

The Associates World

Index

Contacts	page 7	Paulist Associates Promise	page 7
Excerpt from Walter Elliott's Homily on Thanksgiving, 1913	page 1	Prayer for the Intercession of Fr. Isaac T. Hecker	page 6
Fr. Frank Desiderio's Visit to Toronto in April 2016	page 4	Proposed Program for November	page 6
Fr. Hecker Abstracts	page 7	Save the Date	page 5
Insight	page 2	Telephone Conference Connects the Diaspora	page 5
Isaac Hecker Award for Social Justice	page 4	Toronto Paulist Associate John Bertolo	page 5
Isaac Says	page 5	Who Is My Neighbour?	page 3

Excerpt from Walter Elliott's Homily on Thanksgiving, 1913

"We must also look carefully to our little debts of thanksgiving, such as our prayers at meals. St. Paul exhorts us: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10:31) How many Christians sit down and rise up at table without any sign or word of gratitude to God, that heavenly Father Whose loving providence gives them every atom of their food, every pleasure and benefit of their appetite and their digestion. We believe that your debts to your butcher and grocer would be better paid if you paid God His debt of thanksgiving by saying your table prayers.

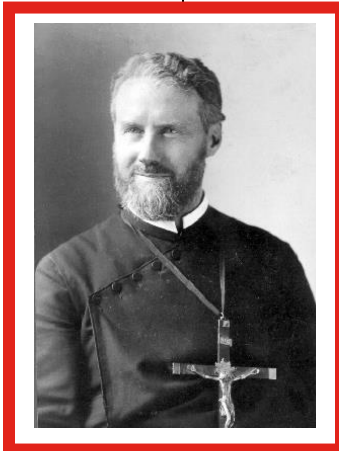
Parents provide good food for their children and expect their gratitude, and wholly forget to teach them their prayers of gratitude to God before and after meals. They would have their family grateful to themselves, and they let them go along quite forgetful of God, the all-bountiful provider for both parents and children.

Let us but realize that everything comes from God, and we shall soon give Him at least the meager payment of our gratitude. It is a form of love that marks and then overflows the limit of mere justice. Whosoever is currently mindful of his dependence on heaven for every good thing of life, soon becomes a recollected spirit. The time surely comes when we must recognize our heavenly Father's love even in bitter adversity. Can we do that, can we kiss the hand that smites us even unto death, if we have habitually thoughtless of His tenderest caresses?"

Author of the first official and comprehensive biography of Hecker, Elliott most likely delivered this sermon at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Manhattan. He was born in Detroit on January 6, 1842, three months after the death of his father. When he was 12, Walter was sent to Notre Dame to study. He then became a partner in his brother's business. His restless soul was lured to Pike's Peak during the Gold Rush.

He then went to Ohio to join up with his brothers and enrolled in law school. He passed the Bar just before the attack at Fort Sumter. He subsequently joined the Fighting Fifth of Ohio as an enlisted man, although he was offered a commission. For a time he was held as a prisoner of war.

After the War, he met Hecker while he was lecturing in Detroit. Elliott was immediately attracted to Hecker and became a lifelong devoted follower and friend. He soon thereafter in 1868 entered the Paulists as the one of the first "non-convert" to do so. Ordained in 1872, Elliott quickly joined the missionary band. Again the adventurer, he set sail for California via Cape Horn in South America, along with Fr. George Deshon and four other Paulists, to conduct missions. He loved the missionary life and only left it to go to New York to be with Hecker in his last days.



In 1891, Elliott published *The Life of Father Hecker*, in which he wrote in the Introduction: "... I cannot help saying, that I have felt the joy of a son in telling the achievements and chronicling the virtues of Father Hecker. I loved him with the sacred fire of holy kinship, and love him still ..."

Although he wrote this book with greatest respect for Hecker and the Catholic Church in America, in the French translation's introduction, Fr. Felix Klein stated that Hecker promoted "Americanism." In response to Klein's assertions, in 1899 Pope Leo XIII sent a letter, *Testem Benevolentiae*, to James Cardinal Gibbons, the leading US Catholic bishop, who, in turn, assured the Pope that the such a heresy was not embodied in the Church in America.

