

# The Associates World

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## The Nones

By Fr. Rich Andre, CSP

Some of us at St. Austin – plus some outside collaborators – recently organized and took part in an event we called “The Late Night / Early Morning Philosophical Party Conversation.”

It’s intended to be “an affirming dialogue for people who are in their 20s and 30s and are spiritual-but-not-religious, questioning, or just don’t know anymore.”

The goal for that night was supposed to be information gathering: what are the needs of the “nones” in central Austin? Well, we didn’t answer that question, but we surely tapped into something that a certain subset of young adults desire.

But what is that something? Is it a space for Millennials to engage in interreligious dialogue, away from their parents’ generation? Several participants talked about social justice: Is it something to do with that? Or is it simply a desire a desire to build community? At the end of our time, 12 of the participants headed across the street for drinks and another hour of discussion.

Why did we organize this event, and what do we hope to accomplish?



*Young people in small groups discussing their generation’s spiritual needs at an August event sponsored by St. Austin parish in Austin, TX.*

There's a lot of background:

Recently, the Lilly Endowment gave a grant to Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary to work with 12 church groups in Central Texas in promoting creative, intentional outreach ministry to people in their 20s. The 12 church groups together are called "The 787 Collective," and St. Austin is part of the collective.

Over the past six months, several members of GAP (the Graduate and Professionals group of St. Austin and the University Catholic Center) and I have been attending retreats and workshops with other member churches of the Collective. We're building new relationships, learning some new collaboration skills, and applying some of the wisdom of iterative processing used by successful technological corporations.

We at St. Austin have decided to use our share of the grant money not to strengthen our existing programs for young adults, but to try to reach young adults who feel disconnected from organized religion.

The Pew Research Center calls these people the "nones," because when asked to identify their religion on a multiple-choice survey, they will select "none of the above."

Roughly 35% of American Millennials consider themselves to be "nones."

Researchers are now trying to understand this demographic. In her book *Choosing Our Religion: The Spiritual Lives of America's Nones*, Elizabeth Drescher points out that many of these young adults have well-developed spiritual and religious practices. Whereas we're used to measuring religious participation by the standards of believing, belonging, and behaving, Drescher says that these young adults are more interested in what nurtures their being and becoming.

One of the reasons the Paulist Fathers have taken St. Paul as our patron is because he "became all things to all, to save at least some" (1 Cor 9:22). St. Austin's participation in the 787 Collective is not necessarily about bringing young adults into the Catholic Church, but to help young adults wherever they are in their spiritual journeys to find the resources they need to flourish and grow.

The purpose of the first event was to start a dialogue with some of the "nones" living in Austin. What do they need? What are they looking for? Can we and our collaborators – from a variety of spiritual practices – help these spiritual seekers?

By many measures, the event was a big success. 15 people showed up, including six women, seven non-Caucasian people, and five immigrants. Two people were from Muslim backgrounds; two were Jewish, and two had exposure to Wicca. Many attendees were on the organizing team or people who had volunteered to be facilitators.

"Nones" were in the minority, but we had energetic, vulnerable discussions for the entire time, and everyone said they would want to do it again, perhaps every two weeks. We'll be trying new – and we hope – better publicity and outreach methods for future sessions. Perhaps we need to simply hold the same event again a few more times.

## *Reflections on the Paulist Associate Retreat in Chicago*

There was a Paulist Associate Retreat on July 13-15, 2018 in Chicago, IL. The topic was “The Role of the Holy Spirit in a Life of Joy, Prayer, and Gratitude”

*Reflection 1: By: Levita Anderson, Paulist Associate at Old St. Mary’s Church*

Paulist along with Fathers Michael Kallock, Steve Petroff, and Brad Schoeberle attended the Paulist’s retreat in



*Group Photo in Chicago*

Chicago. There were twenty Paulist Associates who came from Boston, Columbus, Grand Rapids, Tucson, and Toronto as well as the eleven Paulist Associates from Chicago’s Old St. Mary’s who hosted the event. This year’s theme was, “The Role of the Holy Spirit in a Life of Joy, Prayer, and Gratitude.”

Father Mike Kallock, former pastor of Old St. Mary’s church, welcomed everyone to the retreat Friday night. As facilitator for this year’s retreat, he talked about why joy, prayer, and gratitude are part of our lives. He referenced the recent event concerning

the soccer team that was trapped in a cave to illustrate joy, prayer, and gratitude. Prayer was what the families and the world were doing to ensure that the boys and their coach would be found alive. Gratitude came with the help of rescue workers who found the boys and their coach and planned a way to get them safely out of the cave. Joy was when everyone reached the surface safely and they were reunited with their families. Father Mike then talked about gratitude and how our culture prevents it because we consider ourselves independent of everyone. “It is hard for us to feel grateful in our American culture that stresses so much on our individuality. In reality, we are much more interdependent on each other than we realize. We have so much to be grateful for from others.” Father Mike stated.

