

# The Associates World

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## Lent, Easter, Ramadan: Catholic-Muslim Resonance

Submitted by Tom Ryan, C.S.P.

We recently came out of Lent, and are currently celebrating the joy of Easter. But, in this time of universal distress due to the corona virus pandemic, understanding the ways in which other faithful people reach into themselves as we do in Lent and Holy Week has its benefits.

For starters, let's just review for ourselves the origins of Lent, for doing so will help us appreciate all the more the season we're now in, Easter. When we look at Lent's origins, we see that it does not begin with the burning of palms on Ash Wednesday but the pouring of Baptismal water at Easter.

Were we to seek a path to guide us through the days of Lent, we would not just walk on the narrow road of penitential introspection but also the wide road of baptismal consecration. Through its twofold theme of repentance and baptism, the season of Lent disposes both the catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery of the Lord's death, resurrection, and sending forth the Holy Spirit.

Indeed, the origin, goal and meaning of the forty days of Lent are discovered by gazing *first* on the Three Great Days from Holy Thursday eve through Good Friday and Holy Saturday to Easter Sunday eve— in other words, the Paschal Triduum.

The season of Lent is a time of deepening and renewal of our own baptismal identity and mission, and a communal preparation for the baptismal celebration that is Easter's Vigil.

In short, the forty days of Lent are about baptismal remembrance. The Three Great Days are about renewal and celebration of baptismal identity. And the fifty days of the Easter season are about our common baptismal mission to the world. They are like a Sunday to the whole year.

### Ramadan

On April 23 this year, our Muslim neighbors entered into Ramadan, their devotional period somewhat similar to our Lent, and they will be engaged in their daily practice until May 24. In the *hadith*, which Muslims understand to be an account of the words and teachings of its founder the prophet Muhammad, it says: "Islam has been erected on five pillars: Witness that there is no god but God and

that Muhammad is the messenger of God; doing prayer; contributing to charity; observing the fast of the month of Ramadan; carrying out the pilgrimage to the holy House (Mecca) when it is possible to do so.”

The prayer (*salat*) is to be performed five times each day, corresponding to the important turns of the day (dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and evening). The prayer is composed of bodily movements and simple words which express the complete submission to God of the one who is praying.

The daily fast (*siyam*) of the month of Ramadan gives the worshipper an opportunity to experience hunger, thirst, and abstinence as an offering given to God.

The contribution to charity (*zakat*) permits the believers to share with the poor and the needy the material goods which they have acquired, and to purify by that means their use of that which remains.

The pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca—to be accomplished at least once in a lifetime for those who have the financial means—takes them back to the sources of their faith and history, prepares them for and leads them to the grace of contrition and forgiveness, deepening their conversion to God.

During the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from sun-up to sun-down, then gather together—in mosques, homes, restaurants, and elsewhere—to break their fast each evening of the month. Sometimes these dinners, called *Iftars*, are small family affairs, while others are more festive gatherings of larger groups. Muslims generally welcome Christians and Jews to join them in this meal. This year, however, given the directives and limitations regarding group gatherings, many Muslims will only be connecting with one another on their computers through ZOOM.

### **We Share the Goal and Multiple Means**

Overall, Ramadan is a collective retreat of the Muslim community during which multiple prayers and meditations are offered to God. For many American Muslims, Ramadan is a month that holds religious, family, cultural, and deeply personal meanings, each informing how they share, reflect, and celebrate together.

During this pandemic, faith communities around the globe are rethinking how to be in community, how to stay true to their religious and cultural ideals during this time of uncertainty. As was/is the case with us Catholics during Holy Week and Easter, Muslims are currently having a very different experience of their cherished holy days as well.

