

The Associates World

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Becoming Paulist Associates: A Journey with Paul, Francis and Hecker

By Ann Beisch (with Jen Owens-Ornellas) LA Associates

Last spring we were invited by our parish Paulist Associates to attend one of their meetings. The invitation surprised me but the call was clear. The Associates were about to begin a summer reading of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*. It was the beginning of a new session, the participants were familiar and the timing was just right in more ways than one.

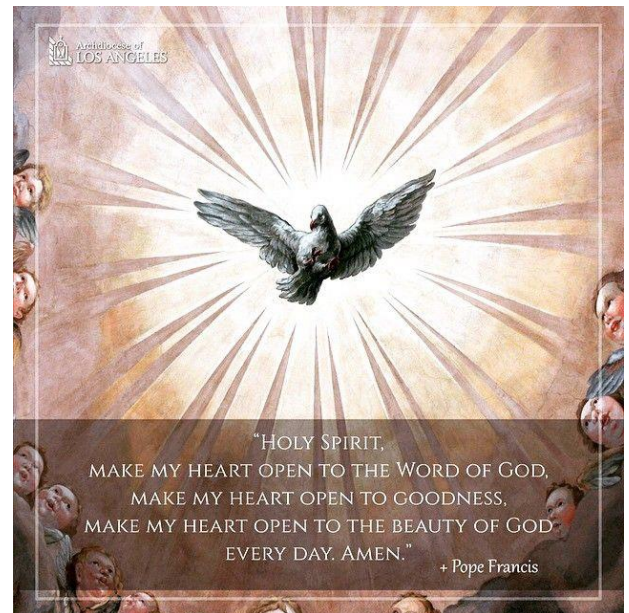
Jen is a convert and I am a "lifer". Both of us had found our spiritual home within St. Paul, the Apostle Parish and community in Los Angeles.

In my case, I have been a member of this Paulist parish and the Paulist mission at University of California, Los Angeles, for years, and possess my own dog-eared copy of the Paulist prayer book with its choice excerpts from the writings of Isaac Hecker, and epistles of St. Paul.

At this same time, our Parish bible study was completing an exhaustive study of the Galatian and Roman Letters of St. Paul by the Jesuit biblical scholar and author, Brendan Byrne. It was a complex and at times difficult analysis but it opened so many doors, insights and personal understanding of Paul.

I could say that, for most of my adult Catholic life, I accepted the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ just like accepting the fact that when the traffic light turns green, you go. But after our study of Paul, this analysis transformed my whole perception of the Crucifixion, understanding it as death to an old life, old laws and old norms right now. And Paul's writing on the Resurrection revealed to me, the new life through Christ that is going on right here and now in my life, redefining aspirations, intent and to whom I answer.

This study of Paul concluded just as we started to read Pope Francis' work, *The Joy of the Gospel*, with the Paulist Associates. While St. Paul is exhorting us to "die" to the old and be reborn in Christ, Francis writes movingly that, "There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter."



And these words struck me. I came to realize that some Christians see their faith as a burden with no joy when it should be the source of hope and regeneration in God's love. This is an essential tenet of the Paulist vision as defined by Paulist Founder, Father Isaac Hecker.

Pope Francis points out that many Christians have an "ostentatious preoccupation for the liturgy, for doctrine, and for the Church's prestige, but without any concern that the gospel have a real impact" on people's lives. His writings reflect the intent and direction of Father Hecker -- that basically the Church and its doctrines and practices are there to bring Christians closer to God and spread the gospel.

Hecker writes, "Most of our troubles arise from unreal causes. They are the effects of exaggerations, or inordinate desires, or mistaken views of honor or duty. Would we only be willing to see things as they are, and be willing to be just what we are, we should find more good in the world and in creation, than some religious writers would be willing to acknowledge."

