

# The Associates World

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## Homily To Open Fr. Hecker's Bicentennial

By Fr. Frank Desiderio, CSP

Are you optimistic?

In the morning, when your eyes first open to greet the new day  
Do you say *Thank You God* or do you see vultures circling your bed?

Do you see your future with joy? Do you feel positive about our  
society? Are you hopeful about our church?

Fr. Isaac Hecker was optimistic.

It was his defining characteristic.

His genuine positive attitude is one thing that made him attractive to so  
many.

He wasn't a Pollyanna or naive. He was very aware of sin in the  
human person and problems in the world.

But, he was optimistic despite profound disappointments in his life.

In 1858, when the Paulists were founded, the Church was embroiled in a traditionalist and  
progressive split – similar to controversies we have today. The traditional Catholics wanted to bolster the  
power of the Pope and define his teaching as infallible.

More progressive Catholics, Fr. Hecker among them, were wary of such a definition.

In 1871, Fr. Hecker was in Rome for the First Vatican Council. He served as a theological advisor  
to bishop James Gibbons of South Carolina. He witnessed the vote which defined Papal infallibility. He  
went home disappointed, worried about how this would affect relations with Americans who were  
already suspicious of papal power. Americans were hostile toward anything that looked like a monarchy.

Yet, Fr. Hecker still saw the church as the best avenue for the salvation of individual souls  
and the best way to reform society.

He said, "The church of Christ on the divine side is always perfect, on the human side always  
imperfect. This is why reform in the church is always in order, separation never."



There's something we need to remember as we confront the scandals in our church today and work to heal the division in our church.

Today we also experience our society being polarized.

Remember, right after the Paulists were founded Fr. Hecker lived through the civil war. The country tore itself in two. Families were shooting at each other. I'm sure Fr. Hecker read the reports of battles such as Gettysburg, Antietam and Shiloh, where streams were turned red with blood.

As a young man he experienced first-hand the problems of poor immigrants, and the abuse of workers.

He and his brothers not only worked for reform through the Working Man's Party, but Isaac, as a junior partner in the Hecker Brothers' Flour Company, spent a lot of his time creating better living and working conditions for the employees of the company.

He started out as a social reformer, but became disillusioned by New York politics and turned to religion to find a better way. But he never lost his love for his country ... or his appreciations for its values: liberty, the willingness to try something new, individual initiative, and democratic decision making.

He said, "We seem to fear intelligence, freedom, energy and all that goes into making us human, when the absence of these is more to be deplored than the danger of their abuse."

He was optimistic about the Paulist Fathers even though his mission preaching partner, Fr. Clarence Walworth, one of the original five founders of the Paulists left the community early on, and another, Fr. Baker, died young, leaving them shorthanded.

These converts to Catholicism who founded the Paulists' saw their mission to preach to non-Catholics and make converts. They did not see themselves as taking on a parish. However, They took on this parish (*St. Paul the Apostle in New York City*) in 1859 There is a reason the first side altar you see when you come in the church is dedicated to St. Patrick.

They ministered to the devout and the uncertain. And that kept them busy. They could not carry out their purpose until more men joined them.

Still, Fr. Hecker was optimistic even through the illness that led to his death in 1888. In 1887, the year before his death, he wrote a book called *The Church and the Age*.

In it he wrote: "The Church is divine, moved by the Holy Spirit in all her supreme and vital acts. ...The Divine Spirit embodied in the Church and the Divine Spirit indwelling in every Christian soul are one and the same Divine Spirit, and they bear testimony to each other, and work together for the same end. <sup>1</sup>"

Optimism is not the same thing as hope. Optimism is an attitude that says *things are going to work out*. Hope is a theological virtue about trusting God. St. Paul tells us that hope is a gift of the Holy Spirit, along with faith and love.

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<sup>1</sup> (1886, *The Church and the Age*, p.146; *Paulist Vocation*, p.219)

Fr. Hecker's optimism, his conviction that he was on the right path sprang from his hope. His hope sprang from his connection to the Holy Spirit.

He believed along with St. Paul that, "All things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. <sup>2</sup>"

Why was he optimistic?

In Catholicism he saw the answer to the deep and fundamental questions of the human soul.

He was not a Pollyanna. He was a mystic. He experienced God directly. From a young age, Hecker experienced the Holy Spirit, even before he had a name for the experience.

His experience of God gave him a vision, which he shared with a Pentecostal fire. He saw a vision of people – as good. He saw a way to goodness – God's grace. In democracy he saw a good political system, but it would only work if good people made good decisions.

The way to make people good is through the Church and the way to make good decisions is through the Holy Spirit. His vision of the church was as the way for people to tap into the flow of God's grace and allow people to make good decisions so that they could govern themselves rightly.