Elliott felt wounded by these accusations; however, he was steadfast in his defense of Hecker throughout his life.

In his later years, he served as editor of and contributor to *The Missionary* magazine, teacher, and rector of a house in Washington, DC.

Elliott died on April 18, 1928, and was laid to rest in the crypt at St. Paul the Apostle Church in New York.

Insight

by Don Sommese, Associate from New Hampshire (Boston Group)

“You’re it?? said Packy. “I pictured gates...Big, Golden Gates....a guy in a gown...and a trumpet...”

— Jack Klugman (“Packy”) speaking to Bob Newhart (God)
Insight episode: “Rebirth of Packy Rowe” - 1979

I guess the Paulists could get away with a known comedian like Bob Newhart playing a suit-wearing, but rather non-descript God: a God that looked like he was just brought in from Accountemps, as the regular God was on vacation for a couple weeks.

This was the type of message that **Insight**, a TV show produced by Paulist Productions, delivered constantly to viewers for 25 years beginning in 1960. It was this message, and its unique perspective, that I watched from my living room: that was my form of inspirational Church growing up in NJ.

Actually, this show brought me great joy as a boy. You see, I wasn’t really Catholic, Italian or Christian, or Jewish. “Religiously” and ethnically, I was nowhere. Sort of like the answer Newhart gave Klugman (playing a theatrical agent), when asked “where am I?”, not knowing if he was in heaven (or a hell bedecked with functional steel-case furniture and a water cooler). Newhart’s answer: “You’re nowhere.”

Klugman soon discovers he’s at a “stop over” place on his way to **The UP** not the down. You see, Packy did not recognize his worth on his own, but he did help people during his life and career. And God recognized that.

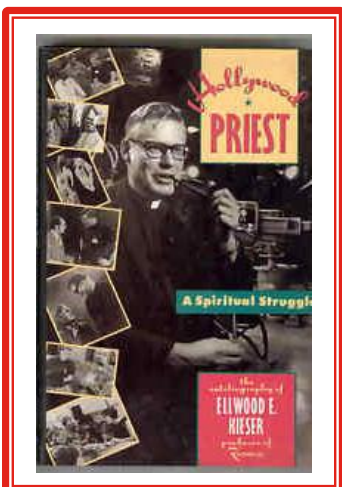
Insight was my “stop over” place around 9:30 AM on most Sunday mornings. While Dad walked the couple of blocks to attend Sunday Mass, I stayed home with my Jewish mom, and we watched this interesting show with famous actors I could identify – Martin Sheen, Patty Duke, Flip Wilson, Eve Plumb (middle girl on the Brady Brunch that I had a crush on). You know, I was entertained and in some ways, this became a type of “church” - a church without pews, but with volume control.

I cherish those moments and those memories. I can see now, the Paulist charism helping me draw nearer to God during those wonder years. It’s really cool, because I didn’t feel judged by my surroundings: it was just me, the carpet, and the TV set.

You probably figured out that I was the product of an ethnically mixed marriage. My Dad was Italian, loved his Catholic faith, read the Bible every day. For the most part, my mother was a secular Jew. Religion was not pushed on me as a boy. I think my father may have brought me to Mass once or twice, and I remember going to a synagogue once with my mother. I don’t really know their intended religious “strategy,” but ultimately I was given the choice to make my own decision: I chose “nowhere.”

And that’s where **Insight** came in: the show was my reassurance that God did exist in forms and people we might not expect to experience Him. Yes, I was part of the un-Churched, but thankfully, a part of the Insight crowd, which provided a path for me as I formulated my own way.

You may find this episode of Insight on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sk36grWPy1I>



You may also be interested in reading *Hollywood Priest: A Spiritual Struggle*, the autobiography of Ellwood E. (“Bud”) Kieser, CSP, published by Doubleday in 1991.

Fr. Kieser led Paulist Productions for nearly 40 years. Among his accomplishments were *Insight*, a television series that ran from 1960 to 1983. The show was nominated for the Emmy for Outstanding Achievement in Religious Programming in 1972 and 1973, and won the category every year from 1981 to 1984.

