

The Associates World

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Paulist Associate National Retreat

From Monday July 22nd to Friday July 26th twenty-two Paulist Associates from seven different groups gathered at Lake George for the National Paulist Associate Retreat. It was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with associates from across the country and explore St. Paul's call to all of us to be ambassadors/ministers of reconciliation. Presenters reflected on this theme in the time of Hecker, in our current society, and in our personal lives. A special thanks to our facilitator and participant Fr. Mike Kallock, Fr. Frank Desiderio for hosting us, and to Fr. Frank DeSiano, Fr. Steven Bell and Fr. Paul Robichaud for leading such engaging discussions.



Faith and Culture in America

By Frank DeSiano, CSP, Washington, DC

I had the privilege of being with over two dozen Paulist Associates at Lake George to help with day two of the retreat on reconciliation. The mood was so positive among the participants that I know my brother Paulist, Steven Bell, got them flying on the first day. I wanted, in this little piece, to reprise some of the ideas we discussed and also to present my main point in case that would be helpful for all the Associates.

The theme was Reconciliation, and how paradoxical it is that religion, in certain areas of American culture, has become a point of division. Believers feel pinched in terms of how their faith sometimes gets used, or even abused, in the course of public dialogue. How can Catholics become more of a voice for reconciliation than a point of division in American (Canadian!) society?

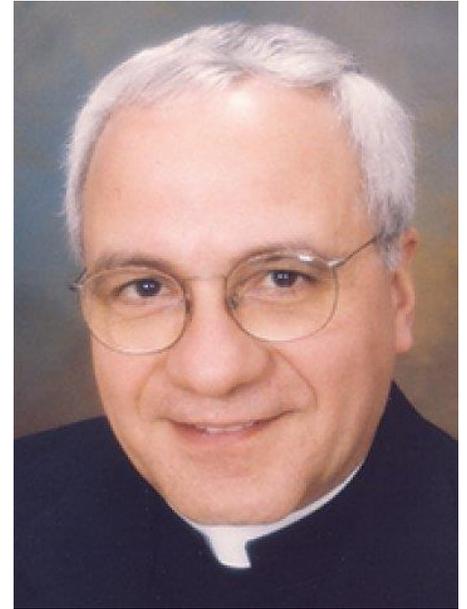
We reviewed the various ways it felt to be religious over the course of Christian history—how faith has sometimes seemed a minority position which one held at the risk of one’s life, to the times when faith virtually merged with culture and political power, as we at least imagined happening in medieval Europe. What would it be like to be an Orthodox Christian at the emergence of Communism in Russia—a land where Orthodoxy is almost identical with the Russian soil? How did the feelings of Catholics shift between the time before J. F. Kennedy, and afterwards?

We also looked at how faith and culture are often very different questions than church and state. The latter configuration, as Cardinal George liked to point out, dealt with legal arrangements, laws, and political forces. But faith-and-culture talks more about how values co-penetrate each other in the matrix of everyday life. We explored our experiences of this in current American life, and many mentioned how believers just tolerated significant shifts in cultural behaviors without underscoring the price believers might pay for these shifts. Some noted the place of a day of Sabbath as an example—or “What have we done with Sunday?”

I mentioned a book that had come to be very helpful in my thinking, *Sense of the Faithful* by Jerome P. Baggett (Oxford). Although I initially resisted some of the approaches, the book eventually helped me to come to see our faith not as a box with carefully defined take-or-leave elements, but as a huge bag that contains centuries of riches; people, in their struggles of their lives, take from the bag what is going to help them survive. This is not to undermine “orthodoxy” but more an observation about the way faith is appropriated in the lives of Catholics today. The book explores the ways six different parishes live the Catholic faith in their various ways.

After pointing out all the neuralgic aspects of faith-culture and church-state today—the pressures being raised by issues of justice, the rights of people, the plight of workers, gender-sexuality issues, for example—I was able to present a possible perspective that might lessen these pressures and lift up possibilities of reconciliation.

I noted that the values of the Kingdom which Jesus articulated are quite broad and quite widely accepted across cultures and cohorts in society. Perhaps we might think more in terms of us being



people of the Kingdom and using this kind of language more overtly in our discourse (more than, say, Church documents and citations of moral conclusions). Maybe we could garner more unity and momentum around these Kingdom values than around particular dogmatic issues.

I present here a list of some of these Kingdom values (which is not intended to be exhaustive or framed in any distinct order):

- One community in which all belong
- A state of acceptance and forgiveness
- People are liberated
- People are healed
- No one is deprived
- People live in expectation and hope
- Everyone acknowledges grace
- “Compassionate as your heavenly Father is compassionate.”

We explored together whether American would see her ideals in a list like this? Or whether American/Canada would find conflict? Of course, the phrase “her ideals” points to a wide range of potential sources—the Puritans in Massachusetts, the Spaniards in Florida, the Dutch traders in New York, for example. What are the sources and development of America’s ideals?

I then pointed out Pope Francis’ short summation of the Kingdom in “The Joy of the Gospel,” which goes like this:

The Gospel is about the kingdom of God (cf. Lk 4:43); it is about loving God who reigns in our world. To the extent that he reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity. Both Christian preaching and life, then, are meant to have an impact on society. (#180)

While St. Paul VI and St. John Paul II wrote more extensively on the Kingdom in their respective evangelization documents (“On Evangelization in the Modern World” and “Mission of the Redeemer”), Francis quickly captures the universal compelling quality of what Jesus lived for, and what the Church exists to bring about: “universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity.” Disagree as many might about how these values might be elaborated politically and socially, these ideals contain so much of the dreams of the human heart that they can span many conversations between citizens—and many conversations between believer and also non-believers.

