



2022 Paulist General Assembly Resolutions



2022 Paulist General Assembly-Resolutions

Table of Contents

Mission Priorities Committee.....page 4

Polarization Committeepage 7

Laity Committee page 12

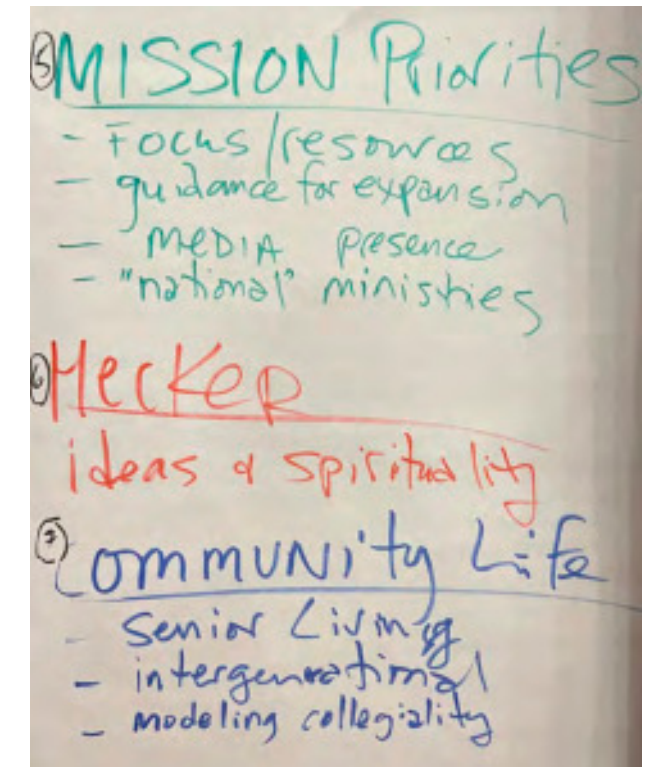
Vocations Committee page 13

Community Life Committee page 14

Hecker Committee..... page 17

Finance Committee page 20

Governance Committee..... page 21





MISSION PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

“A Future for the Church Brighter than Any Past”

At the heart of Paulist spirituality is an unwavering hopefulness that sees the sacred present in the contemporary context in which the mission of the Church is set. Faithful to the charism of our founder, Servant of God Isaac Hecker, Paulist mission, rooted in this hopefulness, trusts that the Holy Spirit is not only present in the modern world, but is actively breathing life into all things.

The signs of the times point us towards the Kingdom of God, inaugurated by Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit, that already exists in the world but has not yet reached its fullness. The great social efforts of our time, such as the emphasis on radical equality, the fair distribution of resources, and the making of decisions by transparent processes echo in a significant way many of the factors that Jesus revealed as dimensions of the Kingdom of God. The forward-thrust of our contemporary dreams reflects the providence that Christians have always attributed to God, a providence that loomed large in the spirituality of Fr. Isaac Hecker. However, we also note the increasing pervasiveness of the forces of polarization and division in today’s culture which lead to the abandonment of the common good in the Kingdom of God.

This social context, with its greatly hopeful as well as deeply challenging dimensions, is exactly the field in which Paulists are called to do mission. Paulists invite people to a sacred space where encounter, accompaniment, and dialogue with one another can truly flourish, as fruit of the Holy Spirit’s work in today’s culture, and as the primary mode of evangelization in today’s world. Pope Francis articulates this mode of operation as synodality, and it is to this vision of Church that Paulists now commit themselves.

“A synodal Church, which listens, which realizes that listening is more than simply hearing. It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the ‘Spirit of truth.’
 — Pope Francis, 50th Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops (2015)

Synodality is a way of walking together as the people of God. More than a listening and decision-making process, it is a relational language that points towards a new reality — one which can breathe new life into Paulist identity and mission. It is a commitment to a continual process of renewal, of ourselves and of church structures, as our response to the dynamism of the Holy Spirit who animates these encounters.



In 2014 and 2018, our Mission Direction Statements strongly articulated to whom Paulist mission is primarily directed toward^[1]. Faithful to the example of our patron, St. Paul, who was the Apostle to the Gentiles, and to the example of Isaac Hecker, who sought to evangelize America with a view primarily to those outside the Catholic Church, we are committed to encountering, accompanying, and entering into dialogue with the other — personified in our present times as those who are distant from the Catholic Church and its practice, and also those who have been relegated to the peripheries, including women, members of the LGBTQ+ community, those in their 20s and 30s, and people of color.^[1] Further, to be a synodal community calls us to stand in solidarity with those in the peripheries. The very task of synodality impels us to ensure that those who are absent from the conversation are welcomed and made present.