As we Paulists celebrate the bicentennial of Fr. Hecker's birth, we rearticulate for ourselves his vision for us. We Sons of Hecker re-recommit ourselves to that vision of appealing to the best in our fellow Americans, of inviting them to taste God's grace, and of invigorating them to do the best that is in them.

I will end with the paraphrase of another quote from Fr. Hecker taken from *The Church and the Age*:

*What we hope for are*  
**People** whose minds are enlightened and  
 Whose wills are strengthened  
 By the increased **action** of the Holy Spirit.  
**People** whose countenances are lit up with heavenly joy,  
 Who breathe an air of inward **peace**,  
**People** act with holy liberty and a resistless energy.  
 These are the people and this is the way,  
 If the age could only be made to see and believe it,  
 To universal restoration,  
 Universal reconciliation,  
 And universal **progress**.

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<sup>2</sup> Romans 8:28

## Old St. Mary's Paulist Associates 2017-18 in Review

By: Levita Anderson, Paulist Associate

There have been many changes this past year and a half. We welcomed a new member to the Paulist Associates - Sandra Bell - and welcomed our newest associate priest - Father Steve Petroff - in 2017. We had a Paulist retreat for our newest member to introduce her to the Paulist community and to her role as a Paulist associate in the Fall of 2017.

We said goodbye to Father Bob Carey, who left us May 29, 2018 to retire to Grand Rapids, Michigan to teach and preach in the area. Father Paul Huesing also retired to Vero Beach, Florida to be the coordinator of the local Paulist community in July of 2018. We will miss them both and wish them good luck on their new journey.

Our Paulist associates planned the regional retreat that was held at Chicago Cenacle on July 13-15, 2018. I worked with Linda Rumpee to make sure we had enough snacks and beverages for the retreat. During our monthly meetings, we discussed readings from "Becoming Catholic Even if You Happen to be One" by J. Killgallon, M. O'Shaughnessy, O.P., and Gerard P. Weber, and how it relates to our mission as Paulist associates and what it means to be Catholic. During this time, we also welcomed our newest pastor, Father Brad Schoeberle, who got his "feet wet" being a presenter at the regional Paulist retreat. Father Brad presided over the Rite of Commitment and Promise on August 12, 2018 where Sandra Bell made her first commitment and promise as an associate. The following associates renewed their commitment and promise: Mary Ann Cushing, Jan Newport, David Rooney, Jacqueline Toepfer, Betty Kenny, Suzie Faigao, Dorothy O'Malley, Levita Anderson, and Kurt Ballard. Paulist associates Linda Rumpee and Penny Mangan were unable to attend due to prior commitments.



**Figure 1: Old St. Mary's Paulist Associates**  
 Back row: Linda Rumpee, Sandra Bell, Levita Anderson, Jan Newport, Mary Ann Cushing, and Kurt Bullard  
 Front row: Dorothy O'Malley, Suzie Faigao, and Betty Kenny  
 Absent were David Rooney and Jacqueline Toepfer



Back row: Father Steve Petroff, Father Daniel McCotter (ret), Kurt Bullard, Jacqueline Toepfer, David Rooney, Mary Ann Cushing, and Father Patrick Johnson  
 Front row: Father Brad Schoeberle, Sandra Bell, Dorothy O'Malley, Jan Newport, Betty Kenny, Suzie Faigao, and Levita Anderson  
 Absent was Linda Rumpee

On November 4, 2018, Bishop Robert Casey from the Archdiocese of Chicago officially installed Father Brad as pastor of Old St. Mary's Church. Paulist President Father Eric Andrews attended the installation.

Bishop Casey joked that he was not sure how to install a priest, but he does know how to install appliances. So he decided to use his expertise in installing appliances as an analogy for Father Brad's installation. Bishop Casey stated that all appliances have a function. Father Brad's function is to administer to the needs of the people of the parish and himself. In order for appliances to work they must be connected. Father Brad must connect to the workings of the Church, parish, and the people. The final analogy was communication. Once appliances are



connected, they must be able to communicate their functionality. Father Brad must be able to communicate with the people of the parish, parish staff, parish pastoral members, and other organizations and committees for the parish to grow financially, to retain and attract new parishioners, and meet the needs/concerns of the community. The ceremony was beautiful as various members of the parish presented him with the tools of his office: The Cross, Bible, and the offering basket.

What a wonderful way to begin Thanksgiving and demonstrate how thankful we are for the end of the year. It also prepared us to usher in Advent and the Christmas season, while preparing us for the challenges and blessings of 2019.

