being taken over by the Paulist.org site). This gave us some insight to what other groups were doing. There was often diversity within each of the Paulist Associate groups and there was definitely diversity between the different Paulist foundations. Some groups thrived and others struggled with direction. I think the Austin group was somewhere in the middle. We didn’t grow much past 12, but we did have new members join as other moved on or away.

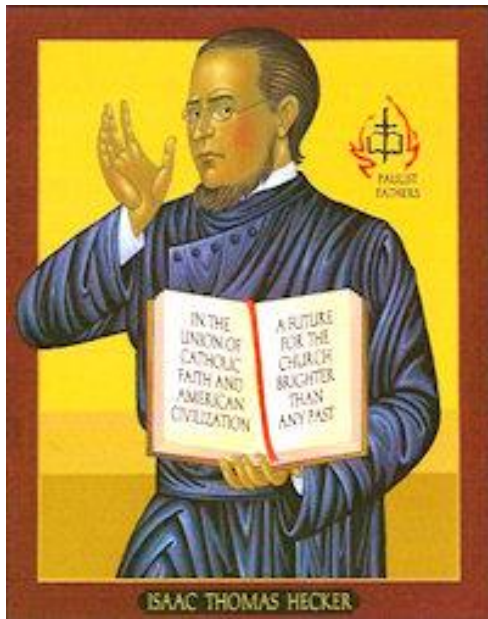
All Associates groups had a similar application and formation process but the meeting structure was as varied as the number of groups. Soon we started having national retreats at places like Lake George, New Jersey and DC. We often had a few representatives from the Austin group at these retreats, and even on some of the pilgrimages (e.g. the one to Rome for the 150th anniversary and Israel), and often at the Paulist Regional Meetings. Later the Paulists would create a more national structure for all of our groups. Today it is much easier to reach out to other groups through resources like this newsletter, at regional retreats, through email or via Facebook to feel connected. It is exciting to see that we even have Paulist Associate groups where we no longer have Paulist parishes and one where the Paulists never had a foundation.

With this structure and connection, we can see how other Associate groups are thriving. Our group today consists of a number of folks who travel often. In the last 6 months, we have opened our meeting with video chat (Google Hangouts). In person is always better, but it would be interesting to see how we could use tools like these to connect the groups across the nation.

Over the years, our group has undergone some growing pains, and at times it seemed we stayed in a small, yet comfortable group. However, now we are growing again; we have 4 new members about join, and have interest from a number of others. New members can help revitalize a group and create has even created a renewed interest in many of our long time members. It would be wonderful to figure out how to share our experiences with other groups.

In Austin, we have always experienced wonderful support from the Paulists at both St. Austin’s and the University Catholic Center over the years. We are looking forward to the next chapter with Fr. Larry Rice, CSP at the helm, as well as the love the support we receive from Fr. Chuck, Fr. Rich and all the Austin-based Paulist Fathers.

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.

My Journey as a Paulist Associate

by Patty Collier — Associate from Austin

Greetings to all the Paulist Associates around the world. When Kathleen invited us to contribute an article for the newsletter, I thought that I might share some of the ways being a Paulist Associate has supported my spiritual journey over the years.

I joined in 2001 when Fr. Bob Scott, CSP invited the people of the University Catholic Center at the University of Texas, and St. Austin Parish to discern if we felt called to associate with the spirituality and mission of the Paulist Fathers.

I have always felt very drawn to the Paulists. I met them as a student at UT. I was raised in two traditions — Methodist from my mom's family, and Catholic from my dad's family. I felt an immediate resonance with the Paulist Fathers, and only later learned that Father Hecker shared the same two faith traditions as I do☺

I knew that it would be great to experience some of the spiritual formation that Paulist Fathers experience in their training. I wanted to have my share in that same warmth, deep faith in the goodness of people, and devotion to the Holy Spirit that I had always witnessed in the Paulists.