And like Pope Francis, Isaac Hecker contends that all the sacraments of the Church, her authority, prayer both mental and vocal, spiritual reading, exercises of mortification and of devotion, have for their end and purpose to lead the soul to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Hecker says in essence, "What else is the Church in all her activities than the means instituted by God to place all souls in more direct and complete communication with Himself, and of rendering those participators in His substance – Divine Expansion!" The promise that a Paulist Associate is asked to make is a support of this Catholic Paulist vision and mission.

Based on a new familiarity with some of Hecker's writings, a better understanding of St. Paul's letters, and the directed focus of Pope Francis' Joy of the Gospel, Jen and I decided to take the next step with the Paulist Associates. We prepared by individually listening and taking notes on the six formation sessions tapes We then came together on a Saturday afternoon to discuss each tape.

Within that all-encompassing session, together we found our previous study of St. Paul, our reading of Hecker, the formation tapes on St. Paul, Hecker and the Paulist mission and spirituality as well as the message of Pope Francis all came together. The words of St. Paul come back to tie this ongoing journey together: "Now, instead of the spirit of the world, we have received the Spirit that comes from God, to teach us to understand the gifts that he has given us" (1 Corinthians 2:12).

Serious Paulist Associates are disciples who learn to cherish this gift and put it to good use in our actions and prayer.

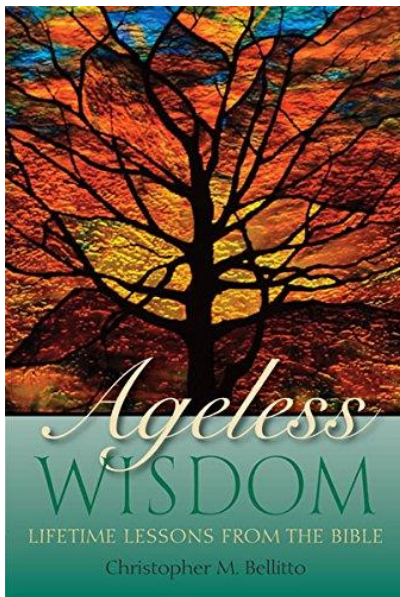
Please pray for us, Ann and Jen

Summer Reading Suggestions

We reached out to our fellow Paulist Associates and asked them for book reviews to give people suggestions for summer readings.



Ageless Wisdom: Lifetime Lessons from the Bible



Christopher M. Bellitto Paulist Press 152 Pages. Paperback, \$18.95 (Kindle Edition \$9.99)

One of the great values of Scripture is its ability to speak the voices and bring to life the circumstances of our ancestors in faith, allowing us to see how they dealt with situations that are very much like those we all face. In this short but powerful book, Kean University Professor Christopher Bellitto guides us in drawing wisdom from the Bible stories we read and hear. Comfortably readable chapters (including “Blessings and Burdens,” “Patience and Humor,” and “Let’s Make a Deal, God,”) elicit lessons that are, in fact, agelessly relevant.

Denis M. Hurley, Boston Associate

Can You Let Go of a Grudge?

Fr. Frank Desiderio, CSP

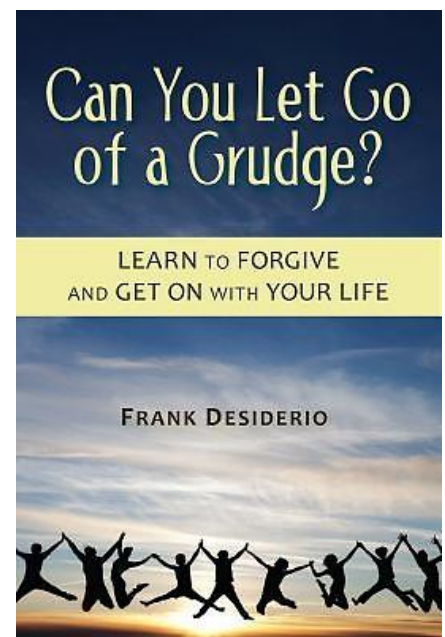
At St. Peter’s, we try to keep the Paulist spirit alive with retreats and missions. During Lent 2020, Fr. Frank will present his forgiveness retreat.