After his presentation, Father Mike had the participants divide into groups of four to discuss what three things we are grateful for today. In my discussion group, many of us were grateful to arrive in Chicago safely due to the heavy traffic on the highways and local neighborhoods. I was grateful that my family was healthy, happy, and secure. When we returned to the large group to debrief, gratitude for safe travels, health, and peace of mind were the main feelings that people had. Father reviewed the Saturday and Sunday schedule and passed out two handouts including one on Joy, Gratitude, and Prayer. The one on Gratitude we were expected to read later tonight.

On Saturday, Morning Prayer service was delivered by David Rooney, a Chicago Paulist Associate, and the music was provided by Jackie Toepfer, another Chicago Paulist Associate. After the prayer service, Father Steve Petroff, associate pastor at Old St. Mary’s gave his presentation on Joy of the Gospel. Father Steve discussed his own experience with Joy and how it was hard to contemplate. He finally understood what Pope Francis was saying about joy as what we experience as God’s saving love. The positive and negative feelings we have, can through the effort of the movement of the Holy Spirit in our lives, bring us to joy. This recognition and trust can bring us hope and confidence. Christian joy of hope is because it springs from joy and the love of Jesus Christ. The best way to experience joy is by imitating Jesus by loving one another. We again broke into new discussion groups to think about serious moments in our lives that made us stop to see that Jesus was in our lives. How can we share that joy in our lives?

In my discussion group, this was hard for me because I had many moments that I knew Jesus was with me and it brought me joy. I have had serious surgeries/illnesses that would have caused me not to be here on this earth. However, the hope that I had that everything would be alright gave my family and me joy when the doctors said that I would be alright. This for me helped to see how the theme gratitude, joy, and prayer can bring hope and love through the Holy Spirit and Christ. Father Steve passed out his handout on Joy for us to read and reflect upon later in the evening.



*Paulist Associates in Chicago*

After our break, Father Brad Schoeberle, Old St. Mary's pastor, gave his presentation on Prayer. Father Brad stated that prayer comes across with music and readings, as well as reflection. He used Matthew and Luke to talk about prayer. Matthew is about the Lord's Prayer and Luke is the story of praying. Father Brad stated that thinking about prayer is not religious, but how we live our lives. The intentions that we pray at mass does not have to be the same for everyone. Father Brad used his experience on the Camino to talk about prayer. The walk to Camino gave the walkers and him a chance to reflect, admire the view, and contemplate on the journey. Everyone had thoughts during the first break on how far they had to go. Eventually those thoughts left as they got a chance to interact with the walkers and the reasons they were doing this. How did prayer relate to the walk to Camino? You had walkers who were doing this for the first time and their prayer was to enjoy this and get to Camino without having to stop because of illness or injury. Father also mentioned how often do we pray and how we make time to pray. The small group discussion was on how much leeway you give yourself to pray. Father Brad passed out his handout on Prayer for us to read and contemplate.

The small group discussion on how much leeway we give to prayer was varied. Some participants pray twice a day. Others prayed at certain times every day. I realized I was one of those that prayed at certain times which for me are at night before I go to bed. Occasionally, when I am driving long distances, I say a prayer for the drivers and me to get to our destination safely.

The evening prayer service was the Taize Prayer. Maryann Cushing, Old St. Mary Paulist Associate, designed and facilitated the prayer service with Jackie Toepfer on music.

Sunday morning prayer was presided by Fathers Kallock, Schoeberle, and Petroff. After the close of the prayer service, Father Mike had the participants reflect on the retreat. All of us felt that the theme helped us connect to Father Hecker. We also appreciated how the priests used their own personal experiences to present their topic. Their vulnerability helped us to show our own in the small group discussions. The breakout sessions were informative and insightful. There was powerful sharing among the participants. The fundamental experience we all felt was gratitude for the depth of our faith and the willingness to share our experiences with one another. The handouts that were given to us showed how the Bible gives us examples of Joy, Prayer, and Gratitude that we can use in our daily lives. The passage in St. Paul's, 1Thessalonians 5:16-18 states, "Rejoicing always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances" is what we needed to be mindful of as we go through our daily lives. We left the retreat fully energized and grateful for the friendships that were made this weekend.