## *Upcoming Pilgrimages, Retreats, Events*

### 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.



## The Loyola Experience: July 4-14

A ten-day Retreat Pilgrimage into the Heart of Ignatius Loyola with Frs. Thomas A. Kane, CSP and Geoff Wheaton, SJ. Our life is a pilgrimage, a journey of faith to deeper communion with God and with one another. In many traditions, the faithful travel as pilgrims along the paths of the saints. Join us on this retreat-pilgrimage to Spain as we pray together, enjoy new sites, experience community, and deepen our awareness of God's grace. As we trace the life and spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola, we also celebrate the common life we share with fine wines and regional foods.



We begin in Bilbao with a visit to the Guggenheim Museum and continue to the town of Azpeitia for a three-day retreat at the Casa Arrupe near the Sanctuary of Loyola. We have retreat talks on the life of Ignatius of Loyola and special prayer opportunities at various pilgrimage sites nearby. We journey next to Pamplona, where Ignatius was wounded, then on to Javier, the birthplace of St. Francis Xavier. As we make our way south, we visit the ancient monastery of Leyre.

Come join us in discovering the richness of our vast spiritual tradition as we journey through these historic lands. This pilgrimage promises to broaden your faith and be one of the most memorable experiences of your life. **Registration will open and a complete itinerary will be available in fall 2018.**

## The Splendors of Eastern Europe and Oberammergau - September 19-October 1, 2020

*An 11-day pilgrimage with Paulist Father Thomas A. Kane on an unforgettable pilgrimage to Eastern Europe. See the once-a-decade performance of the world-famous Oberammergau passion play and explore the breathtaking cities of Budapest, Prague, and Vienna. Register online at: <http://www.paulist.org/pilgrimages/eastern-europe/>*

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I invite you to join us on our Splendors of Eastern Europe and Oberammergau pilgrimage with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attend the world famous Passion Play in 2020. The villagers of Oberammergau first performed the play in 1634 in fulfillment of their promise to God for sparing them from the Black Plague, and it has been presented there every ten years since then.

Our journey will take us to some of Europe's most interesting countries including the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria and Germany. The scenery is absolutely spectacular as we travel through the plains and valleys of the magnificent Eastern European countryside. The points of interest are very diverse, spotlighting historical places and natural wonders. We will also celebrate the liturgy in some wonderful churches along the way.

In addition to our time in Oberammergau, we will have the opportunity to enjoy visits to Prague, the beautiful 1,000-year-old capital of the Czech Republic; Budapest, Hungary's enchanting capital on the Danube River; Vienna, Austria's elegant city with an old world ambience and a rich musical heritage; and Munich, the capital of Bavaria.

The price of our tour includes roundtrip airfare, first class/select hotels and guesthouses in Oberammergau, most meals, first class admission tickets for the Passion Play, the services of a professional tour director and sightseeing in a deluxe motor coach.

***SAVE THE DATE***  
**Paulist National Retreat**  
**22 – 26 July 2019**

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

*By Rev. Rene Costanza, CSP*

It is with deep sorrow that the Paulists in Grand Rapids announce the death of our beloved Associate, Paulist Hoekstra. As many of you who are close to her know, she fought a long battle with cancer that had metastasized to her bone and soft tissue. She tried every treatment that was available and was a fighter till the very end.



She had formed a large network among friends and parishioners here at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew and the Catholic Information Center. There is no doubt that she LOVED the Paulist community.

She was on the Paulist Associates board. Being of strong will and character, she tried to remain active till the very end.

She was a person of great faith, hope and zeal for Paulist mission. We were very fortunate to have commemorated Father Hecker's 199th birthday with her and the other Paulist Associates of Grand Rapids. (Cathy entered Eternal Life on December 28th.)

May she rest in God's loving embrace!

***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.)

Submitted by Mary Sullivan, Paulist Associate/Board Member

### THEME: Paul, the First Missionary.

#### OPENING PRAYER

We love Your Word and choose to make it central in our life. Your Word is alive and active—It's sharper than any double-edged sword—It judges the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts. We long to align ourselves spiritually with You and Your Word every day. We want to pray your Word with greater faith and obedience in our lives as we approach this New Year. Amen

#### READING (IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING)

We celebrate the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul on January 25, 2019. As we contemplate this great feast, what do we really know of Paul? What was he like? If we lived during his time, would we have listened to him? Would we have found him convincing?

Thomas Cahill, devotes a chapter in his book, *Desire of the Everlasting Hills* (Anchor Books, 1999), to "Paul's Jesus". He describes "Saul-Paul" as a "Pharisee, one of the party of rabbis who had gradually grown suspicious of Jesus and set themselves against his teaching on the Law and who were now beginning to speak of him not as the promised Messiah but as an unworthy renegade from authentic Judaism."