It’s based on his book, “Can You Let Go of a Grudge?” a practical guide about forgiveness that you can follow no matter how difficult, long standing or bitter your feelings are.

It introduces exercises you can use to get to a point where you can forgive and move on without malice. First you examine what went wrong, how it has hurt you and how you can “decisionally” forgive the person on the basis of empathy. You don’t have to forgive 100% at this stage. Next step is to “emotionally” forgive - a fuller, more lasting forgiveness.

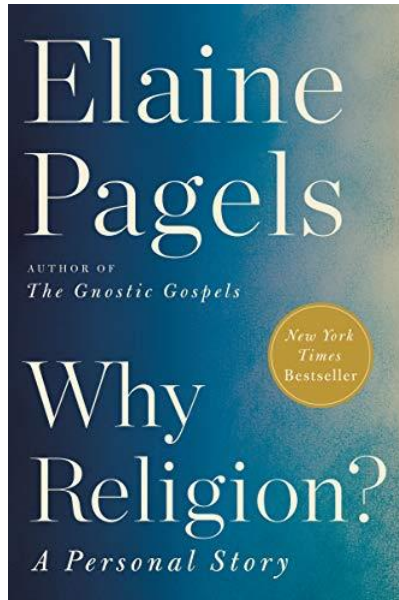
You forgive and take things one day at a time. Sometimes bitterness returns and you start over. I’ve read the book more than once. It’s very useful for change and active learning about the spirituality of forgiveness.

Heather McClory, Toronto Associate



Why Religion: A Personal Story.

Elaine Pagels, Harper Collins Publisher, 235+pages, paperback \$20/Kindle \$13



As I have grown older, I think of life as a journey. Elaine Pagels' "search for the essence of Christianity" is one key to her journey with its accomplishments and suffering.

Why Religion is her reflection on that search begun as a child in a family with conflicts about religion – a search that continues to this day. Her success as a scholar studying the Dead Sea Scrolls and the books found at Nag Hammadi in Egypt, the non-canonical gospels, (some of which are now on my to read list), her grief and struggle just to function after the death of her young son and husband within eighteen months, plus the joy of raising their two adopted children led her to hold that the many bonds that connect us to each other and "whatever is beyond" is the true essence of religion. Knowing that there is grace that heals

hearts, she can assent to the Jewish prayer "Blessed art Thou, Lord God of the Universe, that you have

brought us alive to see this day."

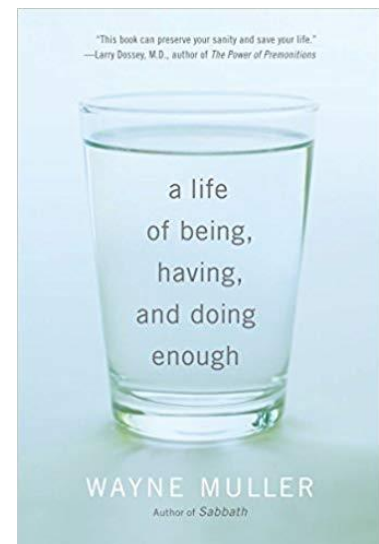
Mary Burke, Boston Associate

A LIFE OF BEING, HAVING, AND DOING ENOUGH

Wayne Muller (Penguin Random House, 2010, approx. 240 pages).

In poetic prose spread across 61 3-to-5-page chapters, Muller tackles the all-too-common perplexities of 21st-century living. How can I get everyone on my to-do" list done? How do I stop myself from acquiring more material goods? How can I convince myself the God loves me as I am?

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/200183/a-life-of-being-having-and-doing-enough-by-wayne-muller/9780307591395/>



Fr. Rich Andre, CSP, St. Austin, Austin TX

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

There will be no July Issue, but we are still accepting new material for August and beyond.

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>.

New Members Approved for First Commitment

We are pleased to announce that Marc Fennell and Frank and Nancy D'Amico were approved for membership in the Paulist Associates. Our congratulations to them and the Paulist Associates and Paulists of Grand Rapids who helped in their preparation and formation. We look forward to hearing from them when Marc, Nancy and Frank make their first commitment.