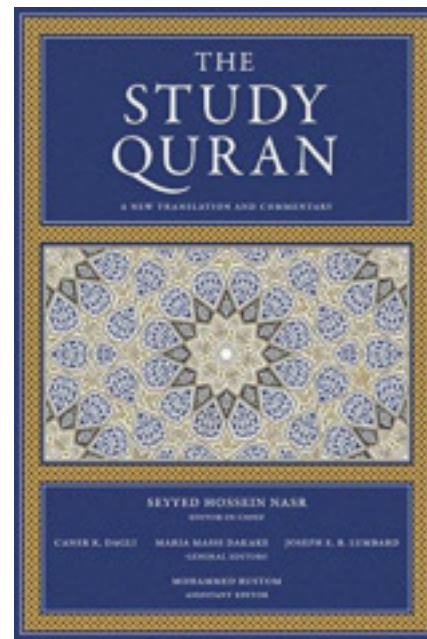
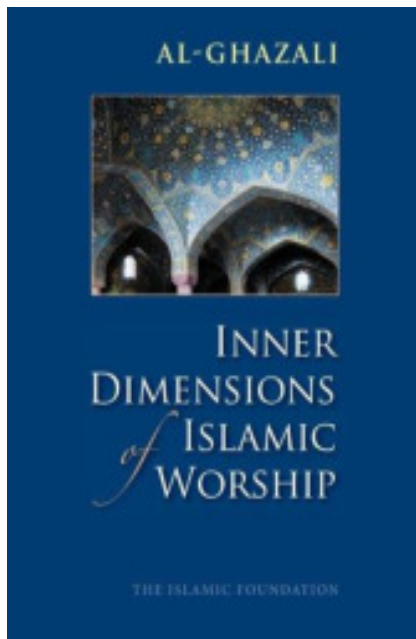
We Christians are encouraged by the Second Vatican Council to respect the sincere worship by Muslims of the living God. Even though our forms and ceremonies of prayer, fasting, almsgiving and pilgrimage differ in various ways, it is good for us—Catholics and Muslims—to be aware that we possess in common certain ancient prayer practices of invocation, litany, intercession, meditation retreat, and that by means of these we renew continually our spiritual energy and strength.

When you pass by your Muslim neighbor, you might want to say “As-Salam-u-Alaikum” (pronounced “as-saa-laam-muu-ah-lay-kum”) -- “Peace be unto you”.

*Fr. Thomas Ryan, C.S.P., directs the Paulist National Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, located at the Paulist Center in Boston.*

Denis Hurley (Boston Paulist Associate) recommends two books to go along with this reading. He writes: It's been my practice since 2001 to read the Qur'an every day during Ramadan as a way of learning more about Islam. The Al Ghazali book is one I've been reading along with some other medieval philosopher/theologians (Maimonides, Aquinas, ibn Sina) as part of my "isolation therapy."

There are many books available at a wide range of prices that can help to explain Islamic faith and practice. Two possible sources are below:



## Zoom Tips For the Paulist World

By Frank Desiderio, C.S.P

The global pandemic has pushed many people into the world of videoconferencing. A popular platform for such meetings is Zoom which is stable and has lots of features. Since Paulist Associates are starting to use Zoom for their meetings, here are some dos and don'ts to make for a better Zoom videoconference.

**What to Use** — You can connect to Zoom either by using your smartphone or your computer (laptop or desktop). With your phone or laptop, everything you need is built in; if you choose to use a desktop computer, you may need an additional webcam and microphone. If you are meeting with more than two people, it is better to use a computer than a phone because the larger screen will allow you to see several people at once. If you do use your smartphone, please orient your phone horizontally. Unlike FaceTime or Instagram, the Zoom platform is designed for horizontal rectangle images, not vertical ones. When you place your smartphone vertically, what people see on the Zoom screen is a wide black bar on either side of your picture. You are wasting screen room when you hold the phone in portrait mode, that is vertically.

**Don't Move** — If you use a laptop, do be fooled by its name: do not place it literally in your lap or on a soft surface like your bed. Your body's slight movements will be exaggerated, and others will get

motion sickness! Place it on a flat hard surface like a desk. The same goes for your phone: unless you \*must\* be on the move during the Zoom meeting, don't hold your phone in your hand; again, use a flat surface. You may need some sort of stand or mini-tripod, but you can also simply prop it up with something like a book.

**Lights**– don't have strong light behind you like a window on a bright day. This will wash out the picture on the camera and turn you into a silhouette. People want to see you, not an outline of you. Have the light overhead or in front of you. When you start your video, make sure the light is bright enough so that people can see you. If the light is just on one side of you that side will be bright and the other side of you will be in shadow.

**Eye to Eye** – People don't want to look up your nostrils. Have the camera just above eye level. If you have to put your phone, tablet or laptop on a stack of books or a standing desk or a shelf then please do so in order to allow you to look right into the camera and not down on it, as if you are sitting on a throne or up at it, as if you were in a hole.