*Reflection 2: By Heather McClory, a Paulist Associate, Toronto*

When going on retreat, I've always looked forward to sharing Mass and prayer times with new and old friends. Our Mass and prayer times at The Cenacle were certainly highlights of the July retreat.

In keeping with the retreat theme, they were inspiring opportunities to express joy in Christ's saving power, gratitude for new friends and for our mission as Associates, and to bring to God our prayers of hope and concern.

The prayers and Mass, which included Fr. Kallock's inspired and concise preaching, prayers which helped us to feel understand the retreat themes in our own way and the very relevant readings, created a holy place for our worship. I felt very comfortable in participating enthusiastically in the celebrations, especially since our leaders in song had picked such singable, easy to learn selections. The lovely setting of the Cenacle chapel, with its view of a beautiful garden in the heart of a big and busy city, gave me even more reason to be thankful for the privilege of spending time in retreat. What a lovely place in which we were able to receive Christ among friends.

Yet, even when, on the last day, our prayer service was located in the downstairs meeting room, these feelings of peace and holiness continued, because by then, I had come to know more of the Associates as my friends.

I would like, once again, to express my thanks to the Chicago Associates and the Associates and priests of the National Board for all their hard work in presenting such a successful retreat.

## ***Tucson Associates Update***

*By Larry Schnebly, Tucson Paulist Associate*

The Paulist Associates/Tucson are unique (aren't we ALL?! ) in some ways and NOT SO in others.

Unique is that we have no year-round Paulist presence in our parish, much like some other ex-Paulist Foundations, which ALSO begin with "T", strangely enough. St. Cyril's has been staffed by some excellent Carmelites, since the necessary departure of 'our' Paulists in 2006. Fr. Ed Pietrucha, now living at St. Paul the Apostle (retired, but in senior ministry!) was the person I would associate with our establishment in 2003. Fr. Ed continued to live in Tucson and met with us (as did Fr. Bill Dougherty until his death) before his move to NYC in May of 2014. (Fr. Ed's family lives in New Jersey!) We have continued to meet monthly except in June, July and August in keeping with Tucson hot-weather tradition, at the parish, where our 20+ members gather and invite you to join us at 10am if you are in the area on the first Saturday of the month! Fr. Frank Desiderio, so far has been able to combine a retreat at Tucson's Picture Rocks (Redemptorist) Center, with a visit to our group to hear the annual promises during his mass with us on the Saturday closest to the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, Apostle.

We have been enriched by Associates joining us as regulars from Chicago and Columbus.

We have been using the proposed programs from THE ASSOCIATES WORLD at times, as well as inviting experts in Carmelite, Dominican and Jesuit spirituality to tell us about their charisms and approaches to God. We are working to get representatives from Franciscan and Redemptorist traditions to do the same thing. It is impressive to feel the human journey of others as they seek to draw closer to the Divine Spirit, too.

We have spun off two study groups, one in pursuit of meditative contemplation and prayer....another following the writings of Pope Francis and other encyclicals, and although they are comprised of Associates mostly, we are inviting one and all to join us.

One of our members was willing to say YES to stand for election to the Paulist Associate Council, recently, also. So God's grace to us continues through our following the Paulist path.

## ***Upcoming Pilgrimages, Retreats, Events***

### **The Footsteps of Jesus: The Holy Land - March 30-April 10, 2019**

Paulist Fathers Thomas A. Kane and Bruce Nieli will lead an unforgettable 12-day pilgrimage to Israel and the Holy Land. Registration and pricing available now: <http://paulistpilgrimages.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Paulist-Pilgrimages-Holy-Land-Save-the-Date-Flyer.pdf>



### **The Footsteps of St. Paul: Greece and the Islands: May 21 – June 1, 2019**



Join Fathers Thomas A. Kane and Rich Andre for a 12-day pilgrimage to Greece and the Islands. Who better to explore Pauline sites than two members of the Paulist Fathers? St. Paul, our patron saint, is a key inspiration in our lives and ministry! Fr. Thomas has traveled extensively throughout the world, leading many pilgrimages in Greece and Turkey. His knowledge of art and culture will enhance the spiritual depth of our time together with special prayer services and liturgies. Fr. Rich has journeyed to the Holy Land, bringing scriptural insights and a liturgical enthusiasm to the group.

