

Christmas  
2023



# the Voice

News from The Paulist Fathers Office of Mission Advancement



"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone."  
(Isaiah 9: 1)

# "This Son of Our Shores"

On November 14, 2023, the **U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops** voted to affirm the advancement of the Cause for Beatification and Canonization of our founder, **Servant of God Isaac Hecker** (1819 - 1888).

Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, presented Fr. Hecker's story to the bishops during their fall plenary assembly in Baltimore. Here is an abridged version of his beautiful remarks:

"His life is a classic American story. The son of immigrants, difficult childhood, raised by a single mother, Hecker didn't have it easy. ...

"Like a modern-day Augustine, his restless heart was constantly searching. ...

"He would have recognized himself in the many young people today who claim to be spiritual but not religious. His openness to the Truth soon brought him to reckon with the claims of Catholicism. And, here, the yearning of his heart met the rigor of his mind and he found himself at home.

"Like those Apostles on Pentecost Sunday, he was on fire to share this with everyone. For the rest of his life, Isaac Hecker maintained a deep devotion to the Holy Spirit whom he trusted to guide his ministry. ...

"He was a multi-media (even for the time) missionary in the parish missions that he preached so vigorously, in the lectures he delivered, in the books he published, in the periodicals he founded, in the countless columns he penned. Fr. Hecker worked tirelessly to proclaim the Word of God.

"Two-fold was his purpose: To make the Catholic faith appealing and accessible and compelling to a skeptical, and at times hostile, population, and then to educate

and encourage Catholics in their own faith, enabling them to become ambassadors for Christ. ...

"... he sought an apostolate of attraction to propose the faith with clarity, color, and charity, always assuming the goodwill of those to whom he preached. ...

"Here is what's unique, too: His efforts were animated by a deep sense of hope in the future of the United States of America despite the divisions that, at his time, were tearing the country apart.

## Consultation on Cause of Beatification and Canonization

Servant of God

Isaac Thomas Hecker,

Priest and Founder of the

Missionary Society of

Saint Paul the Apostle



Pictured: Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York speaks to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops about Servant of God Isaac Hecker during the bishops' meeting on November 14, 2023, in Baltimore, MD.

# , A Saint for Our Times"

Fr. Hecker believed that the Catholic Church was uniquely positioned to heal and unite the American people, reminding us all of our universal belonging to Christ.

"In the face of a skeptical Old World back in Europe, Fr. Hecker believed that America's founding principles formed a fertile field for the faith. And, with the Church unfettered here in this republic to propose her beliefs in the marketplace of ideas, he had every confidence that the Truth would prevail.

"His confidence and trust in the Holy Spirit cast out all fear. This was not false optimism, brothers, but the conviction of faith, seen through the bright light of Truth, the fire of Love.

"Convinced was he that the Holy Spirit renews the individual soul and that that soul would help build up the Church, the Church could then sanctify the world.

"His faith ought to inspire us, I propose, as we call upon that same Spirit to fill our hearts, to renew the face of the Earth, as we strive to continue his own missionary work in this vineyard of America, sharing his joy and his steadfast loyalty to the Church that he called his home."

"I ask for your endorsement, brother bishops, that the Church might soon raise to the altars, this Servant of God, this son of our shores, a saint for our times, Isaac Thomas Hecker."

To learn more about Servant of God Isaac Hecker and his Cause for Beatification and Canonization, please visit: [paulist.org/Hecker](http://paulist.org/Hecker). 🙏



## Prayer for Fr. Hecker's Intercession

If you or a loved one is in need of a miracle for healing or another purpose, please consider praying the words below and stating your request where indicated. Two miracles must be attributed to **Servant of God Isaac Hecker's** intercession before he may be canonized.

**"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 St. 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 Fr. 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."**

If God grants your prayer at the intercession of Fr. Hecker, please contact **Paulist Fr. Ron Franco**, the Postulator of Fr. Hecker's Cause, at: [heckercause@paulist.org](mailto:heckercause@paulist.org).



# To Show Our Gratitude



**Your support means the world to us!** To show our gratitude, we are offering this exciting incentive:

Make a donation from now **until March 1, 2024**, to the Annual Paulist Appeal, make a pledge payment on your "Hope for The Future" campaign pledge, or set up a recurring monthly gift of \$25 or more and you will be entered into a random drawing to receive a **gift certificate**.

The gift certificate may be used in the Paulist Fathers' online merchandise store, at the Paulist Press website, or at your local parish bookstore or gift shop.

For those donors fulfilling "Hope for The Future" pledges before March 1, 2024, you will receive a double entry.