**Ready for My Close Up** – We want to see your face but not in extreme close up. A good shot is your head and shoulders with your face should be in the top third of the frame. You don't want to be on the other side of the room because then you will look like some Lilliputian nor do you want your face so close to the camera that you are in our face as if picking a fight. Nonverbal communication is important. Once in a while, use a soft cloth to wipe off the lens of the camera.

**Hello? Can You Hear Me?** The mute and unmute button to turn your mic on and off is in the bottom left corner of your screen. Don't embarrass yourself by leaving the mic open when you munch potato chips or step away from your screen to flush the toilet. In fact, it is a good rule of thumb to keep yourself muted except when you are talking. This will keep ambient sound around you (sirens, barking dog, ringing phone, crying babies) from disrupting the meeting. Also, if you use a speaker phone to participate in the meetings you might create a feedback loop that will affect the entire meeting. It is best to use integrated headphones with a microphone built into the wire. These come with many smartphones; in most cases, these can also be used with your laptop or desktop.

**What's That Behind You?** –You are doing a cinema verité documentary of a postcard of your life. One of the features of videoconferencing is that it brings people into your space. What do you want people to see behind you? Do you want then to literally see your dirty laundry and unmade bed? Put the camera in a place so that what is behind you reflects the best of you.

Please, don't do Zoom meetings lounging in your bed. It's not a sleepover.

**Are You on Vacation?** - Zoom allows some but not all computers to add a virtual background. You can make it look like you on the beach when you are in your bedroom. If your computer is able to use the Virtual Background option here's what you do. When you sign into a meeting a screen comes up that says, "Video Review". In the upper righthand corner of this screen is an icon. When you point to it with your cursor it will say "Virtual Background". Click on that and you will go to a screen where you can click on stock selections to insert in the background of your video window. There is also a "plus" sign that you can click on and upload images from your photo library or desktop. Click "done" and you will be brought into the meeting with your virtual background. If this doesn't work, then go to the Zoom.us website and click on the support button at the top of the page. That will take you to the Help Center. Search for "Virtual Background" and you'll find a tutorial.

**Lock Your Door** - People are worried about “Zoom bombing,” which is when someone hacks into your meeting and takes it over to spread offensive content. Here are five tips for the meeting host to help keep Zoom bombers out of your meeting.

1. Don't use your personal meeting ID – use the automatic meeting ID generator that you can check on the start meeting screen. If people get ahold of your personal meeting ID, which is like your Zoom phone number they can use it to hack into any meeting you host.
2. Use a password for each meeting. When you start a meeting, you will be given an option to use a password unique to that meeting. Take the option to keep unwanted people out.
3. Use Zoom's waiting room – When you start a meeting you can choose to hold participants in a waiting room until you let them into the meeting. This will allow you to exclude someone from getting into the meeting.
4. As the host, you can mute a participant's audio or turn off their video if they start to hijack a meeting.
5. Turn off screen sharing for everyone except for the host (you) and any co-host you choose to share your administrative responsibilities.

For further explanation search in your internet browser for “Protect yourself from Zoom bombers.”

Even when we can meet face to face again, people will continue to use videoconferencing; it's popular and practical. It will be good for all of us to develop a set of best practices for video meetings the same way we want to practice good etiquette when we are invited into someone's home.

*Thanks to Paulists Dave Dwyer and Ricky Manalo who contributed their ideas.*

## **Thinking Back on a New Kind of Lent**

*By Levita Anderson, Chicago Paulist Associate*

The self-quarantine that we are going through where we can't meet with others because of the possibility of affecting them with COVID 19 is causing stress and anxiety.

During Lent we, as usual, may have given up something in order to enhance our journey to Christ. However, we now must continue to give up our ability to connect with people in order to protect the community. Our children are home due to school closings; restaurants and bars are closed; and our churches are closed for Mass and services. We can't meet with family, especially if that family has older members or members who have comprised immune systems. We can't visit friends to celebrate birthdays or anniversaries, or just have a good time out of fear of spreading the virus.

Is this what Jesus felt when He was in the wilderness for forty days?

This Lenten season for me was trying because I missed seeing and talking with my friends and colleagues due to crowd restrictions. Every organization that I belong to has “closed” their doors in order to protect children and their staff. I have no Girl Scouts meetings, no region council meetings, retired meetings, church meetings, or church services. I miss those interactions because they energized by mind and spirit. So I was – and still am now -- in limbo, trying to find something that can occupy my mind and spirit. I tried to stream Masses on my computer, but it kept freezing, so I can't have that to calm my mind or spirit.