Over the past 15 years or so, I have grown a lot in my spiritual development. One of the main things that the Paulist

Associates have taught me is continuously to devote myself to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I had felt inadequate in most of my life's endeavors. Now I realize that the Holy Spirit has all the gifts needed to help the world, and we are each given a tiny piece of the puzzle. I only have to discern what my small gift is, and give it willingly. I also love watching the gifts of others, and no longer feel jealous of their gifts. I see that together, we can make the whole.

The monthly faith sharing, attendance at some of the national Paulist gatherings, and visiting St. Mary's on Lake George help me feel close to Father Hecker. I feel like I can carry a little of his spirit, which is the Holy Spirit, out into the world to help lift up those I meet.

Thanks for reading, and peace to you all!



Retreat Day for Paulist Associates from St. Paul Parish in Horseshoe Bay along with Austin-based Associates from St. Austin Parish and University of Texas Catholic Center with Fr. Bruce Nieli, CSP on April 23, 2106

Thinking about Being a Paulist Associate? — Me Too.

by John Sweitzer — Candidate in Formation from Austin

Early this year, I learned that Paulist Associates are lay persons committed to living out the Paulist ideals of reconciliation, evangelization, and ecumenism in their daily lives. These big "three" ideals were a bit overwhelming for me but was still intrigued. I started to learn more by attending an Associate meeting, listening to Paulist Associate talks, and using *The Paulist Prayer Book*. What I have learned has not pushed me away, so I am sharing thoughts that may help others get by those overwhelming ideals.

Around the 1850's, Fr. Hecker saw the union of Catholicism (grace, moral power, sacraments, structure, context for true human freedom) and American democracy (liberal constitution and protection of religious freedom) as a great experiment. For me, the word 'experiment' was powerful since it implied a process of changing one's understanding through discovery. Becoming a more perfect Christian, becoming a more perfect nation involves constantly evaluating what is working and what is not working based on new understanding. One of the ways Fr. Hecker captured this is:

"I have the conviction that I can be all the better Catholic because I am American and all the better American because I am Catholic" (*The Paulist Prayer Book*, p. 116).

That is, evolve Catholicism and American democracy to address an ever-changing society. It strikes me that this perspective is just as true today as it was in the 1850's.

Being a member of the Catholic Church and a citizen of the United States means one belongs to large communities with many "laws" and with diverse perspectives. Rather than emphasize control through discipline, rules and external authority, Fr. Hecker thought that the nature of the Paulists is one of self-control, conscience, and internal guidance of the Holy Spirit. He wrote:

"The individuality of a person cannot be too strong, or one's liberty too great when one is guided by the Spirit of God" (*The Paulist Prayer Book*, p. 110).

So he emphasized what individuals bring to the community when they are led by the Holy Spirit and not individual or group thinking. The counter-intuitive part of this is that Fr. Hecker also embraced the "laws" of the Catholic Church and of the United States. The rules of the Church and the laws of our nation can be thought of as launching pads. They give us something to start with so we aren't wasting our time coming

up with a common understanding across a community. However, they aren't the end all in the sense that one cannot assume one will be a good Catholic or a good American if one follows the law alone. Finally, sharing how one is being guided by the Holy Spirit with members of the community is a necessary part of learning more about the Spirit's guidance. The idea that being guided by the Spirit requires interactions with the Spirit in others was something I hadn't known but changes the way I think about evangelization.

Finally, when I started learning more about being an Associate, for both professional and personal reasons, I was searching for ways to get involved with people that get along or worked together. Well, during this past Lent, Fr. Kullman led a book club that read Pope Francis's book: *The Church of Mercy*. In one of his sermons, the Pope states:

"Only the Spirit can awaken diversity, plurality, and multiplicity, while at the same time building unity."

The Pope explained 'unity' in this context means harmony and not "uniformity". Diversity is not a source of conflict when the Spirit enables us to encounter the Spirit in others in a way that leads to harmony. Human plans for unity can result in uniformity and standardization, which ultimately closes out some. Thinking about unity this way makes ecumenism less overwhelming for me since it may start with harmonizing any belief differences (not just religious) between individuals.

