

The Associates World

Index

Being a Paulist Associate	page 2	Paulist Associates Promise	page 7
Book Review	page 3	Prayer for the Intercession of Fr. Isaac T. Hecker	page 7
Call for Materials for The Associates World	page 2	Proposed Program for November	page 4
Contacts	page 7	Reflection on Luke 13:10-13	page 3
Errata	page 2	Save the Date	page 6
Grand Rapids Reflects on Isaac Hecker	page 1		

Grand Rapids Reflects on Isaac Hecker

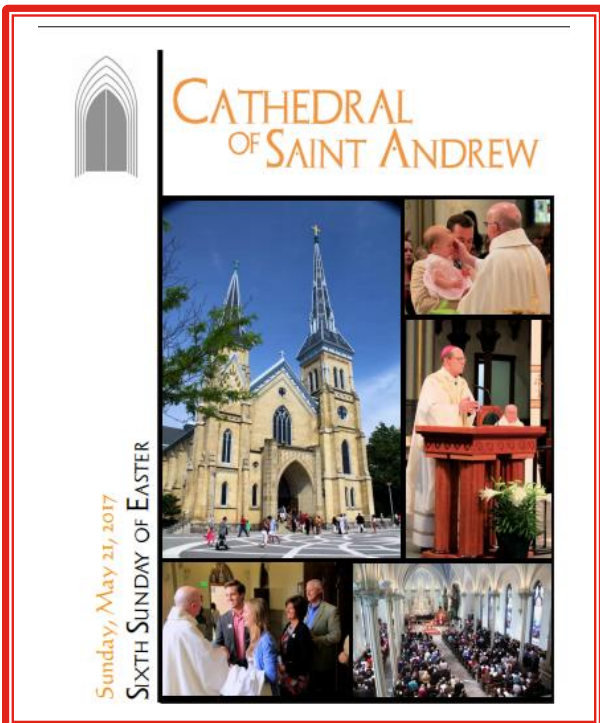
by Cathy Hoekstra — Paulist Associate in Grand Rapids

For the past couple of years, you will find a quote from Fr. Isaac Hecker printed in the weekly bulletin of the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Since the beginning of this year these quotes have come from the *Collection of Isaac Hecker Quotes* compiled and edited by the Paulist Associates. In addition to the weekly quotes, we offer a reflection on the quote for the third week of the month, written by a local Associate.

The bulletin also includes a paragraph about the Paulist Associates and contact information for anyone who might be interested in learning more about or becoming an Associate.

We hope that you enjoy these reflections. Feel free to use this format in your own foundation and with your Associate group.

Reflection by Rita Loper — Paulist Associate in Grand Rapids – published 05/21/2017



“God wishes to fill our intelligence and our heart with divine light and love, and thus to deify our whole nature – to make us one with what we represent – God.”

Isaac Hecker, from “The Guidance of the Holy Spirit”
in *The Paulist Vocation*, p.133

We are all made in the image and likeness of God so we are taught by the Church. But what does that mean? If we think about God filling us with divine light and love, I visualize Light and Love with capital “L’s.” We need to allow Light and Love to take over our mind and heart, trusting in the Holy Spirit to give and teach us all that we truly need to make us one with God.

Father Hecker believed that through prayer and reflection upon how the Holy Spirit puts opportunities in our paths “to see the light,” we can grow in divine Love. Sometimes during the day, we think of a little act of kindness we could do for someone and wonder why did I think of that just now? I believe it is the Holy Spirit wishing to fill my mind and heart with Light and Love. All we need to do when these moments occur is to act on them and not let them pass us by. Let God’s wish of divine Light and Love for you happen!

ERRATA

My deepest apologies to Carol Wagner Williams. In last month's issue of *The Associates World*, I accidentally misidentified her when I acknowledged her as the author of the piece, "Camino Dream Comes TRUE." We made an immediate change to the version on the website and to the PDF that is posted there.

Carol's article and photos are among the finest examples of what individuals say they want to read: personal stories of spirituality, faith, and living out the mission of the Paulist.