We identify these as vital mission priorities for the Paulist Fathers and commit to this synodal path as a transformative force within our Paulist community, in our various foundations, and community-sponsored ministries.

[1] Led by the Holy Spirit, the Paulists are a missionary community that forms Catholics for mission, giving particular attention to those beyond the Catholic community (2014 Paulist General Assembly)

... we identify those whom we primarily seek to serve in Paulist ministry as: (1) the religiously unaffiliated, particularly young adults, and (2) those Catholics on the peripheries of the Church: women who feel unrepresented in leadership, members of the LGBTQ community who feel unwelcomed, and the many Asian, Black and Latino Catholics whose needs are inadequately addressed and whose gifts and contributions have not been fully validated by the Church (2018 Paulist General Assembly)

Resolutions

Resolution #1: The Paulist Fathers in General Assembly **recommend** that all Paulist foundations and ministries engage in a synodal process, paying particular attention to what gifts and charisms are currently present that make Paulist mission possible, and what gifts and charisms are under-represented or absent. We **recommend** the implementation of this process to the General Council, as a mechanism that also promotes the strengthening of the communication and collaboration of national and local Paulist decision-makers.

Resolution #2: The signs of the times call us to reflect on how we presently engage with Paulist mission, and whether new models and structures may be necessary for our mission to thrive. In light of the signs of the times, the realities of Paulist resources, and our missionary impact, this Assembly **mandates the General Council** to begin a synodal process that **reviews the following ministries**, which includes the enlisting of outside expertise beyond our ranks in conversation with the ministries listed, to evaluate them for their methods and sustainability in today's Paulist mission environment.

- Paulist Press
- Paulist Productions
- Busted Halo
- Paulist Evangelization Ministries
- Paulist Reconciliation Ministries
- The Paulist Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Resolution #3: Paulists are at our best when we come together and talk about mission, producing a synergy that leads to vision and concrete action. Therefore, in view of this commitment to our mission priorities, we **recommend** that the General Council invite Paulists and others with interest and expertise into conversation to develop concrete pastoral directions and resources to address these priorities.

Resolution #4: The General Assembly **commends** the many media and communication innovations and practices that were done in Paulist Foundations and Ministries through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The General Assembly **commends** Andy Metzger, webmaster of the Paulist Fathers website, for his great work, knowledge, and skill in helping to organize, coordinate, and disseminate digital Paulist ministries during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The General Assembly **commends** Paul Snatchko, Director of Paulist Marketing and Communications, for his great work, dedication, and creativity in assisting our Paulist ministries through his efforts in communication and social media during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The General Assembly **commends** Rev. Eric Andrews, CSP for his tireless efforts in shepherding the Hope for the Future Capital Campaign, for which its positive effects on the Paulist community and the American Catholic Church will be felt for generations to come. Further, the General Assembly commends his efforts in uniting Paulist Foundations and supporters through online broadcasts such as our national retreats, gala events, and Paulist virtual Christmas cards.

The General Assembly **commends** Danilo Macalinao, CSP for his hard work and dynamic creativity in producing numerous virtual events for the Paulist Fathers.

The General Assembly **recommends** that the General Council provide resources that Paulist Foundations and other Paulists can consult to assist their local media production; this resource can also help share ideas and best practices in communication.



POLARIZATION COMMITTEE



"Toward a More Perfect Union: Mission in an Age of Polarization"

Introduction

- "I tried preaching on the recent gun violence in schools and over half the congregation either ignored me or called me a stooge for a political party."
- "We formed a ministry to address abortion and were accused of being against women."
- "We formed a discussion group about racial equity and received hate mail and death threats."
- "I tried to talk about the beauty of marriage and was castigated by those who could not marry and those who had experienced divorce."

Many of us have had these discouraging experiences in ministry.

Isaac Hecker sought to address the needs of his age. In the spirit of Hecker, this Paulist General Assembly seeks to continue that tradition by addressing the needs of our age. As reflected by the Pre-Assembly of 2021 leading up to this General Assembly of 2022, the polarization of our society rose as a central concern for the Paulist Fathers to consider. Indeed, many have called it a first-order crisis in that it must be effectively addressed in our church and our society before any of our other mission priorities can be pursued. It is within this critical context that this committee has been formed to specifically engage these concerns.