Now, let's get back to the big "three". At this point in my Paulist Associate discernment, the big "three" are less overwhelming, largely because I now realize every human interaction involves some aspect of reconciliation, evangelization, and ecumenism. The challenge of remembering this during every interaction is exciting.

If you had a thought like, "that isn't quite right" as you read this piece, then please say a prayer for me, and I will try to listen for your insight through the Spirit. After all, I am sharing my thoughts in this form to interact with a broader community — something I never imagined doing before starting this path.

The spirit in the following Paulist Fathers have nudged me on this spiritual exploration: Fr. Desiderio by offering his "Mercy" talk at St. Austin; Fr. Kullman by encouraging me to look into the Associates; Fr. Andre by listening enthusiastically; Fr. Rice by answering my "20 questions"; and Fr. Sparks by making me feel comfortable asking for God's Mercy.

ISAAC SAYS ...

For the exercise of the moral virtues precedes ordinarily the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the possession of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit should be the aim of all Christians. For we are exhorted by the Apostle Paul to "Be zealous for spiritual gifts" (1 Cor., xiv. 1).

— 1876, *On the Mission of New Religious Communities*

Proposed Program for October

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

Theme: Theological Virtues, Cardinal Virtues, and Gifts of the Holy Spirit

OPENING PRAYER

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

READING (IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING)

From Isaac T. Hecker, *Notes on the Holy Spirit*

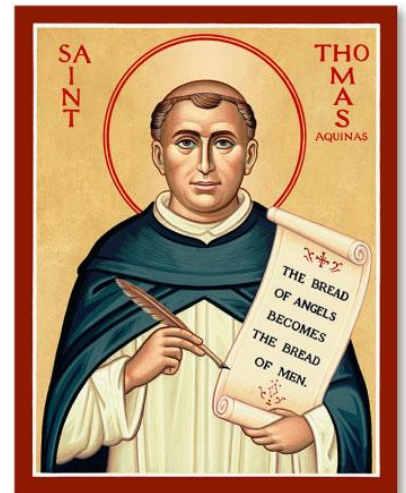
By the sacrament of Baptism, the Holy Spirit communicates Himself to the essence of the soul and substantially dwells within it as in His temple. To this indwelling divine presence is attached certain virtues, gifts and privileges which are infused therewith into the soul. It is by the exercise of these dispositions called habits or virtues and the cooperation with the movements of the Holy Spirit in the soul that the soul is sanctified. Sanctification is nothing else than the soul acting habitually by the instinct of the divine ideal, the Holy Spirit.

The first of these habits or dispositions infused into the soul relate it directly to God and are therefore called theological virtues — faith, hope and charity. These being the proximate means of uniting the soul to God, all other exercise whatever of the spiritual life to be directed to their perfection.

The next are the intellectual and moral virtues — intelligence, science, wisdom and prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice; the four latter are the moral or called sometimes the cardinal virtues. The object of the practice of these virtues is to bring the passions, appetites, the will to obey promptly the dictates of reason.

The next in order are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are wisdom, intelligence, science, counsel, piety, fortitude, fear. The object of these gifts is to render reason prompt obeying and following of the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

These virtues and gifts are dispositions and must be practiced and cooperated with to a greater or less extent by every adult, to attain the supernatural end for which he was created. Such is the teaching of the angelic St. Thomas. By the faithful practice of these virtues and docility to the Holy Spirit, man is rendered, as far as this is possible, perfect as his heavenly Father is perfect. While at the same time is established thereby the kingdom of heaven, or God in the soul. The kingdom of God in the soul consists in the possession, to a certain degree of perfection, of the beatitudes. These are purity of heart — the sight of God; the thirst for justice — its fullness; peacemaker — children of God; merciful — receiving mercy; meekness — inheriting the earth; suffering persecution — great reward; mourn — they shall be comforted; poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God. These beatitudes terminate as flowers do into the fruits of the Holy Spirit — to wit charity, joy, peace; patience, benignity; goodness; longanimity, meekness, faith, modesty, continence, chastity.