He also produced the feature films. First, in 1989, was *Romero*, starring Raul Julia, about the life of Oscar Romero, assassinated Archbishop of El Salvador. Next was *Entertaining Angels* in 1996, a look at Dorothy Day, portrayed by Moira Kelly. Martin Sheen, long-time friend of the Paulists, took on the role of Peter Maurin in this film.

In addition, in 1974, Fr. Kieser created the Humanitas Prize, to “to celebrate television programs, which affirm the human dignity, explore the meaning of life, enlighten the use of human freedom and reveal to each person our common humanity.” The prize recognizes and provides a cash award to screenwriters for television shows, films, and documentaries whose work helps to encourage and motivate viewers to respond with respect and compassion to all humankind.

Who Is My Neighbour? (continued)

side. I had learned to trust that the stranger nearest in any random time of need would be a Good Samaritan. I had acquired unconditional faith in my neighbour.

About the original parable, and our own parallels to it: each story involves travelling. We are always en route to somewhere during our larger life journey when we encounter a Good Samaritan. There's always an investment, perhaps material, but more often it's giving time for spontaneous support and care. And very often, there is a meeting of widely different lifestyles or cultures, with strangers stranded. As Carol Goar wrote recently in her *Toronto Star* column, we are right now living through a remarkable moment. She tells us about Mary Jo Leddy, a woman who has worked for twenty-five years at welcoming refugees in Toronto. In putting at ease a group of nervous sponsors of Syrians soon to arrive, she told what Goar called a parable: awhile ago a recently divorced man had called her up and said, "I might be crazy, but I've got an empty house. Send a family over." She determined that he was unhappy, but sane, and agreed to his offer. Eventually a family got to his place. A few weeks later, he called back and told Mary Jo, "I really like their company and they're looking after me."

It's a perpetual two-way bridge, this global Samaritan road we're on, faith begetting faith, east to west, and west to east, transcending our differences.

Fr. Frank Desiderio's Visit to St. Peter's in April 2016

by Heather McClory, Associate from Toronto

St. Peter's Associates were pleased to host Fr. Frank Desiderio from April 16th to 20th; he visited with our group and presented a mission to our parish community. The visit began on the Saturday the 16th, when he attended the Paulist Associates monthly meeting and helped us renew our annual promise. We very much appreciate his encouragement of our group to carry on despite the lack of active Paulists in Toronto. We also appreciate various Paulist's efforts to visit us and the willingness of our Pastor, Fr. Mike McGourty, to welcome them to the parish.

Fr. Frank preached at all weekend Masses, then on the Monday night began his mission: "The Church of Mercy: the Life and Thought of Pope Francis". This multimedia mission was well attended and sparked much discussion among a wide variety of St. Peter's diverse parishioners. He showed us how so many aspects of Pope Francis' experience, from his early life as a son of immigrants to his encouragement of the priests in his diocese to serve the poor, demonstrate how deeply he believes in Christ's mercy. The three nights of his presentation challenged us to put this theology of mercy into action in our own lives.

A highlight of the mission for me was the encouragement to remember mercy in my own life, especially among my family and friends. This came when Fr. Frank taught us the simple and ancient Jesus prayer: **'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'**

As we repeated the prayer together as a congregation, both aloud and in silence, he calmly guided us to be mindful of our breath in and out and gradually shortened the prayer down to a simple, hopeful statement: **"Jesus – mercy."**

We thank Fr. Frank for coming to Toronto – his mission was a gift to the parish from the Toronto Associates, and we intend to keep the Paulist charism alive here by welcoming Paulists back to their Toronto home.