— P. Cuozzo

Being a Paulist Associate

by Grace Rees — an Associate from Columbus, Ohio

"These are the times that try men's souls."

"It's a curse to be born in interesting times."

"In this world, you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world."

Being a Paulist Associate, even being a practicing Christian in today's America, is a challenge. Christ calls us to follow Him in love, to follow His teachings in the Sermon on the Mount as people of peace. The New Covenant articulated in the New Testament compels us to see all our brothers and sisters around the world with God's eye of compassion and mercy, to see all as equally and unconditionally beloved in His sight. The Paulist Associates here at the St. Thomas More Newman Center in Columbus, Ohio, look forward to this challenge. We are fortunate to serve the students of The Ohio State University and to be members of a congregation that represent 35+ different countries and cultures from every corner of the world.

So, with joy we embrace the fundamental charisms of the Paulist Fathers — evangelization, reconciliation, ecumenism, and interfaith dialogue. Because of their leadership, we can look to the story of the Samaritan woman in John 4:5-42 — "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" — and be inspired to confidently believe its all-encompassing message. We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that His Living Water has been created for and given to: the outsider, the insider; the believer, the non-believer; the female, the male; the child, the elder; the friend, the enemy; the neighbor, the foreigner; the rich one, the poor one; the whole, the disabled; the clean, the diseased; the straight, the gay; the white, the different colored; the peacemaker, the soldier; the addicted, the homeless, the felon ... "And let all who thirst come to the water."

We thank God for the example of the Paulist Fathers voiced in their statement following the Charlottesville riot this past August. "We pray for our country, that all of its citizens may seek an end to any form of hate and violence. May the Holy Spirit guide our thoughts, words, and actions, making us instruments of God's love enabling an ethic of non-violence and peace to prevail in our nation's civic discourse." Their faith, dedication, devotion, indeed their bravery in publicly publishing this document give us all the courage to be modern-day prophets, to speak truth to authority.

Being a Paulist Associate is a life commitment and priority. We promise once a year to pay heed to this special calling to be instruments of God's love. In the words in the Letter to the Hebrews, "Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." (12:1)

CALL FOR MATERIALS FOR THE ASSOCIATES WORLD

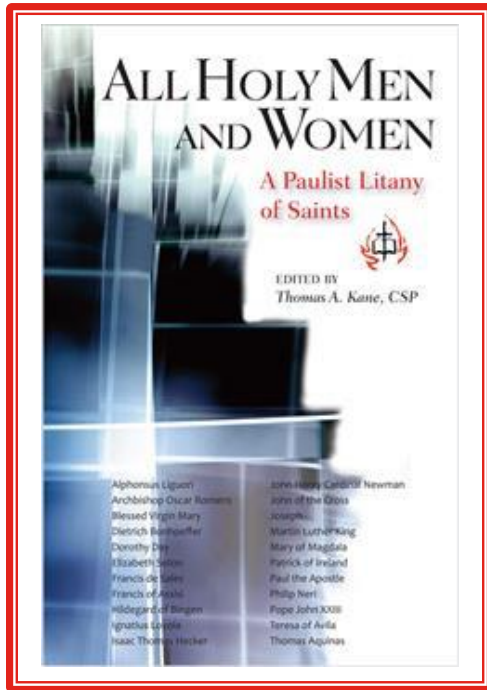
Paulist Associates and Paulists alike often tell us that they most enjoy are stories about how local worship communities and individual Paulist Associates live out the charisms and foster the mission of the Paulists in daily living. So, to continue publishing this newsletter, we need you to be creative and submit articles, poems, reflections, book reviews, photos, and images.

Email your materials to paulacuozzo@aol.com. We are looking forward to your contributions!