Therefore, I am writing this reflection because, as I woke up one Lenten morning, the thought of how Jesus must have felt came to mind along with how I was feeling. I am isolated from what I love to do, but not isolated from God. Apparently, when I am beginning to slowly wake up, this is where my thoughts are clearer and that I can be quiet to listen to the Spirit as it guides me to calmer waters before I fully awaken. Jesus meditated for forty days to prepare him for his final journey in his ministry. My meditation time is between the fully waking and sleeping. This is where I am most calm, quiet, and meditative. This is also where I realize my Lenten journey is to find calm in the storm called COVID 19 and be more patient until this crisis has ended.

Jesus journey to Jerusalem ended on Palm Sunday when he began final steps toward crucifixion and resurrection. However, my journey won't end until COVID 19 has disappeared. When that eventually happens my days in the "desert" will have ended and I can begin to enter my Palm Sunday and Easter with joy and contentment that my journey brought me closer to the Holy Trinity.

My prayer to those during this time is that Jesus' love and healing power heal those that are ill of body, mind, and spirit. That His healing power bring peace and good health. My His blessings bless those whose love ones have gone home to Him and they can't celebrate their Homecoming.

May His power grant them peace and tranquility. I ask this in His name. Amen

### *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>.

### *Paulist Associate News: Save the Date*

We have been planning and have scheduled a Paulist Associate Regional Retreat in the Austin, TX area on Oct 15-18 hosted by the Austin and Horseshoe Bay Associates.

The Theme is **The Holy Spirit in America: Encountering God Today**. It will be the pilot retreat of the Paulists Hecker Spirituality Retreat Committee. All depends, of course, on the unfolding Covid-19 pandemic and what kind of travel and gathering restrictions there may be in the fall. But it's not too soon to keep this retreat and date in mind!



## Looking for Newsletter Input

Dear Associates,

If you'd like to make a submission, you should send it to Denis Hurley at [dhpc18@gmail.com](mailto:dhpc18@gmail.com).

These are some simple style suggestions that we ask you follow in making submission:

- Articles should in the range of about 600 words.
- They should be typed in (preferably Calibri) some *sans serif* font in 12 point type.
- Pictures should be accompanied by captions describing where those who are pictured are, what they're doing, and who they are (full names) in left-to-right order.
- You should add a byline with the form of your named you'd prefer to be identified by.
- You should cite all sources with phrases such as, "according to," "in Name's words," or, best of all, "Name said." That last one should be in past tense and should not be substituted for with more abstract words such as "feels" or "thinks." ("Said she feels" or the like is OK, but the writer can only know what the source has said.)
- Please also say something about yourself, as in, " Boston Associate Denis Hurley is a former newspaper, magazine and broadcast editor. He is currently a Lecturer at the Boston University College of Communication."

We love book reviews and descriptions of special events various Associates may have sponsored. And, especially as we approach particular seasons, we'd like to know about any personal reflections you may have. (Some Associates have, for instance, shared thoughts about books they may read or practices they may use during Lent.) And, since many will be following the suggested programs we post each month, it would be interesting to hear some thoughts that have emerged from those discussions in individual groups.

Don't worry if you're not sure about a topic. If you're really concerned, you can send a suggestion and we'll get in touch with you about it.

And don't worry about your writing. What you write has to be yours. We can do any editing of specifics that's necessary.

Thank you. We look forward to hearing from you.

The Editors.

## Our Monthly Programs for Our 15 Paulist Patrons

*Submitted by Fr. Mike Kallock, C.S.P.*

I have been very pleased by the response and quality of the monthly programs for our fifteen Paulist Patrons. Associate groups have really stepped up. Thank You!

Below with this May Newsletter is the remaining schedule:

- we are now booked through December!
- only three Patrons still need to be taken and scheduled
- Those three will be scheduled for the months of January – March 2021

I trust the chart/schedule is understandable. To take one of the three Paulist Patrons left, email me at [kallockcsp@paulist.org](mailto:kallockcsp@paulist.org) ASAP.