Disagreement and various perspectives are part of the human experience, central to the American experiment, and a lived reality of the Church which takes as its name “universal.” In the Council of Jerusalem (A.D. 50), for example, heated discussions between Jewish Christians (who observed the Torah) and the Gentile Christians (who were not bound by the Torah) eventually led to both groups learning how to co-exist with one another, thanks to the moderating skills of Peter, James, Paul, and Barnabas. Yet as we have seen polarization increasing within our church and our society over the past fifty-plus years to toxic levels, examples of mutual respect amidst strong disagreement of opinion or disposition seem rare if not foreign to many.

We remember that the namesake of our community, Saint Paul, originated as Saul. He was a figure who would (sadly) not be unfamiliar in our age: a militant ideologue who believed he was doing God’s will through violence. Yet when Saul encountered and was transformed by Christ, he embraced a larger view of God’s world and God’s people.

Taking our lead from the synodality process that Pope Francis has initiated, early meetings of the Committee on Polarization consisted of sharing-of-stories, which led to intensive conversations. During these discussions, the committee began to appreciate both the depth and the breadth of the issues surrounding this phenomenon. The instinctual rush to come up with plans and measurable outcomes was quickly subsumed by an appreciation of the need to take in the complexities, struggles, and pain caused by the different facets of polarization. Several themes emerged—which we do not present as all encompassing—but they do help to give a broader context of the issue.

Part One: An Overview of Toxic Polarization

Polarization as a social phenomenon occurs when two diametrically opposed positions emerge and is sustained through the espousing and reinforcement of sharply contrasting worldviews, cultural values and social practices.^[1] A better term that describes our situation today might be toxic polarization. Over the past fifty plus years, this form of social polarization has been escalating and creating a destructive trajectory, leading to the current socio-cultural landscape that is marked by:

- the feuding divisions among family members, friends, colleagues, parishes and communities;
- the growth and spread of anxiety, addiction, depression, fear, trauma, suicide, and increasing acts of violence;
- the perpetuation of an illusion that this crisis is intractable,
- coupled with a loss of hope.

[1] Polarization is not necessarily a destructive force in itself, but a natural phenomenon (e.g., in physics, it pertains to the direction of waves and the creation of geometrical patterns). Similarly, it is a natural human response that reinforces cultural values in contrast to other values. And in politics—with which polarization is often associated—is also in and of itself a natural phenomenon that when engaged in a healthy way, can help individuals within groups navigate their world in a productive way (“positive polarization”).

Polarization as a First-Order Crisis

Toxic Polarization impairs our ability to effectively promote, practice, and achieve our well-being and missionary endeavors:

How do we effectively address and respond to the current civic and moral issues of our times, for example, abortion, climate change, immigration, gender and sexuality, gun control, racism, and secularization when toxic polarization impairs any process for constructive dialogue?

How do we build up community life within our own Paulist houses when toxic polarization creates barriers for respecting our differences?

How can we foster a culture of vocations if toxic polarization negatively attaches predetermined ideological labels to our Paulist charism and social image?

And finally, how do we feel safe? How do we care for ourselves and each other spiritually, emotionally, physically, and intellectually when it is increasingly difficult to disconnect from media tools and other social platforms that promote toxic polarizing agendas and campaigns?

Finding Hope: A Path Towards a More Perfect Union and Transformation

While the destructive force of polarization has no doubt led to many of our current social ills, there is actually hope and light glowing within this darkness. At the core of our Christian tradition is faith in the resurrection of Christ who conquered sin and death upon the cross. This single act of love remains the prism through which we are to view our missionary endeavors; it is also where we find our hope as we move towards a more perfect union in Christ who lived in a divided world, who conquered sin.

For example, hope is found in the growing number of studies that suggest only 10-20% of Americans hold extreme polar positions in civic and religious issues, while the overwhelming majority of Americans have much more nuanced positions.^[2] Those 10-20% who are in the

extreme ends include many civic and religious leaders and institutions, as well as corresponding media platforms, who perpetuate the flames of toxic polarization by oversimplifying current conflict: e.g., mass shootings, racially charged incidents, the pandemic, voting rights and elections.

Furthermore, a critical mass of Americans are fed up — we are emotionally and physically exhausted from our nation’s divisiveness, a telling sign that the time is ripe for us to move forward in a more positive direction.^[3] In short, our current desperate situation is the necessary condition for radical change and transformation to take place.



[2] Mary Ellen Konieczny, “Polarization in the U.S. Catholic Church,” (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013), viii.