Mike Kallock, CSP

Director of the Paulist Associates

**Associates Retreat at the Paulist Fathers Summer Home
St. Mary's of the Lake at Lake George, NY
Monday, July 22 – Friday, July 26**



The Registration Deadline is June 15. Eighteen have already registered and there is room for only twelve more.

Check in Monday afternoon, supper at 6:30 followed by the Opening Session. Retreat ends Friday morning (July 26) lunch optional.

Full details, with registration form can be found in the March or April Associates World Newsletters. The Newsletters can also be found online on the Paulist Fathers Website: www.paulist.org

THEME: God...through Christ has given us the Ministry of Reconciliation (2 Cor 18)

Upcoming Pilgrimages, Retreats, Events

The Holy Land: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus - February 10 to 21, 2020

St. Jerome called the Holy Land “The Fifth Gospel.” Today, many people say that to visit the Holy Land is to see the Bible in color, in 3D, or in high definition. Come with [Paulist Fr. Rich Andre](#) and Mr. Sergio Pellicano to experience the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in new and powerful ways! We will have Mass every day, including in many of the holiest sites of Christianity. A secondary focus of our pilgrimage will be getting to know the various peoples currently living in the Holy Land.

We will spend our first six days in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas. ([Click here to download the proposed itinerary.](#))



The Splendors of Eastern Europe and Oberammergau - Sep 19-Oct 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.

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.

Proposed Program for This Month

(It is strongly suggested during the Bicentennial Year of Hecker's Birth that all groups follow the basic theme for the designated month.)

Submitted by Mary Sullivan, Paulist Associate (Boston)/Board Member

THEME: THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE INDIVIDUAL

OPENING PRAYER:

A PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR WISDOM(written by Fr. Louis O'Hara, C.S.P. found in the Paulist Prayer Book)

O Holy Spirit, shed your light upon our hearts. Teach us to know and understand your hidden ways. Assist our Study by bringing your divine wisdom to our aid, so that we may learn to know and love you, whose glory shines through all your works. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord. **Amen.**

READING (IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING):

"It is an error, and a gross one, to declare that the essence of Christianity is authority. It is no such thing. Authority never was and never can be the essence of anything, much less the essence of the highest and best of all things—religion. The essence of Christianity in its relation to man is the elevation of rational creatures, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to a union with God above that which they enjoy by their birth. Thus religion communicates to the human soul the indwelling Holy Spirit, who superadds to the relation man received from his Maker in the act of creation one that makes him a participator in the divine nature and which transforms him from a creature into a child of God.

Authority is always secondary to something else as its end, never an end in itself. Hence authority may be defined in its most general sense as a power subservient to the end for which people are associated together. Thus parental authority is subservient to the proper rearing and education of children. Political authority is subservient to the securing of the general welfare of a people. The authority of the Church is subservient to the end for which the Christian religion was revealed—that is, the promotion and safeguard of the action of the indwelling Holy Spirit by which the soul is united to God. Therefore it may be laid down as an axiom of Christianity that the outward authority of the church effaces itself in a direct ratio to the action of the Holy Spirit within the soul. (This is but another way of enunciating St. Augustine's well known maxim. Ama Deum et fa quod vis. Love God and do what you will."

Fr. Isaac Hecker, C.S.P. "The Church and the Age", pop. 197-98

CONVERSATION CATALYSTS:

1. How do I experience the Holy Spirit encouraging my particular gifts and talents?
How do I experience the Holy Spirit challenging/transforming my particular faults and weaknesses?

2. How do I discover what is the will of the Holy Spirit v. my will. How does the Holy Spirit speak to me within my heart? How does the Holy Spirit speak to me in other people or situations?
3. As a member of many communities, including the Church and the Paulist Associates, how can I discern and contribute to the common good?