Book Review:

All Holy Men and Women, A Paulist Litany of Saints ***Edited by Thomas A. Kane, CSP;*** ***illustrated by Frank Sabatte, CSP***

by Jane Kelsey – Associate from Columbus



Fr. Tom Kane has gathered reflections on Paulist patronal saints and other holy men and women who can serve as role models for 21st century spiritual seekers. Twenty-four men and women – clergy, religious, and lay – are profiled, some for being evangelizers, some for seeking to reform and rebuild the Church, others for working for peace and social justice, and some for “bringing theological vigor and spiritual insight to the Church.” People who are profiled cover 2000 years of history, starting with Mary and Joseph and continuing through Pope John XXIII and Archbishop Oscar Romero. The final essay fittingly profiles Servant of God Isaac Hecker.

The book is organized by the calendar dates on which the holy person is recognized. Each reflection is 8 to 10 pages long; each includes a short introduction by Fr. Tom as well as a reflection by one of the Paulist Fathers or a colleague from the academic world. Each reflection closes with a prayer by or about the holy person.

The book itself is interesting and insightful. In addition, the profiles can serve as a jumping-off point for Paulist Associates meetings. Reflection questions can be added, as can prayer services for Paulist patronal saints highlighted in the Paulist Prayer Book.

Reflection on Luke 13:10-13 — 10/23/12

by Ana Berrios – Associate from Columbus

He was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath. And a woman was there who for eighteen years had been crippled by a spirit; she was bent over, completely incapable of standing erect. When Jesus saw her, he called to her and said, “Woman, you are set free of your infirmity.” He laid his hands on her, and she at once stood up straight and glorified God.

Waiting for God

I took a closer look
At your story

We share the same 18 years
Hoping for something

You understood what it was
To leave exactly the same

Yet we keep on coming
Waiting for His Mercy

Trusting
That this might be the day!
Woman of faith
You bent over

He saw you
He stares at me

He called us
Healing deeply our lives

We praise Him
Moving forward in reconciliation

You stood up straight
I kneel at His presence...

Proposed Program for November

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

Fr. Frank DeSiano, CSP, the President of Paulist Evangelization Ministries (PEM, recently wrote a thoughtful and thought-invoking piece entitled “The Conversion of America.” The Paulist Associates Board believes that this is an impressive contribution to the dialogue around the Paulist mission for the 21st century.

Over the next four months, the Proposed Program will include a section of that article along with some questions that Fr. Frank has prepared for us.

Theme: The Conversion of America – Part 1 by Fr. Frank DeSiano, CSP

OPENING PRAYER

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

READING (IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING)

Reflections on Mission Today

Father Hecker would often use the term “conversion of America” to describe the mission of the Paulist Fathers; this term, in fact, was a virtual short-cut to thinking about Paulist work up to the Second Vatican Council. As that Council mixed in ingredients that made the term “conversion” more complicated, so also the Paulists sought to nuance their thinking about Hecker’s classic term. If “conversion” meant joining the Catholic Church, then what was one to make of ecumenical awareness? If “conversion” meant saving people from hell, what was one to make of a broader awareness of God’s effective will, one that could touch the lives of people who never even heard of Jesus?

This complex mix of ingredients, placing conversion into a more nuanced context, evolved in Paulist thinking into the 1986 Mission Direction Statement, with its identification of three prongs to Paulist mission: evangelization, reconciliation, and ecumenism. Paulists still think instinctually of their mission life in these terms. The 2014 Paulist Assembly articulated our mission in these terms: Led by the Holy Spirit, the Paulists are a missionary community that forms Catholics for mission, giving particular attention to those beyond the Catholic community.

The phrase “conversion of America,” however, should have more than just a mission-and-religion pitch to it. Not only are Americans invited to a religious vision—the fullness of faith—but they are invited to a social vision of their country which has religious implications. How Americans think about themselves, their purpose, and their reason for living, can dispose them toward an openness to religious proclamation—to, for example, a message about the Kingdom of God and how we experience that in human categories.