[3] See introduction to Peter T. Coleman, *The Way Out: How to Overcome Toxic Polarization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

In his encyclical, Fratelli Tutti, (On Fraternity and Social Friendship, Oct. 3, 2020) Pope Francis called for the development of “a better kind of politics”:

“The development of a global community of fraternity based on the practice of social friendship on the part of peoples and nations calls for a better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the common good” (no. 154).

Toward a More Perfect Union: Mission in an Age of Polarization contributes to this development by proposing a set of initiatives that will refocus our national reconciliation outreach efforts to strategically and intentionally address the toxic polarization plaguing our social interactions and reduce the divisiveness in America through short-term and long-term objectives.

Resolutions

Part Two: The Paulist National Reconciliation Initiative (working title)

Purpose: To refocus our national reconciliation outreach efforts to strategically and intentionally address the toxic polarization plaguing our social interactions and reduce the divisiveness in America through short-term and long-term objectives.

Proposal: To reestablish, staff and fund a Paulist National Initiative for Reconciliation that will allow the following objectives:

Resolution #1: We **recommend** that the General Council approve the creation of a Paulist National Reconciliation Initiative. This Paulist National Reconciliation Initiative will be tasked with directly addressing the issues and underlying dynamics of toxic polarization as its primary mission. This initiative will create, promote, and maintain a hub for pastoral guidelines, preaching aids, resources, media, bibliography, best practices and proven models available for all Paulist foundations and ministries and as a national resource.

Resolution #2: We **recommend** the General Council to bring forth a task force to create an instructional discussion tool using the documents and resources of the General Assembly to assist Paulists in local foundations in fostering small group discussions on the topic of polarization.

Resolution #3: We **recommend** the Presidential Board to convoke within 2 years, a gathering of Paulists, Associates, Affiliates, and partners in mission, to explore the issues and dynamics of polarization in society, and to share and deepen ways we can help each other navigate and carry this heavy cross.



Resolution #4: We **recommend** that the General Council work to facilitate a continual conversation within the Paulist Fathers on diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly with respect to racism within the Paulists and the Catholic Church.

Resolution #5: We **recommend** that all Paulist media and national offices devote a portion of the content they produce in the performance of their ministries to address the issue of polarization in our church and/or society. Additionally, we commend these offices for the content they have already produced that has brought awareness and reflection in regard to this issue.

Resolution #6: We **recommend** that the issues and dynamics of toxic polarization be addressed in Paulist preaching whenever possible and prudent, and that resources be made available for this purpose.

Conclusion

We fully acknowledge the complexity of polarization, particularly when it relates to those times in which we are called to stand up for what is right. Those who have ever served in the role of prophet in this world understand that critique, derision, and abuse often come with the territory. Calls for peace can often really mean, “Ignore the issue.” In the midst of his courageous ministry to bring equality for all Americans, Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote in his Letter from a Birmingham Jail:

I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro’s great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to “order” than to justice...

That being said, language meant to inspire one’s understanding of the good can often be used as a cudgel that only advances misunderstanding and division.

Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother’s eye. (Luke 6:24, NRSV)

We start this journey recognizing our own need for continued transformation, so we collectively ask the Holy Spirit for:

Wisdom: So that we may navigate the complexities and contradictions that can come with this effort;

Courage: So that we go to the places of hurt and danger in order to bring about the peace and justice that God desires;

Humility: So that we seek to do God’s work and not our own;

Understanding: So that our guide is always a fuller truth that goes beyond our preconceived notions;

Perseverance: So that we continue the race.

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
(Col 3:14, NRSV)



Resolutions

Resolution #1: (Paulist Personnel Manual):

Purpose: To update the Paulist Personnel Manual.

Background: The Paulist Personnel Manual has not been updated officially since 2000. The policy needs to be in line with HR employee policies in consultation with the HR professionals at BMT Associates.

Resolution: The Paulist Fathers of the General Assembly **MANDATE that the personnel manual for lay employees of the Paulist Fathers be reviewed, updated and promulgated.**

Resolution #2: (Paulist Associates):

We **recommend** that the Presidential Board request the National Board of Paulist Associates to survey the Paulist Associates: What is commended and what is recommended?

We **recommend** that the General Council survey the Paulist priests, students and novices regarding the Paulist Associates: What is commended and what is recommended?

Resolution #3: (Paulist Ambassadors):

Paulist Ambassadors are those who have caught the Paulist spirit that includes welcoming, dialog and inclusivity. This affords the Paulist Community new perspectives for the Ambassadors to champion the Paulist way of living out the mission of Jesus Christ.