## ***Paulist Associate Board: Visions/Thoughts/Reflections***

Late breaking news is that Fr. Mike Kallock will now be our national director of the Paulist Associates. Next month we will hear from him on his thoughts for the Paulist Associates and as well as an introduction from him to all of us. In our newsletter each month we would like to introduce one of the Paulist Associate Board Members and keep you up to date with some of the national activities. This month **Cathy Hoekstra** invites us into the some of the activities and thoughts for the Paulist Associates:

“It was in December 2007 that the Paulist Associates in Grand Rapids made their first promises. There were twelve of us and we had been meeting monthly with Paulist Father Joe Gallagher for two and a half years discussing the Paulist mission, charisms, the Holy Spirit and related topics. It was a long but fruitful formation. I am a retired nurse who has been a Paulist Associate for ten years and have been involved in music ministry, parish nurse ministry, Eucharistic ministry, and am a member of our ecumenical committee.

In 2014, I was elected to the re-formed Paulist Associate National Board. Because there had not been an actively functioning board for four years, there was much to do.

During the past four years members of the board have participated in revising the Associate Handbook, developing a monthly newsletter (The Associates World), increasing the use of social media, and editing and organizing a collection of Isaac Hecker quotes. The board also decided to try to have regular national and regional retreats. There was outreach to Paulist Associates who were no longer able to meet with a group but wanted to continue their association. These “Diaspora” Associates meet through monthly conference calls. Currently, the board is working on updating the Formation Booklet and transcribing the formation talks so individuals can read them as well as listen to them.

My vision for the Associates’ board is that it will continue to look for ways to inspire and enhance communications with the Associates and the Paulist Fathers and to enhance the role of the Associates within the Paulist mission. The board has a role for setting standards of membership and formation of Associates through the Associates Handbook and the Formation Guide and by articulating the vision of Father Isaac Hecker, the Paulist Fathers, and the spirituality of the Holy Spirit.”

## ***Renewing Promises and Updating Lists of Associates***

We are always happy to hear about new Associates taking promises as well as current Paulists renewing theirs. Please post notices and photos on Facebook and let us know so we can add the information in this newsletter.

When these renewals take place, it would be helpful to all if the local coordinator would send an updated list of Associates to Kathleen Lossau so she can keep our contact list current. Please email contact information for those taking first promises and those renewing promises as well as a list of those who have opted not to renewing promises to Kathleen Lossau <klossau@austin.rr.com>.

## ***Looking for Newsletter Input***

New material for Associates World is always welcome. We would love to hear what is going on with your local organization. If you have material for the newsletter please contact Denis Hurley <dhpc18@gmail.com>.

## Proposed Program for This Month

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

*Thanks to Rev Bruce Nieli, CSP in Austin, TX*

**Theme: Fr. Hecker's thought and the current crises in the Catholic church**

### OPENING PRAYER

God, we ask you to make holy this place where we gather, to make holy our hearts as we consider these deep concerns, to make holy our voices and our senses as we speak and hear and feel the wisdom of our companions, to send your Spirit of Holiness to dwell with us and guide us in this time we spend together. Amen.

### READING (IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING)

*What would Father Hecker say regarding the current crises in Church and society?*

My short answer to the question is that he would reiterate what he said during his lifetime: What is needed is “a new awakening of the spirit of Christianity in America”... prayer and work for a “greater effusion of the Holy Spirit” in each individual human soul, updated to our time—ecumenically, interreligiously, and globally. In other words, a new Great Awakening.

Like the Transcendentalists with whom he lived, Isaac Hecker saw the need for social reform: “How could a man love his neighbor as himself and then accumulate wealth by their toil? How can those who believe that all men were created in the image of God, and redeemed by the blood of Christ, and therefore equal before God, treat them as drudges, servants, and slaves? Why should not those who profess Christianity imitate Christ in devoting themselves entirely to the spreading of the truth, the relief of the poor, and the elevation of the lower classes?” Such questions were also raised by the likes of Emerson, Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and the Alcotts.

The Transcendentalists, true children of the Enlightenment, reacted against the horrors of the abuses of religion, coming from such sources as the Inquisition, the Crusades, and the European religious wars—sadly, atrocities not very different in impact from the horrors of the present crisis in our Church. But unlike their Enlightenment brothers and sisters, the Transcendentalists wanted a spirituality, filling the deeply human hunger and thirst for unity, truth, goodness, and beauty—but a spirituality without religion (sound familiar?!). This hunger and thirst the young Hecker found satisfied in the indwelling Holy Spirit, which drew him to the mystical element of religion, especially the mysticism of Catholicism.

For a reform to take place, “it was my duty to begin with myself” were his words. These put him in sync with movements of spiritual conversion which have historically been called “Great Awakenings.” Evangelists like George Whitfield, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, Phoebe Palmer, Julia Ward Howe, Sojourner Truth and others served to



*Fruitlands, where Isaac Hecker stayed for a short while with a group of Transcendentalists is now a museum in Harvard, MA.*



unite America by first touching individual hearts and souls with the need for personal conversion and reform. From this came not only the unity of the 13 original colonies but also great reform movements like abolition of slavery and equal rights for women. But, to quote a contemporary song, “Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.”