If you are not able to make a financial contribution at this time, you may also enter the drawing by mailing a letter or card to us with a brief answer to the question **"What does the Paulist mission mean to you?"**. Please include your name, mailing address, email address, and phone number in your letter or card mailed to: **Paulist Fathers Office of Mission Advancement, 415 West 59th St., New York, NY 10019**.

We will announce the drawing winners in a future edition of "The Voice" and in our "Things To Know" weekly email.

For questions or more details, please contact our Office of Mission Advancement team at **(212) 586-2074** or **development@paulist.org**, or visit: **paulist.org/GiftCertificate**.

Chances of being selected to receive a gift certificate will be solely based on the number of participants from now until March 1, 2024, and the names will be randomly selected. 🍀



## "Things To Know" Newsletters

Do you receive our **"Things To Know"** email newsletters every Wednesday in the late afternoon or early evening? They are filled with important news and updates about Paulist ministries and upcoming events.

To receive "Things To Know," please send your email address to: **media@paulist.org**.

Please also check your "Promotions" tab or spam folder to ensure the latest edition of "Things To Know" made it past your email filters. 🍀



# Merry Christmas & Happy New Year 2024!

THE PAULIST FATHERS OFFICE OF MISSION ADVANCEMENT

Father Dave      Father René      Fr. John  
Brett      Paul  
Linda      Kami      Alexandra      Ellie



# FROM THE DESK OF FR. RENÉ



Dear Friends,

Whether you are reading this in the final days of Advent or during the beginning of the Christmas season, I pray that you and your loved ones are experiencing the many blessings of this wonderful time of year.

Before I turn to a particular piece of good news, I want to pause and record our collective sorrow at events abroad.

***Esta carta se puede leer en español en: [paulist.org/espanol](http://paulist.org/espanol)***

With our hearts and minds focused on the birth of the Christ Child in Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago, it's difficult not to be heartbroken over the recent violence and war in Israel and Gaza. Please join me and all of the Paulist Fathers in praying for peace in the land of Jesus' birth and ministry.

**As you will read in this issue of "The Voice,"** the Paulist family was given an early Christmas gift on November 14 when the U.S. Catholic Bishops endorsed the Cause for Beatification and Canonization of our founder, **Servant of God Isaac Hecker.**

We are very grateful to the bishops for taking this step that will lead to more people learning about Fr. Hecker and his passion to bring the Catholic faith into the mainstream of American life.

Like so many Americans today, Fr. Hecker was a religious seeker. He was constantly discerning how the Holy Spirit was moving within him. As Cardinal Timothy Dolan beautifully said when presenting Fr. Hecker's story to the bishops: "His openness to the Truth soon brought him to reckon with the claims of Catholicism. And, here, the yearning of his heart met the rigor of his mind and he found himself at home."

**We are so thankful for you, our partners in mission,** for helping us to advance Fr. Hecker's passion within the Paulist community and ministries today. Your prayers, active participation, and financial support of the **Annual Paulist Appeal** and our **"Hope for the Future"** campaign enable all that we do.

Merry Christmas! May God abundantly bless you and your loved ones during this season of hope and in the New Year 2024! You remain in our constant prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Father René".

**Very Rev. René Constanza, C.S.P.**  
President, The Paulist Fathers

**P.S. We know that some of our parishioners, friends, and benefactors** prefer to make financial contributions in the final days of the calendar year for tax purposes. To support our mission and ministries with a year-end gift, please use the enclosed envelope or visit: **[paulist.org/apa](http://paulist.org/apa)**. Thank you for your generosity!

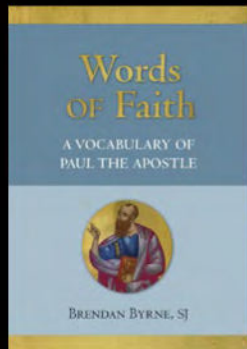


**Pictured: The creche at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle in New York City.**



**PAULIST  
FATHERS**

415 West 59th St.  
New York, NY 10019



**NEW FROM PAULIST PRESS:  
Words of Faith:  
A Vocabulary of Paul the Apostle**

By Brendan Byrne, SJ

This is a dictionary with more than 100 entries on key words and concepts of St. Paul from a theological point of view.

Employing judicious and even-handed insights, the author offers a comprehensive window into St. Paul's theological vision by means of his extensive vocabulary. It's an essential resource for anyone interested in St. Paul's letters.

To learn more about this and other Paulist Press titles, please visit: [paulistpress.com](http://paulistpress.com).

**QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FOR THE OFFICE OF MISSION ADVANCEMENT?**

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**Pictured: The sanctuary of St. Austin Church in Austin, TX, at Christmastime.  
On the cover: A stained-glass window representing the Nativity of Jesus  
at Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Community in Los Angeles.**