Resolution: We **recommend** that the General Council form a committee to explore and potentially establish the Paulist Ambassadors.

Resolution #4: (Lay Advisory Committee):

Inasmuch as the synodal process followed before the General Assembly brought forth the importance of lay input into Paulist leadership, the General Assembly **recommends** that a committee of at least five lay people be chosen to meet with the Presidential Board, giving input before General Council meetings. Such a committee would be composed of people selected by the Presidential Board from the Paulist Associates, Institutional Staff, and others who might be recommended by the wider Paulist community; this committee would be approved by the General Council. It would meet either virtually or in person depending on circumstances and availability. The term of office would be two years with the possibility of a two year extension.



Resolutions

Purpose

In order that the mission of the Paulist Fathers and the Church continues and grows, we seek to increase vocations to the Paulist Fathers and create a culture of vocations in the Society and among our partners in mission.

Background

The success of our Hope for the Future Capital Campaign, whose centerpiece was a new house of mission and studies for the Paulist community, indicates strong energy and support for the mission of the Paulist Fathers. The Paulist Fathers gathered in General Assembly wish to capitalize on this energy by creating a parallel campaign that focuses on another important capital: vocations to the Paulist Fathers.

The model of a sustained and focused capital campaign is a way of assisting our foundations and supporters in our collective vocation work. There were some 2,700 donors from 40 states who participated in the Hope for the Future campaign. As an extension of this campaign, our vocation outreach is expanded significantly beyond the current Paulist footprint.

Resolution:

In order that the mission of the Paulist Fathers and the Church continues and grows, the General Assembly **recommends** that, in the next four years, the Paulist Fathers coordinate a parallel vocation campaign to the Hope for the Future capital campaign. Guided by the Paulist Fathers Office of Vocation, with the assistance of the Presidential Board, General Council, and Office of Mission Advancement, each Paulist foundation and national ministry will participate actively in the campaign.





Prefatory Remark: "My God, you really do love one another."

Community Life in all of its ecclesial forms but specifically in religious life is a gift to the church and to the world. As such in all its forms, contemplative and apostolic it a tangible sign of God's love. Each Paulist has in his life heard a version of this gift when someone, utterly unsolicited, says to us, "My God, you really do love one another." Cherish those unsolicited recognitions of our meaning, our vocation, as we seek to renew our life in common.

Resolutions

COMMENDATIONS

Resolution #1: In a society often divided by age, we affirm that the Paulists function well as an intergenerational community. Three accomplishments to a more transformative community life can be noted:

- A culture of alcoholic misbehavior common through the '60's and '70's has gradually been replaced with charity, truth telling, patience and resolve. That same spirit will guide the care of any Paulist subject to any addictive behavior.
- In the immediate aftermath of Vatican II, Paulists were bitterly divided in their attitudes toward Education and Formation. Over the years a much more positive attitude has emerged.
- Reflecting the larger society's struggle and change the Paulists in their life together and apostolic outreach express a more positive attitude toward and with persons of different sexual orientations.



We also **commend** the Presidential Board for creating the position Assistant to Senior Ministers and for the wonderful work that Bob Cary has done in that role.

TRANSITIONS

Resolution #2: We **recommend** that in our local houses the expectations and needs of all its members be clearly discussed and shared in regards to ministry (particularly for senior ministers), common prayer times, shared meals, money and the use of community property (e.g. cars). Also personal needs and responsibilities with regard to dietary needs and medical needs need to be shared as appropriate by all. This sharing is especially important when a new member enters the community; and these expectations should be reviewed periodically.

ENTERING SENIOR MINISTRY

Resolution #3: Each Paulist approaching Senior Ministry should prayerfully consider in wide consultation their changes in living arrangements, ministerial responsibilities, health needs and financial arrangements. Each Paulist as a standard of his Paulist identity shall choose a health advocate from among Paulists living with him at the time. Family should be aware of this advocacy and feel welcome to share in their brother's situation. Power of attorney may be vested by the Paulist with a family member or friend, but the President of the Paulists and/or his designated representative ought to be an active partner in the settling of the individual Paulist's estate.

The general assembly **mandates the general council to develop guidelines and processes for a Paulist entering senior ministry** and the local community where the SM Paulist will reside to identify expectations and needs for living arrangements, ministerial opportunities, health needs and financial arrangements.

Resolution #4: It is **recommended** that a Paulist entering senior ministry be required to execute a last will and testament, healthcare directives and power of attorney for his finances and property.