Paul was, to say the least, an unusual man, sophisticated for his day with a thorough Jewish education. He understood and spoke Greek. He was, as Cahill writes, "... an intellectual overachiever, pushed repeatedly to success by a keenly competitive father, Paul had no time for ordinary social niceties and neither gave, nor expected to receive, normal social comforts. One can imagine him sitting uncomfortably in some conventional parlor, staring penetratingly at his hostess while trying to find some Meaning in her inquiry as to whether he took one lump or two."

Yet, his intellectual capabilities enabled him, after his mystical experience, to bring shape and form to the absolutely startling and overwhelming story of who Jesus was.

Despite his towering role in history, though, he was still a solitary soul in the world. As Cahill writes

"This driven man (driven by his zeal for the Gospel), this caring man (attempting to sympathize with all his charges, perhaps even with everyone he met), is remembered today not so much for the effectiveness of his preaching, the warmth of his sympathy, or even the extent of his labors as for the words he left behind in his surviving letters, which are still read each Sunday in churches throughout out the world – all those churches for which he felt such anxiety. Dimly, we can seem him entering a new marketplace for the first time, setting up his modest booth, engaging in conversation whomever he can – potential customers, their servants, his fellow merchants. We can see him taking a room in the tiny house of some merchant from a neighboring booth, gradually gathering a small community around him, instructing them in the Gospel and watching it take root among them. Then far into the night, sometimes with the help of a friendly scribe, sometimes alone, he scratches his letters to the church-communities he has had to leave behind, trying to find the right words, the words that will catch fire in their hearts and enable them to keep going. If nothing else, the overwhelming loneliness of this man – always beginning again, always



‘a stranger in a strange land’, always opening and closing his letters by naming distant friends, always recalling his ties of affection to those he has had to leave behind – should impress us.”

### CONVERSATION CATALYSTS

Many would agree that Paul was controversial but, as Daniel J. Harrington, SJ writes in his book *Meeting St. Paul Today* (Loyola Press, 2008), “The Church of the twenty-first century can learn much from Paul”.

Harrington includes some specific things that can be learned from Paul. Do you agree? Discuss.

“We can learn about the church as the body of Christ and the people of God, and about our continuing relationship with the Jewish people.”

“We can learn that each Christian has been gifted by the Holy Spirit and must use those gifts for the common good and so build up the body of Christ.”

“We can learn to appreciate better the Eucharist or Lord’s Supper as the sacrament of ongoing Christian life, and that we all stand as equals before God in the Christian community”

“We can learn to recognize the prominence of women in Paul’s mission and ministry, and the high value that Paul placed on collaborative ministry.”

“We can learn about the value of order and structure in Christian community life as a means of directing our spiritual energies into words and actions that edify those in the church and those outside it.”

“We can learn from the personal example of Paul who supported his own ministry, suffered for the gospel and shared the good news “like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children”.

“We can learn from Paul, the pastoral theologian who dealt with the real problems of his fellow Christians in the light of the gospel and who developed his theology in relation to his work as a pastor.”

### NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### CLOSING PRAYER TAKEN FROM THE CLOSING OF HECKER’S CHRISTMAS SERMON

O God, Who taught the multitude of the Gentiles by the preaching of St. Paul the Apostle, grant unto us that we, who keep his memory sacred, may feel the might of his intercession before You. We ask this, as we ask all things, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

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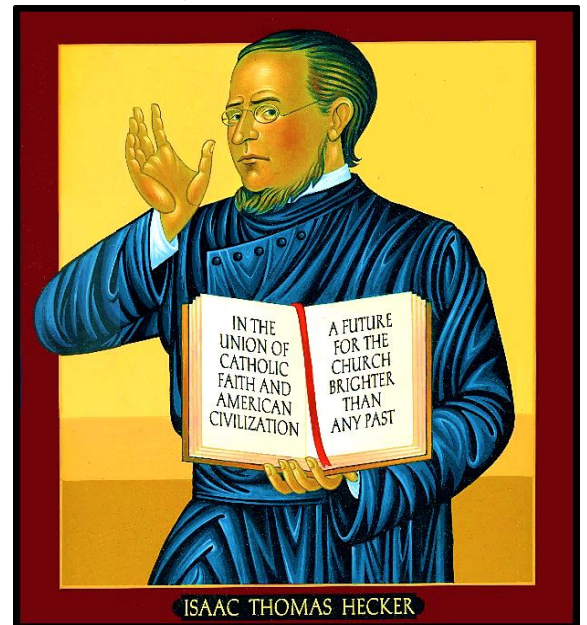
## PRAYER FOR THE INTERCESSION OF FATHER ISAAC T. HECKER, SERVANT OF GOD

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](mailto:heckercause@paulist.org). Visit the web site: <http://www.isaachecker.org/> to learn more about his life and the cause for his canonization.



ISAAC THOMAS HECKER

## 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.*