Fr. Frank presents in the church

Isaac Hecker Award for Social Justice

The Paulist Center Community in Boston presented the 2016 Isaac Hecker Award for Social Justice to Boston Police Commissioner William B. Evans. The advisory committee stated, "His commitment to administering justice and fair practices in Boston's neighborhoods is evident in his leadership and approach to community policing which builds on relationships among clergy, civic leaders, and local residents. He works daily at building in his department an ethos of de-escalation and the idea that Police officers are guardians, not warriors. He challenges officers to be agents of change and connectors as well as enforcers of the law. Commissioner Evans helps us expand the notion of social justice by leading the department with the ideals *to give somebody a break, put yourself in their position, think how you would want to be treated and... look out for each other.*"

Since 1974, the PCC bestowed this award to an outstanding North American Catholic who promotes social justice. Recipients of the award have included locally and nationally recognized women and men — lay people, sisters, priests, and bishops. Some have been involved in direct service, others in advocacy work and the transformation of structures and institutions. Many of the recipients have been committed to both these dimensions of social action. Most of them overtly and directly connected their faith and action. All have been committed to building a more just and peaceful world.

The first person to receive the Isaac Hecker Award for Social Justice was Dorothy Day.



Toronto Paulist Associate John Bertolo

by Heather McClory, Associate from Toronto

Toronto Paulist Associate John Bertolo (seen here in April when Fr. Frank came to visit and celebrate a parish mission at St. Peter's) has been accepted into the Permanent Diaconate program of the Archdiocese of Toronto. Having completed his discernment year, John will, with the support of his wife Annette, continue his studies for the next four years.

The intensity of the program will preclude his active participation as a Paulist Associate. However, John views this journey as "a four-year leave of absence to pursue the Permanent Diaconate with the spirit of the Paulists".

We will miss him at our meetings but will pray for him as he continues his studies, and ask all Associates to keep him in your prayers.

Telephone Conference Connects the Diaspora

In our first monthly virtual meeting via telephone, we learned that the bonds of Paulist Associates are strong and endure even when Associates are no longer able to attend monthly meetings with their original group.

Four individuals — Richard Allegra, Brian Flanagan, Rita Kerr, and Kathy Rex — participated in our telephone conference for Paulist Associates in the Diaspora on Sunday, October 23. We began the gathering from around the country with an opening prayer, initial introductions, and etiquette tips for conference calling. Fr. Frank Desiderio, CSP, our national director, facilitated this session, based on the proposed program for October found in the September issue of *The Associates World*: "Theological Virtues, Cardinal Virtues, and Gifts of the Holy Spirit." There was a camaraderie beyond those involved in the call by using the same materials as some of the other Paulist Associate groups. The exchange began with the intrinsic nature of the virtues outlined by St. Thomas Aquinas, "the practice of wearing the habits of virtue," and the importance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us to become more virtuous in our lives, work, and prayer.

The group appreciated the chance for a virtual meeting, and strengthened their resolve to continue meeting on a regular basis. The next call will take place on Sunday, November 27, again, relying on the proposed program for November, found in the October issue of *The Associates World*.

We continue to seek out other Associates who are expatriate from their original group to join us in these calls. Please contact Fr. Frank Desiderio, CSP at frankd@paulist.org if you can identify any of the Associates now in the Diaspora. We'd love for them to join the monthly virtual meeting. In addition, if there are any Paulist Associates who are no longer able to attend the monthly meeting in his/her area and would like to join this call, please feel free to contact Fr. Frank about the possibility of participating.

Save the Date

Ordination to the Priesthood ---Matt Berrios, Steve Petroff, and Stuart Wilson-Smith

Church of St. Paul the Apostle, New York, NY — Saturday, May 20, 2017

To reserve hotel rooms, please visit: <https://www.stpaultheapostle.org/sectioncontent.php?secid=14>

National Retreat for the Paulist Associates

St. Mary's on the Lake, Lake George, NY — Sunday, July 2 to Friday, July 7, 2017

ISAAC SAYS ...

This, my dear friend, I have attempted to give you a brief statement by which you can form some idea of the past conduct of your friend. It will explain to you many facts which must have been as inexplicable to you as they were to myself. Deo gratias, I have left Egypt, passed the Desert, and am now in Israel, the land flowering with milk and honey.

I have said nothing of my having taken the vows. But what can I say? I have them and am free. Free, having never understood that word until now. Render thanks and gratitude to God for my freedom for I know not how. Aid me for the grace is too great and grand for my heart.

