

The Associates World

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Being a Paulist Associate

by Michael Ames — Associate from Columbus, Ohio

Why I became a Paulist Associate? Because I was asked! We live in a busy world with so many distractions surrounding us that we often forget to reach out and offer a friendly gesture to a new face. But this was far from my experience when I first attended Mass at the St. Thomas More Newman Center across from The Ohio State University.

Many years ago I was associated for a short time with the Paulist Parish of St. Paul the Apostle in Los Angeles where I was married and was a member of the choir. Around that time I occasionally would watch the television program "Insight" produced by Fr. Elwood Keiser and Paulist Productions. I remember being rather amazed that an order of priests were creating a drama for TV viewing.

My family eventually moved to Columbus, Ohio where I've raised my children and have lived for many years. It was less than three years ago, at the suggestion of a friend, that I first attended Mass at the Newman Center. My parish was dwindling in numbers, there was little community involvement and, being an outgoing person, it just wasn't a good fit. Attending the

Newman Center, I felt like I had come home, back to the Paulist way, and a place where I could be fed both spiritually and in community.

After being taken in, as it were, by a warm and energetic group of women, a couple of them suggested that I might want to think about becoming a Paulist Associate. I had never heard of Fr. Isaac Hecker and his missionary work. During my discernment period to become a Paulist Associate, I learned much about the history and mission of the Paulist Fathers through the recordings that were assigned to us. I took my first promises this last winter.

I realize that I am on a journey, that becoming a Paulist Associate is a process in which I can only hope to deepen my spiritual awareness and make, evermore real, who I am as a child of God. I am most grateful for the journey. My hope and prayer is that I will integrate into my daily life the Mission of the Paulist Fathers; to be a witness to the good news of the Gospel, to promote justice and healing, and to seek understanding and unity through interfaith dialogue.

Website Info

Visit the Paulist Associates web page on the Paulist Fathers' site: <http://www.paulist.org/ministry/associates/>. You will find the current as well as the previous editions of the newsletter as well as the recordings for the formation for those interested in becoming an Associate. In addition, A Collection of Isaac Hecker Quotes can be found at http://www.paulist.org/app/uploads/2017/03/A_Collection_of_Isaac_Hecker_Quotes_2017.pdf.

Poem

by Kathy Ward — Associate from Boston

Blue Space

Maybe,
 All I need to do
 To continue on this journey
 Still singing,
 Is to step away now and then
 Into my blue space~
 Where the horizon seems infinite
 And seagulls glide so effortlessly
 Over land and sea
 And waves curl with white foam
 Before crashing onto the shore
 Leaving gifts of shells and pebbles to delight me
 And the smell and feel of the salty air
 envelops my senses bringing me alive
 And just for awhile I can breathe deeply again~
 Ahhhh, Cares and obligations vanish
 Fasting brings freedom from my food addiction
 And the bookends of my days
 Are clothed in sherbet and orange
 With the sun's coming and going
 Independent of me~
 "How can I keep from singing!"



Grand Rapids Reflects on Isaac Hecker

Reflection by Sue Ann Clark — Paulist Associate in Grand Rapids – published 06/18/2017

Grace is the direct influence of God operating in the human soul. This primary action of God in the soul demands our primary attention.

Isaac Hecker, found in *The Paulist Vocation*, p. 175

Each day is a new opportunity to see God's grace at work in our lives and the lives of those around us. God impacts souls. Through our actions, we reflect to those we encounter the impact of God's goodness and love on our soul. Would we not but want to direct our attention to being a person of influence for Him?

Each year I celebrate Pentecost, I am reminded of God's personal seal on my heart — and with joy I recommit my life to the Life Giver. May all I say and do be a reflection of His love and grace that others may see in me the gift of the Holy Spirit and seek Him in a very personal way.

As we grow in our understanding of the indwelling Spirit, as we direct our eyes to seek Him and recognize Him in the eyes of those we encounter, our lives are blessed. When we direct our primary attention we continually renew, ignite God within us.

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.

Proposed Program for December

(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.

This is the second installment, which includes a section of that article along with some questions that Fr. Frank has prepared for us.

Theme: The Conversion of America – Part 2 by Fr. Frank DeSiano, CSP

OPENING PRAYER

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

READING (IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING)

The Five Conversions

With this outline of some of the questions around the unified vision that America has of itself (and Americans have of themselves), are there fundamental changes that all have to undergo in order for a society to cohere? Are there changes and revisions of thinking that appeal to every conscience claiming to be part of American society?

The following sketch five basic changes that believers can put before Americans for consideration. Each change has a political (in the best sense of that word) meaning, but each one also has religious implications as well.

The First Conversion

This, then, might be the first conversion to which we have to invite people: to a sense of America as a nation of people connected to each other, where the good of any one person involves the good of all persons; and, perhaps more tellingly, where the suffering of any one person involves the suffering, the diminishment, of all. Throughout our history, different shameful situations have been exposed, from the plight of slaves, to the plight of tenement dwellers, to the plight of poor farmers, to the plight of very sick people. It often took something like “yellow journalism” to expose who the impoverished and hurting segments of society were, followed by a more or less successful attempts to remedy things through legislation.

The racial background to all of this hardly needs demonstration. The ability to look down on African slaves with impunity extended to groups consistently looking down on other groups with impunity, whether on religious, ethnic, or national bases. Wave after wave of immigrant experienced the scornful look of those who “were already here”—and those who were originally here, Native Americans, were driven from homeland to reservation, and reservation to reservation, often without any concern for their lives. Indeed, a generation grew up watching “Cowboy and Indian” shows on television; we all knew who were the “bad guys” and for whom we should be rooting. The ability of people to dismiss or diminish each other because of race, ethnicity or religion greases the fissures that keep the “one” from emerging from the “many.”