The closest thing in my lifetime to the Great Awakening movements of the Spirit was the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950’s and 1960’s. And it was at that time that I made a decision to become a missionary priest. The dream of Dr. Martin Luther King—the table of brotherhood and sisterhood—has become for me the table of the Eucharist.

“The radical and adequate remedy for all the evils of our age, and the source of all true progress, consist in increased attention and fidelity to the action of the Holy Spirit in the soul” was at the core of Isaac Hecker’s vision for Church and society. As he prayed at the beginning of his spiritual journey: “Oh may I become more obedient, meek, humble, like Jesus Christ, my master, Lord, and saving Redeemer, to whom and to Thee and to the Holy Spirit my soul is indebted wholly without measure...Now oh Lord I ask in Jesus’ name give unto me more and more of thy loving Spirit. Fill my whole being that there may not remain anything but thy loving kindness.”

For some time now, especially since the intensification of the current moral crisis, I have made an effort to pay more attention to the movement of the Holy Spirit in my soul through increased fidelity to prayer, penance, and spiritual discipline. I have a long way to go! “Come, Holy Spirit!” But if enough of us make similar moves, more and more will we become channels of the Holy Spirit, building a more humble, holier Church and a more humble, holier nation. And we like Isaac Thomas Hecker, will do our small but important part in renewing the face of the earth in a future, “brighter than any past.”

#### CONVERSATION CATALYSTS:

1. In the midst of the present crisis in the Church, how do you react to the dream of Isaac Hecker: “In the union of Catholic faith and American civilization, a future for the Church brighter than any past!”
2. The current crisis in the Church is accompanied by a parallel crisis in American politics and culture. How can the Church and America help each other through the crisis?

#### NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Parent of us all, we ask keep us under your care as we leave this assembly. We thank you for filling this place with the Wisdom of your Spirit. We entreat you to send that Spirit with us into our daily lives and into the complicated, confusing and often misdirected world we inhabit. Remain with us, O God. Remember your people always. Allow us to bring your presence to all we encounter. 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

Mike Kallock, CSP  
Paulist General Office  
P.O. Box 20606  
New York, NY 10023  
[kallockcsp@paulist.org](mailto:kallockcsp@paulist.org)



### BOARD MEMBERS

Cathy Hoekstra  
Grand Rapids, MI  
[cathy\\_hoekstra@yahoo.com](mailto:cathy_hoekstra@yahoo.com)

Frank Desiderio, CSP  
[frankd@paulist.org](mailto:frankd@paulist.org)

Katherine Murphy Mertzluft  
Columbus, OH  
[ktnm608@gmail.com](mailto:ktnm608@gmail.com)

Joe Scott, CSP  
[frjoe@oldsaintmarys.org](mailto:frjoe@oldsaintmarys.org)

David Rooney  
Chicago, IL  
[drooney@ymail.com](mailto:drooney@ymail.com)

Mary Sullivan  
Boston, MA  
[marysullivan6@gmail.com](mailto:marysullivan6@gmail.com)

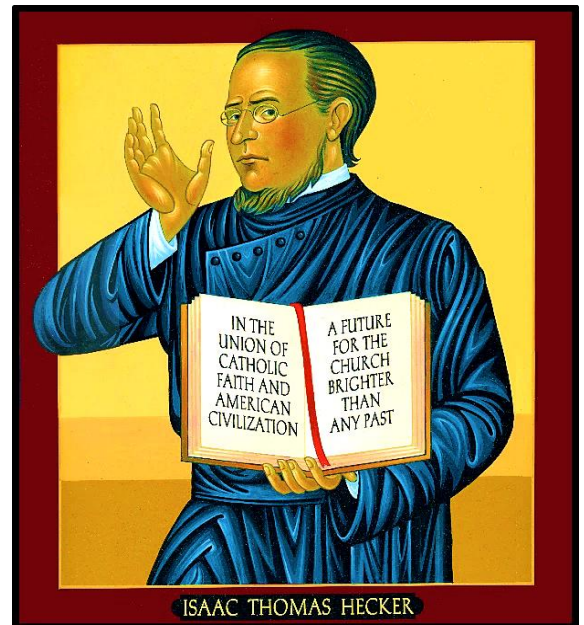
## PRAYER FOR THE INTERCESSION OF FATHER ISAAC T. HECKER, SERVANT OF GOD

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](mailto: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.*