— Letter to Orestes Brownson, November 1, 1846

Proposed Program for December

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

Theme: Servant of God, Isaac Thomas Hecker

Isaac Hecker was born in New York City on December 18, 1819. He died on December 22, 1888 at the Paulist House on 59th Street in New York City.

OPENING PRAYER

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

READING (IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING)

“Isaac Thomas Hecker” by Ronald Franco, CSP
from *All Holy Men and Women: A Paulist Litany of Saints*, Thomas A. Kane, CSP, editor
pages 215ff

CONVERSATION CATALYST

- Hecker’s work was varied: missionary, preacher, lecturer, teacher, spiritual director, author/publisher, founder of a religious community, etc. What do you believe was his primary charism?
- What is one of your favorite Hecker quotes and why?
- Hecker was a mystic. How did he integrate his mystical experiences into his daily living?

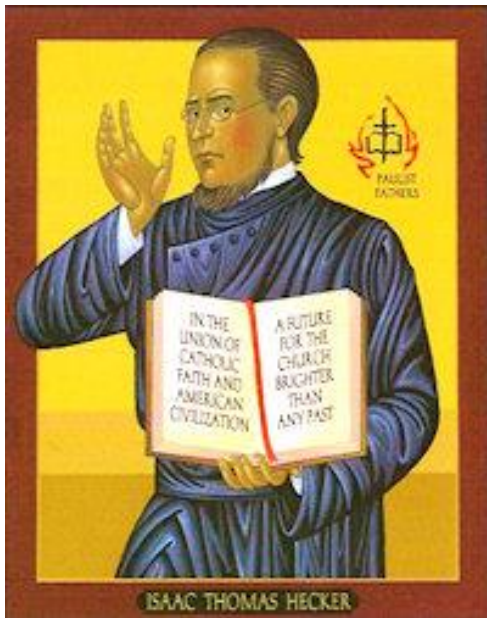
NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING PRAYER

From Isaac Hecker’s Sermon on Christmas, 1870

O sweet infant Saviour,
give to us that peace which you came to bring on the earth. Peace to the young and the old, to the poor and the sick, to the sorrowful and to all of good will. Peace on earth to all nations, especially to Your Holy Church (Papal States) and to Your Vicar the Pope who like You suffers from the hands of others. Peace to the world at war that your kingdom may begin!

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

PAULIST ASSOCIATES WEB SITE

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

FIND US ON FACEBOOK

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

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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.**

Paulist Father Isaac Hecker: An American Saint

by Boniface Hanley, OFM

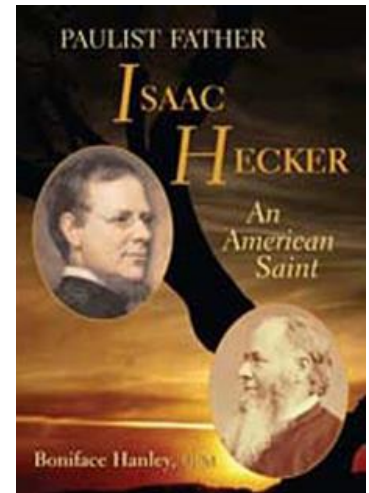
This short biography was prepared for the 150th anniversary of the Paulist Fathers. It is a great introduction to Hecker's life and works for anyone unfamiliar with him and the founding of the Paulists. Hanley traces Isaac's spiritual roots from his boyhood to his time with the Transcendentalists to his life with the Redemptorists and ultimate expulsion from the order. The author then provides an overview of the founding of the Paulists, Hecker and his companions' missions in the United States, his work at the First Vatican Council, the founding of the Catholic Publication Society (now Paulist Press), and his influential writings on the Holy Spirit.

A Franciscan Friar born in Brooklyn, New York, Hanley was a pastor, missionary, teacher, retreat house and spiritual director, and author of 13 books. He died in 2010 at the age of 85.

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

You may also find this biography on the Paulist Fathers' web site:

<http://www.paulist.org/who-we-are/our-history/isaac-hecker/isaac-hecker-biography/>



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.