ADVANCED NEEDS

Resolution #5: For the sake of all those in Senior Ministry and those eventually to follow the general assembly **mandates the general council to establish a task force** comprised of council member(s), senior Paulist(s), and other Paulists along with lay persons with experience in senior living and their task is **to prepare by June 2024 guidelines and policies for the Paulist PB and Council to act upon.**

- Designate 2-3 Paulist houses as locations most appropriate to offering home care and other health services.
- Guidelines and policies for shared responsibility between individual Paulists in SMS and the Paulist Community for financial responsibility in care services
- Guidelines and policies to guide the difficult decision for both the individual Paulist and Community to move from a Paulist residence to a skilled nursing or memory care facility. "We remember that several who have made this transition experienced reinvigorated lives due to better and more consistent care.

COLLEGIALITY IN PRACTICE

Resolution #6: We affirm the resolutions in the 2018 General Assembly stating that local houses should strengthen their lives around Communal Prayer, Common Meals, Intentional Community Days, and regular Community gatherings, weekly if possible. Moreover, we **recommend** that each house makes available a regular family time gathering where members can share more deeply, with the help of a professional facilitator, in the spirit of greater fraternal care for one another.

Resolution #7: We **recommend** that each local house have a Community Life Coordinator who is responsible for coordinating community outings, birthday celebrations, anniversary celebrations, etc.

Resolution #8: C91. "The local superior will be a Paulist in final profession. He will strive to be a leader, animator, nurturer, listener, mediator, articulator of consensus, protector of the weak and servant of all. He will have a genuine concern for the missionary and pastoral works which are entrusted to members of the foundation." We recognize this constitutional clause and **recommend** that the role of a local superior be further defined by the General Council with guidelines for specific roles and responsibilities.

Resolution #9: We **recommend** that all local houses, if at all possible, have at least three men living in them. Preferably at least one man in each house will be in Senior Ministry.

Resolution #10: Three additional issues need our community's attention and vigilance:

- We **recommend** that each Paulist house reacquaint themselves periodically with stated Paulist policy concerning children and other vulnerable persons.
- We **recommend** that each Paulist house in the spirit of Laudato Si take particular care of the energy use and waste in our homes and other ministerial facilities. We could profit from conversations with informed people/parishioners that would help us to be better participants in our very fragile shared home — this earth, God's gift.
- We **recommend** that there be greater dialogue between national ministries and local houses, such that local houses become more familiar with national ministry programs and provide relevant feedback. This would be most effective if conversations occur with no more than 3 houses at once.

Resolution #11: We strongly **recommend** that the Paulist community continue the powerful conversations around race and ethnicity that were begun this past winter.



HECKER COMMITTEE



Rationale

On May 23, 2006, the Paulist Fathers' General Assembly, "conscious of the need for contemporary models of holiness," resolved to promote the canonization Cause of our founder, the Servant of God Father Isaac Thomas Hecker. On that occasion, the Paulist General Assembly declared Hecker's life and teaching "truly a valuable resource that needs to be widely recognized and communicated," that he "can inspire others beyond ourselves towards holiness of life, heroic virtue and personal faithfulness to Christ," and that "the time has come" for Father Hecker's story "to be disseminated throughout the larger church."

This 2022 General Assembly reaffirms our community's appreciation of Isaac Hecker's holy life and heroic virtue. Faithful to the example and charism of our founder, we Paulists live and work together to continue Christ's life and mission in our contemporary context and to foster Hecker's hope for a "brighter, more glorious future for God's holy Church." We continue to be inspired and directed in our discernment by Hecker's own experience and his continuing influence.

We believe that it is vital for the Paulist Fathers to ground ourselves in the charism of our founder in our day-to-day life as an apostolic religious community and in our mission as a community within the Church in dialogue with our time and place. While much of what Hecker said and wrote was historically and culturally conditioned, at its heart was the perennial truth which he experienced in the Catholic Church - as the Body of Christ which continues the mission of the Incarnation in the world - and the individual and social effects which flow from openness to that divine activity. His charism is a continuing invitation to read and reread our time and place through the unique experience of the Church's life and then to share that experience with our world today.

Having himself experienced the divided and fragmented character of modern society, increasingly characterized by diminished connections and fragile bonds among individuals, Hecker hoped for the Church, which “has met humanity in every stage of its development” and is uniquely positioned to play a prominent part in this process, to be a powerfully unifying force, acting - as he famously suggested to Blessed Pope Pius IX — “like oil on troubled waters,” blunting the dangerously sharp cutting edges of conflict and dissension.