CLOSING PRAYER:

PRAYER FOR A HOLY HEART (written by St. Thomas More, found in the Paulist Prayer Book).

Lord, grant me a holy heart that sees always what is fine and pure and is not frightened at the sight of sin, but creates order wherever it goes.

Grant me a heart that knows nothing of boredom, weeping and sighing.

Let me not be too concerned with the bothersome thing I call "myself."

Lord, give me a sense of humor, and I will find happiness in life and profit for others.

Amen.

Proposed Program for Next Month

As there will not be a July Issue of The Associates World, Mike Kallock, CSP has submitted the following for those groups who will be meeting in July.

(It is strongly suggested during the Bicentennial Year of Hecker's Birth that all groups follow the basic theme for the designated month.)

THEME: The Holy Spirit and the Church in the Thoughts and Spirituality of Father Hecker

OPENING PRAYER:

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who, by the light of the Holy Spirit, instructed the hearts of the faithful, grant that, by the same Spirit, we may know what is right and always rejoice in the Spirit's consolation, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

REFLECTION ON THE THEME:

When I think of the Holy Spirit and the Church I immediately fall back on the simple (but profound) notion that we were taught in Sunday School – The Holy Spirit gave birth to the Church on Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is at the core, the heart of the Church's very existence.

I don't think I exaggerate when I say that for us Paulists and Paulist Associates no one in our "modern age" experienced and expressed the centrality of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church better than our founder, Servant Isaac Hecker.

Below are a few of my favorite quotes from Hecker on the Holy Spirit and the Church followed by a discussion question to challenge and stretch our understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church.

FROM THE WRITINGS OF FATHER HECKER:

1. *The Christian Church dates her birth from the day of Pentecost, when she was endowed from on high with the never-failing presence of the Holy Spirit who is her indwelling life and power.*
2. *It is from the Holy Spirit we are to look for the renewal of the life and strength and glory of the Church.*
3. *The Holy Spirit is received by the sacramental grace of baptism, and renewed by the other sacraments; also in prayer ... hearing sermons, reading the Scriptures or devout books, and on occasions, extraordinary or ordinary, in the course of daily life*
4. *The sum of the spiritual life consists in observing and yielding to the movements of the Spirit of God in the soul, employing for this purpose all exercises of prayer, spiritual reading, sacraments, the practice of virtues and good works.*

EACH ONE SHARE WITH YOUR GROUP HOW HECKER'S EMPHASIS ON THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH HAS IMPACTED YOUR OWN VIEW AND EXPERIENCE IN THE CHURCH.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Send the fire of your Holy Spirit deep within us, Lord, so that we can serve you with devotion and please you with our hearts, minds, and actions. We pray this through 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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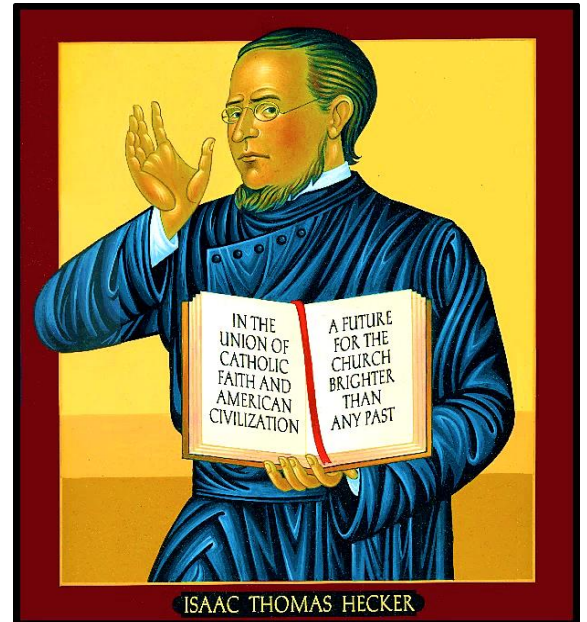
PRAYER FOR THE INTERCESSION OF FATHER ISAAC T. HECKER, SERVANT OF GOD

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. 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.