“E Pluribus Unum—One from Many”

One cannot deny that the great American experiment—a government of the people, for the people, and by the people, in Abraham Lincoln’s famous phrase—has several fissures arising from tensions built into the conception of the United States. Of course, the destructiveness of the Civil War is the most conspicuous manifestation of these fissures. But, throughout history, regional and sectional tensions have brought government to a standstill, actually or virtually. In addition to regional tensions, unresolved issues of class have caused extensive debate about the responsibility that Americans have for each other, and particularly for the poor. Whether religion even need be in America, or whether she can imagine herself without any expressed faith, underlies another set of unresolved tensions, all under the rubric of “separation of church and state.” The extensive, and accepted, practice of slavery—done in the South and tolerated for long periods by the North, exposed fissures around human existence itself—whether, that is, a class of people can be defined as inherently less worthy than others, as deserving fewer secured rights.

One way or another, these fissures continue to today, and get re-enacted in virtually every presidential campaign, not to mention more local elections. Buzz words like “states’ rights,” and “equality,” and “America first,” and “world leader,”

all harbor roots that go to the heart of our American self-conception. So long as this self-conception is up for debate, that's how long our fissures continue; and that's how long a coherent vision of America eludes us.

How can believers address a society that resists a coherent vision around key elements of its identity? From the way religion has been used to justify any number of contradictory positions, it is clear that what it means to believe in America is a conflicted idea. From the way religion can be co-opted by people who seem to speak in contradictions, shows that much prior work must be accomplished before a religious mission to America can have success.

"One from many" has been a motto of the United States, depicting both a plan (to incorporate a multiplicity states, or persons, politically into one) and an ideal (to bring about a unified whole). The United States has succeeded, for the most part, when it comes to a plan to bring about a political entity. People in all the states, and many of the territories, can feel they are part of America. The Civil War, however, revealed the fragility of this plan—as well as the ongoing periodic appeals to regional power at the expense of central power. That "big government" became the enemy in the 1980s, and "big government" can sometimes look like most government, leads to a local, and potentially splintering, emphasis. The 1980s attack had very deep roots in the American psyche. "This is how we do it here; who has the right to question what we do?" So, the plan to make us "one" is mostly accepted, but still debated.

But the ideal of "one from many" is ever more elusive. What, after all, is the "one"? Is there a sense of a common core, a common good, to which everyone subscribes? If the "one" is a political entity for which a central government provides defense, currency, and interconnecting roads—and little else—then we have one sense of our nation very different from those who hold that America represents a community of people bound to each other and pledged to uphold fundamental rights and values.

There is no "unum" if people understand themselves as unconnected to others, whether it be the poor in the slum housing or the wealthy in their high-rise condos. There is no "unum" if people see society as a way for each individual to get ahead as he or she strives to get ahead. We only have an "unum" when everyone sees his or her life as interconnected with the lives of everyone else. If segments of the society are quite content to tolerate other segments living in desperation, without basic resources, and without access to proper education, health, food, and housing, then, in some way, each segment is out for itself. Likewise, if some sectors of society write off other sectors out of hand, we cannot have an "unum." Members of each segment see the "whole" as something from which they can take, as they want, to enhance their lives, not as something the binds us as one.

America can be little more, for some, than a resource for me to use so I can seek "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." It's a collection of individual, but certainly not an "unum."

Often the debate has been put between "conservatives" and "liberals"—and some of the tags for these have switched over history—with conservatives seeing the nation as providing a platform on which each can perform, and liberals seeing the nation as a community where each has a claim. In the early 1900s, Republicans took aversion to the Jim Crow traces of slavery, while some parts of the Democratic party took far less aversion to this legacy. After the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1966, the roles switched, with Republicans adopting a greater openness to the regionalism of the South, and Democrats thinking less in regional terms. The "Party of Lincoln" led a war to forge a nation; one wonders if it leads forays, now, to forge regions in opposition to other regions. The "Party of FDR" developed a legislative process to overcome the travails of the depression. But segments of that party still think in terms of classes struggling against each other, and even make it hard for people with deep religious convictions to feel they can have a place.