While he anticipated “no special outpouring of the Holy Spirit – in the miraculous sense, no more than the present action, or the action of the Church in any age was miraculous,” Hecker enthusiastically expected an outpouring of the Holy Spirit through his embrace of the Church’s faith that Christ’s life and work are realized in the Church through the mission of the Holy Spirit who dwells by grace in each of us. As he wrote in summary near the end of his life: “It cannot be too deeply and firmly impressed on the mind that the Church is actuated by the instinct of the Holy Spirit, and to discern clearly its action, and to cooperate with it effectually, is the highest employment of our faculties, and at the same time the primary source of the greatest good to society.”

Conscious that all creation is always ultimately ordered to God’s grace, Hecker recognized that changed political arrangements and social situations, which might otherwise be perceived as obstacles, may actually be new opportunities for individual and social transformation through the Church’s ongoing realization of the incarnation. Waiving away the faded flag of 19th-century European Catholic preoccupation with the union of Church and State (integralism) — and, by extension, its 21st-century American revivals - Hecker proposed a radical renewal of American society through a profound religious renewal rooted in authentic personal spiritual renewal. And he hoped his Paulist Fathers’ community could be an effective vehicle for getting from here to there.

Hecker was well aware that his spiritual insights concerning what Catholicism had to offer to our society hardly corresponded to 19th-century conventional wisdom – on either side of the Atlantic. He never wavered, however, in his conviction that what he personally had been able to find only in Catholicism could and would be society’s answer as well. He combined Catholic universalism and a historically conditioned American self-understanding of the relationship between religion and society in a providential perspective. While many of Hecker’s 19th-century hopes and aspirations have not been met by historical developments, we Paulists still rightly seek inspiration in Hecker’s vision of social reconciliation and solidarity through evangelization. Thus, eager to address our age as he did, we Paulists root all our diverse pastoral and missionary efforts in our founder’s abiding trust in God’s presence and action in the world in which we live and in his prayerful, lifelong, commitment to discern and cooperate with God’s design for human beings.

Hecker consciously combined a strong, outward-directed, ministerial energy with intense, internal, personal, and priestly spirituality, envisaging a religious Society of Apostolic Life in which every member might consciously understand himself as a full participant in both the community’s internal life and outward mission. This classic pairing of discipleship (“personal perfection”) and evangelization (“zeal for souls”) still challenges us to reexamine and reimagine our individual conversion and community life and the religious witness and priestly ministry that flow from that.

“The Catholic faith,” Hecker wrote, “is capable of giving to people a true permanent and burning enthusiasm fraught with the greatest of deeds. But to enkindle this in others we must be possessed of it first ourselves.”

Resolutions

Resolution #1: We **recommend** that all of Hecker’s remaining unpublished writings be transcribed, edited, and published in a timely manner, so as to make them accessible to all Paulists and beyond the Paulist family.

Resolution #2: We **recommend** that a spiritual/theological biography of Hecker be commissioned, emphasizing Hecker’s mature thought and activity and his influence.

Resolution #3: We **recommend** that the convocation called for by the 2018 Assembly* (or a larger, nationally oriented gathering) be convoked within the next four years, and that the principal part of that experience be devoted specifically to the appropriation of Hecker’s spiritual insights in a manner which will be relevant for our present time.

Resolution #4: We **recommend** that knowledge of and devotion to Hecker and appropriate prayer for his intercession be encouraged as an essential element in every Paulist foundation’s ministry and outreach. We commend Paulist foundations which are already doing this.

Resolution #5: We **mandate** that the Postulator of the Cause of Isaac Hecker provide guidelines regarding legitimate devotion and prayer for Hecker’s intercession.

*** We repeat here for reference the section from the resolutions of the 2018 General Assembly’s Community Life Committee entitled Spirituality and Community Life:**



“Paulist community life can only be strengthened by developing in a deeper and more concerted way the spirituality of Father Isaac Hecker, the life and teaching of Saint Paul, and the place of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. A growth in our understanding of the spirituality of Fr. Hecker can better inform the mission of the Paulist Fathers.

“Those conversant with the history and writings of Fr. Hecker should be resources for the reflection and study of Paulists. Father Hecker provides a way to think about the search for God, the experience of conversion, the giving of oneself heroically in service, serving the Church’s mission and attentiveness to the direction of the Holy Spirit. These are elements not only for the Paulists themselves but also for the spirituality of the wider Church.