SCHEDULE OF OUR MONTHLY PROPOSED PROGRAMS FOR OUR 15 PAULIST PATRONS			
<b>Jan</b>	<b>Conversion of St Paul</b> – Joe Scott, CSP	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Thomas Aquinas</b> - Knoxville
<b>Feb</b>	<b>John of the Cross</b> - Mike Kallock, CSP	<b>Oct</b>	<b>John Henry Newman</b> - Columbus
<b>Mar</b>	<b>Francis de Sales</b> - Mike Martin, CSP	<b>Nov</b>	<b>John XXIII</b> – West Michigan
<b>Apr</b>	<b>Teresa of Avila</b> – Tucson	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Isaac Jogues</b> - Tucson
<b>May</b>	<b>Joseph, husband of Mary</b> – Chicago		
<b>Jun</b>	<b>Philip Neri</b> – Toronto	<b>TBA</b>	<b>Alphonsus Liguori</b> - ???
<b>Jul</b>	<b>Mary Magdalene</b> – Boston	<b>TBA</b>	<b>Patrick</b> - ???
<b>Aug</b>	<b>Elizabeth Seton</b> – Los Angeles	<b>TBA</b>	<b>The Blessed Immaculate Virgin Mary</b> - ???



## Proposed Program for May: Joseph, Husband of Mary

Submitted by Chicago Paulist Associates:

### Opening Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, by Saint Joseph's intercession  
Your Church may comfortably watch over  
the unfolding mysteries of human salvation,  
whose beginnings you entrusted to his faithful care.

*(from the Opening Prayer of the Liturgy on the Feast of St.  
Joseph, March 19)*

### Read in advance of meeting:

What little we know of St. Joseph comes from the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John. The Genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke differ on who was the father of Joseph. Most important though, for our appreciation of Joseph, is that he is a descendant of the House of David (Matthew 1: 2-16), thus fulfilling the prophecy that the Messiah would come from the House of David.



In the Book of Matthew 1: 18-25, 2:13-23, Joseph listened to God's instructions about Mary and the child she carried. Joseph followed God's instructions and took Mary as his wife, and her unborn son as his own. When Jesus was born, Joseph again listened to God's instruction regarding the safety of Mary and Jesus and fled to Egypt where the family stayed until it was safe to go to Nazareth. We can infer from Matthew that Joseph was a man who believed strongly in God and family.

St. Joseph is the patron saint of fathers and workers. His feast, on March 19, celebrates him as the earthly father of Jesus. His feast, on May 1, celebrates his job as a carpenter worker. Father Hecker's homily on March 19, 1863 at St. Paul the Apostle Church in New York City states:

*To find God and be one with God, solitary life in the desert was not necessary to St. Joseph. He was in the world and found God where he was. He sanctified his work by carrying God with him into the workshop...Our age is not an age of martyrdom, nor an age of hermits, nor a monastic age. Although it has its martyrs, its recluses, and its monastic communities, these are not, and are not likely to be its prevailing types of Christian perfection. Our age lives in its busy marts, in counting rooms, in workshops, in homes, and in the varied relations that form human society, and it is into these that sanctity is to be introduced. St. Joseph stands forth as an excellent and unsurpassed model of this type of perfection (The Saint of Our Day),*

### Discussion Questions to Share in Your Group:

- Father Hecker calls St. Joseph "an unsurpassed model of perfection?" How do you see our everyday lives reflecting that pattern?
- Have you ever felt a dream gave you a path to take?
- Do we, like St. Joseph, answer our Lord's requests no matter how difficult or unclear they may seem?
- We all have some type of work to do. How often do we pray to St. Joseph for help and guidance?

- In Matthew 1:24, 2:13-14, and 2:20-21, we read of Joseph receiving direction in dreams and acting. What insight into Joseph's personality do these passages provide? How is the New testament Joseph like the Joseph in the Old testament?
- In Matthew 1:18-19, we read of Joseph's intentions to divorce Mary quietly. How does this time of quiet agony that Joseph must have felt compare to Jesus' agony in Gethsemane? How does it compare to Abraham's testing when asked to sacrifice his son Isaac?
- What was Joseph's role in the Holy Family? How did his actions within the Holy Family fulfill this role? How does that extend to the Church?
- How does Joseph's decision not to divorce Mary validate Mary's purity? What does it say about Joseph's belief in God's omnipotence and providence?

### News/Announcements/Prayers for Others:

Please share information about the upcoming October regional retreat.

### Closing Prayer:

O God, Creator of all things,  
Who laid down for the human race the law of work,  
graciously grant that by the example of St. Joseph  
and under his patronage,  
we may complete the works you set us to do  
and attain the rewards you promise.

*(from the Opening Prayer of the Liturgy on the  
Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, May 1)*

## 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.



## 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.*