The fractured nature of the factions that compose the United States have only been made sharper by the election processes or recent decades. Factions vote for more extreme people who pledge to have nothing to do with people who do not think as they do. These extreme people come into government willing to close everything down rather than give up their “principles”—principles often driven by extreme media who have much to gain from the anger and resentment of people. Media, once bringing people together for common experiences (think of the evening news delivered in the 1960s by the three major networks) now comes through a myriad of outlets via cable or Internet. These various centers, with their points of view, buttress the extreme quality of discourse and political behavior. The

major, underlying, dispute, however, continues to revolve precisely over the oneness of the “one”—the one from many.

The Second Conversion

This shows the second needed conversion: away from the parochialism that divides people into “us” and “them” (or “mine” and “yours”) with the resultant division of groups which demonize each other, often using “cliquish” forms of media to instigate further division.

Complicating senses of unity in current American society are the major splits about economics and money, typified in attitudes toward taxes. Overheard recently: “Every dollar the government takes in taxes is a dollar for which someone worked hard and which the government is robbing.” The idea behind this line of thinking goes like this: there are individuals and there are possessions. Individuals have an absolute right to these possessions. Whatever increases the amount that each individual possesses is the ideal. Whatever diminishes the amount that each person possesses falls from that ideal. Taxes are a way to take possessions from individuals. This might be needed for certain limited needs (defense, economics, crime prevention); but the more it is limited, the better.



Some of this thinking comes from the somewhat rapacious nature of American experience. Colonists came here and saw all that was here for the taking. (Didn't we buy Manhattan for \$26.00 in beads and trinkets?) So American life has been a process of taking a vast and almost inexhaustible richness. American struggles with Native Americans showed this rapaciousness; even more, the re-adjustments of previously made treaties with Native Americans, as they were pushed further westward into less hospitable lands. America has likewise been characterized by entrepreneurs who have sought monopolies in various areas (coal, oil, transportation, technology, produce), building vast fortunes, often on the back of exploited workers. America, in this way, represents unrestricted possession—for those who can make it. For the rest, it involves being

used by big business, and living with the envy that would let them become rapacious themselves.

“Rapacious” may seem like an extreme word, but what else conveys the idea that there are no limits to what one can take, make, and possess? How paradoxical for a society that strives for democratic values to continue to invent an economic royalty (whether business, sports, or entertainment) that the lesser members get to ogle at?

This attitude of being able to “take or get it all” inevitably causes in capitalism (and American practices a particular brand of capitalism limited only by the tax code and the actions of the Fed) repeated collapses in the economy. People point to 1929 as the start of the Great Depression, but that depression exceeded only in extent prior and subsequent depressions. As pursuit of wealth causes people to chase down particular avenues, looking for ever greater returns, these objects of pursuit become inflated even beyond their obvious value. Yet money still pursues these objects until, inevitably, the pursued object bursts in terms of value; what was thought to be unendingly worth more suddenly becomes worth very little because give up the pursuit. The collapse of the “dot coms” in the 1990s — in which money feverously chased companies that seemed to have some potential to bring income through the Internet—came from the realization that these companies could not produce at the level at which they were valued. The collapse in the mid-2000s arose from the pursuit of money from weaker and riskier sources, with debt repackaged and sold again, until it was clear that we had already reached the end of value. Every year people worry about new bubbles in the economy, and every year brings the likelihood of this happening. But every bubble is the result of rapacious attitudes.

Of course, there must be limits to possession; it cannot be unrestricted and absolute. Limits come from the sheer uselessness of so much wealth, the way monopolistic possession impedes the economic stability of others in the society, and the ecological limitations which the earth's potential destruction imposes of itself.

➤ **CONVERSATION CATALYST**

- Do you think the idea of a society where people were basically responsible for each other, linked by common need and concern, is attractive or frightening? How do you think most people would think about this?
- Do you think “rapacious” is a fair way to characterize some aspects of the American spirit? What adjectives might you use to describe the American attitude toward expansion and possession throughout its history?
- What is your experience as a participant in American society? Do you feel society cares for you? Uses you? Pushes you? Acknowledges you? Explain.

NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**CLOSING PRAYER****Prayer for Generosity — St. Ignatius of Loyola**

Eternal Word, only begotten Son of God,

Teach me true generosity.

Teach me to serve you as you deserve.

To give without counting the cost,

To fight heedless of wounds,

To labor without seeking rest,

To sacrifice myself without thought of any reward

Save the knowledge that I have done your will.

Amen.

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.

Please consider writing an article, generally from 500 to 750 words in length, although shorter and longer pieces have been submitted. Encourage your local Paulist liaison or other Paulist Associates to write a short article if you know that they are good writers.

While we don't want to limit an individual's creativity (so against the Hecker way of thinking!), some have requested that we suggest a few topics.

- **a current special project by the group or your Paulist foundation related to the Paulist mission and ministries**
- **a book review of a recent Paulist Press publication**
- **a favorite passage from St. Paul and why**
- **a reflection on one of Hecker's writings**
- **reflection on a Paulist ministry and your involvement**
- **remembrance of the first time you met a Paulist**

We are happy to help with editing so don't feel any pressure to submit a literary masterpiece. In addition, please send along some photos or other images for us to use.

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

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.