CONVERSATION CATALYST

- St. Thomas Aquinas wrote that virtue is a habit that “disposes an agent to perform its proper operation or movement” (*Summa Theologiae* I-II.49.1). What does it mean for you to be virtuous?
- Discuss how you might use the theological virtues and the cardinal/moral virtues in an examination of conscience.

NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING PRAYER

A Student's Prayer by St. Thomas Aquinas

Come, Holy Spirit, Divine Creator, true source of light and fountain of wisdom! Pour forth your brilliance upon my dense intellect, dissipate the darkness which covers me, that of sin and of ignorance. Grant me a penetrating mind to understand, a retentive memory, method and ease in learning, the lucidity to comprehend, and abundant grace in expressing myself. Guide the beginning of my work, direct its progress, and bring it to successful completion. This I ask through Jesus Christ, true God and true man, living and reigning with You and the Father, forever and ever. Amen.

Contacts

PAULIST ASSOCIATES WEB SITE

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

FIND US ON FACEBOOK

 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/paulistassociates/>

PAULIST ASSOCIATES NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Frank Desiderio, CSP
Paulist General Office
P.O. Box 20606
New York, NY 10023
frankd@paulist.org



BOARD MEMBERS

Angie Barbieri
Toronto, ON, Canada
angelabarbieri@rogers.com

Paula Cuzzo
Boston, MA
paulacuozzo@aol.com

Cathy Hoekstra
Grand Rapids, MI
cathy_hoekstra@yahoo.com

Mike Kallock, CSP
kallockcsp@paulist.org

Terry Modica
Tampa, FL
t.modica@gnm.org

Paul Robichaud, CSP
paulgrobichaud@gmail.com

FR. HECKER ABSTRACTS

Some Associates are looking for additional resources for a more in-depth reflection on the life and works of Servant of God and founder of the Paulists, Isaac Hecker. For the next several months, we will feature a book, article, web site, or other resource to consider for further study by individuals and perhaps by the local groups.

Your recommendations are welcome. **Please send your suggestions to Paula Cuzzo at paulacuozzo@aol.com.**

Isaac Hecker: An American Catholic

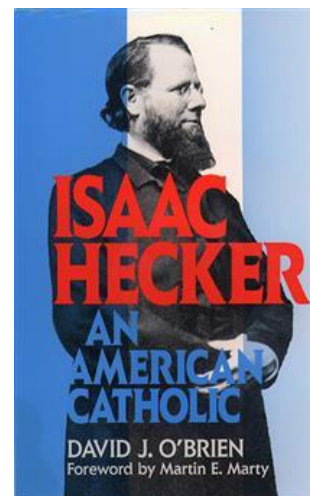
by David J. O'Brien

This is a comprehensive biography of Isaac Hecker — mystic, priest, journalist, missionary, and among the influential Catholics in 19th-century America. While respectful of Hecker, his faith, and his resolve to convert the United States to Roman Catholicism, David O'Brien does not hesitate to offer a less than romantic view of Hecker, calling him "a tortured idealist who matched his time and place." He reveals Hecker's interior struggles with the workings of the Holy Spirit within the individual soul, liberty in American society, and church authority.

Through it all, Hecker remains steadfast to his conviction that the United States in the 19th century is the perfect environment for the Catholic Church to flourish. O'Brien portrays Hecker as both a devoted Catholic and a loyal American.

O'Brien received the American Catholic Historical Association's John Gilmary Shea Prize in 1992 for this work. He is Professor Emeritus of Catholic Studies at the College of the Holy Cross and University Professor of Faith and Culture at the University of Dayton. O'Brien also served as President of the American Catholic Historical Association.

This book is available at Paulist Press (www.paulistpress.com).



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.*