“Prior to the convocation, the Presidential Board should gather a group of Paulists together to develop a way to elaborate on Hecker’s spirituality in a way that other can assess his depth more easily, through various kinds of publication. This might be envisioned as describing “Father Hecker’s Spiritual Path.” This can become a resource for mission preaching, formation, Paulist Associates and Deacon Affiliates, and the wider People of God.



We commend our Treasurer John Tortolani and Director of Finance Kate McDonnell for their good stewardship of our financial resources and for their active communication and transparency with the Presidential Board and General Council.

We also commend outgoing President Eric Andrew, CSP, our outgoing Presidential Board, Ryan Holmgren from Steier Group, the entire Office Of Mission Advancement, the lay advisory committee, and the local foundations for guiding the most successful capital campaign in the society's history, which fully funded our retirement needs and paid for a new seminary building.

We thank our Business Manager Judy Leong-Eng for over 15 years of dedicated service to the Paulist community.

We are ever grateful for all of our benefactors who make our community life and mission possible.

Resolutions

Resolution #1: We **recommend** that the local finance officer periodically, preferably at least twice a year, shares a report of the local house financial position to the local community.

Resolution #2: We **commend** local houses for largely sending assessments back to the general community over the expected amount.

Resolution #3: We **mandate** that, acknowledging that a manual has been worked on previously, **there be a review, update, and completion of the Paulist Financial Manual.**

Resolution #4: We **recommend**, in light of 16.4% cumulative rate of inflation over the last 4 years, the monthly allowance be raised commensurately from \$300 to \$350. Furthermore we **recommend** that other figures be appropriately adjusted by the General Council in the next 6 months.

Resolution #5: C94. "The local superior, with the consent of the general council, will designate the finance officer." We bring attention to this constitutional clause and **recommend** that the local superior and the finance officer are not the same person.

Resolution #6: Whereas the Finance Committee received the financial reports of the last four years and met with the General Treasurer and Director of Finance, the committee **recommends** that the General Assembly accepts the Quadrennial Report.



Resolutions

Resolution #1: Whereas C24 of our Constitution provides that the Presidential Board has responsibility for the conduct of elections,

Be it **resolved** the General Assembly **recommends** the Presidential Board continue to encourage electronic voting in future elections and adjust the time frame with due regard for deliberation and promptitude in the election of officers, consultants, and delegates to the General Assembly.

Resolution #2: Whereas the Presidential Board and the General Council need greater flexibility in filling leadership positions in our foundations even as we experience fewer Paulists in active ministry,

Be it **resolved** D103 be amended to read:

"The term of office for the Local Superior and for Pastors of Paulist foundations will be four years; they may be reappointed for additional terms of either two or four years; ordinarily for no more than twelve years."

Be it further **resolved** the General Assembly **mandates** the Presidential Board to seek the permission of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life to implement the amended Decree *ad experimentum* until review and possible confirmation by the 2026 General Assembly.





NOTES

Resolution #3: Whereas D43 “The Vice President will be elected by popular ballot from among the already elected Consultors, for a term of four years, and may be reelected.” Is inconsistent with other sections of the Constitution and Decrees and the current election process of the Community as recommended by the 2018 General Assembly,

Be it **resolved** that the General Assembly amends Decree 43 to read: “The Vice President will be elected by popular ballot for a term of four years, and may be reelected.”

Be it further **resolved** the General Assembly **mandates** the Presidential Board to seek the permission of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life to implement the amended Decree *ad experimentum* until review and confirmation by the 2026 General Assembly.

Resolution #4: Whereas the 2018 General Assembly amended D45 and directed the Presidential Board seek permission to implement the Decree *ad experimental*, which permission was granted,

Be it **resolved** the General Assembly affirms the 2018 General Assembly amendment of D45 to read: “The First Consultor will be designated by the President (elect) after consultation with the Vice President.”

Resolution #5: C16 of our Constitution states the Paulist, following the example of Fr. Hecker, “cultivate a personal and community devotion to the “Holy Spirit . . . the Virgin Mary . . . St. Paul and other designated saints.” The designated saints are set forth in D3 and may be reviewed by the General Assembly for changes in designation.

Be it **resolved** D3 be amended with the designation of

St. Isaac Jogues
 St. John XXIII
 St. Kateri Tekakwitha
 St. Oscar Romero

Be it further **resolved** the General Assembly mandates the Presidential Board to seek the permission of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life to implement the amended Decree *ad experimentum* until review and possible confirmation by the 2026 General Assembly.





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