There may be regions, but there must a "one." There may be individuals, but there must be a "community." Without a core to which we are all pointing, and in which all are included, we lack a common meaning to the idea of "nation," and "people." That America has been composed of cohorts that have been incorporated over decades, primarily through immigration, makes it all the more important that she have a unified notion of who she is because there will always be new cohorts entering into American society.

CONVERSATION CATALYST

- What do you think binds America together as a people? How would you express it?
- What do you make of the ongoing, and seemingly inherent, divisions within the American people? In what ways is this conflict potentially good? In what ways it is potentially bad?
- What are the limits, if any, to the responsibility that people have for each other in American society?

NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING PRAYER

Benediction for the Democratic Convention

Delivered by Fr. John Ardis, CSP, July 29, 2004

Let us pray...

God of all holiness, we have invoked your Spirit to guide these delegates in their work over the past four days.

As we take leave of this convention in the place where our country's quest for freedom began, words of liberty and equality for all must not be left idly behind in this arena.

We rely on You, O God of strength and wisdom, to inspire these candidates, these delegates, and indeed all citizens of this great nation to go forth and build a stronger America and to work for respect and accomplish peace around the world.

By the power of your Grace, instill in Senators Kerry and Edwards the fortitude to uphold the Constitution, which promotes the dignity of every person and frees all people to serve You as You have called them. Help these public servants to safeguard the common good. Give them the courage to live lives of integrity. Inspire them to speak with a prophetic voice for the disenfranchised and the disinherited. And when these candidates hear Your call, give them the strength and wisdom to say, "Send us."

By the power of your Grace, guide every citizen of our United States to cherish all life. Help us to seek unity in diversity. Give us the courage to embrace each person as our neighbor, regardless of gender, race, or ethnic origin, regardless of sexual orientation, religious tradition, or age. Inspire us to support all families in their pursuit of happiness. And when we hear Your call, give us the strength and wisdom to say, "Send us."

By the power of your Grace, remind us that Your love knows no national boundaries. Give counsel to world leaders so we may never again declare an unjust war. Help all peoples of the world overcome prejudice and poverty. Inspire everyone to work for justice so we may know true peace. And when we hear Your call, give us the strength and wisdom to say, "Send us."

Therefore, God, O Lover of us all, open our eyes to the bright future that is before us. Give us the strength to labor with a lively faith. Send us forth with a firm hope. Send us forth with a charity that knows no bounds. Send us forth as one people that we may realize the splendor of Your creation. Now and forever. Amen.

You may find a video of
Fr. John's delivery of the
benediction on the C-SPAN
web site:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?182721-2/democratic-national-convention-day-4-evening&start=15880>

Save the Date

Paulist Associates Regional Retreat for 2018 — Chicago

July 13-15, 2018

Details will be made available after the first of the year.

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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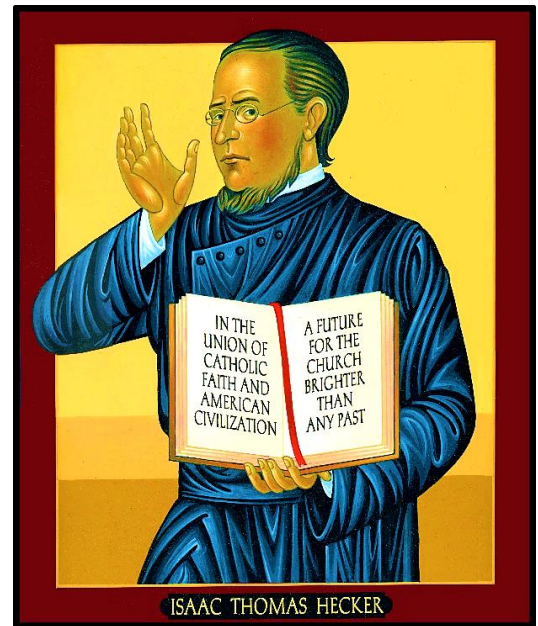
PRAYER FOR THE INTERCESSION OF FATHER ISAAC T. HECKER, SERVANT OF GOD

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.



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.