The point that has been ticking in my mind in recent years is this: we Catholics can communicate more clearly who we are, and why we are, if we focused primarily on the Kingdom, and how Jesus’ vision of “the fullness of life and love” pulls at the basic thread of history and social organization. Once this has been clarified, we can then offer ourselves as a wonderful embodiment of the values of the Kingdom—the very catholic breadth of our world-wide communion and our magnificently noble teachings. This might also, as one participant pointed out, be a far better way to present the Church to younger generations.

This short summary does little justice to the great and free exchange among the Associates. What a great group of believers and conversationalists we Paulists and Associates are! The Gospel for our day (Matthew’s initial Gospel of the Sower and the Seed) gave me the opportunity to play with the imagery of Jesus. What if the “seed” is not only the Word of God but the people who have received the Word? What if we, as Catholic believers, were being sowed across these great lands of our ours? And

how have we, Paulist and Paulist associates, been scattered into the cultures in which we live? What kind of produce might we be yielding for the Kingdom?

Reflections of the Retreatants

A new beginning at Lake George - Lisa Wellik, Los Angeles Associate

I traveled to Lake George for the Paulist Associates National Retreat with great curiosity and anticipation, as this would be my first experience at this gathering. I came away not only spiritually enriched, but thrilled that I've made about twenty new friends from all over the country (and Toronto!). When I decided to attend, I was very attracted to the retreat theme on reconciliation and how we are called to be reconcilers in all aspects of our lives.

Having arrived a day early with my fellow Los Angeles associates, I was able to ease into the week and familiarize myself with the beautiful setting of St. Mary's on the Lake. What a lovely and wonderful place it is! It rained this first day, but I was taken with the calming sound of the raindrops during Mass in the chapel. The weather seemed to encourage a letting go of any anxieties I brought from home as I began meeting the associates group.

As the days progressed, I was so grateful for the care and thought put into the daily prayers and programming offered. I loved the excerpts from St. Paul's writings on reconciliation that Fr. Mike Kallock offered in his simple opening session, particularly Colossians 3:12-14, which exhorts us to put on the virtues of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

I kept this in mind as I listened to Fr. Frank DeSiano discuss the notion of "Baptized Democracy" and learned more about the dynamics of the Paulist community's formation from Fr. Paul Robichaud. I was particularly moved by Fr. Steven Bell's firsthand stories of interactions with sexual abuse victims during his session on how to be reconcilers in our personal lives. His accounts demonstrated that true reconciliation begins with respect for the dignity of the individual.

Overall, I was struck by how quickly and easily new bonds were formed with fellow associates I'd never met before this week. There was such a welcoming and openness to the interactions during the group sessions, talks over meals and spontaneous outings. I was moved by our prayer time and appreciated being personally introduced to all the Lake George traditions. As I watched the fireworks from the boat dock on our final night together, I felt a sense of calm and satisfaction that I've not experienced in quite a while.

I left St. Mary's truly renewed and thankful that I am a Paulist Associate. I'm inspired to delve deeper into the writings of Fr. Hecker and to share the Paulist charism of reconciliation in my daily life. I feel like I am at the early stage of a wonderful journey with the Paulist Associates and look forward to wherever the Holy Spirit takes me next!

A retreat with a bonus - Mary Ward, Columbus Associate

I have just returned from the Associates retreat at Lake George. I was showered with spirit, love and inspiration. As we all know, Paulists are super stars, and they did not disappoint. I was able to

connect with old friends and make new friends. I'm certain that you will be hearing much about the retreat from other participants, so I want to share another experience.

Carol Wagner-Williams drove and I navigated. On our return, we stayed in Rochester NY. We went to an Irish pub for dinner and had a great time reminiscing about the retreat and solving the world's problems. As we were preparing to pay our bill, a large man, unknown to either of us, came up to our table and grabbed the bill. He proceeded to stuff the folder with money and said "your bill is paid"

Well let me tell you, my jaw dropped and I asked him why. He said "Your bill is paid and the tip is included. Pay it forward"

And just how would we do this. My first thought was to make a donation to the food pantry. After thinking just a little longer, I concluded that a different response would continue the intention of this generous man. So now I'm contemplating how I can carry on this initiative.

This all caused Carole and me to talk about how we see Jesus in the stranger, where we both feel deficient. His size made our first instinct to be fear, but clearly he was kind and generous.

In some people, it is easy to see Jesus. Others are more difficult.

So now we have two items that we need to deal with: How to see Jesus in each person that we encounter, even when it is most difficult, and how to carry on the love and kindness that this man shared.

A 'nested meditation' - Katherine Murphy, Columbus Associate

A 'nested meditation' reflection from the Paulist Associates National Retreat:
God...through Christ has given us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 18)

What would it be like...

if you have a grievance against another, to forgive?

What would it be like if you have a grievance against another to forgive, for mercy sake?

What would it be like if you have a grievance against another, to forgive?

For mercy sake, let it go and become a reconciler.

What would it be like if you have a grievance against another, to forgive?

For mercy sake, let it go.

To become a reconciler is our call through Christ.

What would it be like if you have a grievance against another, to forgive?

For mercy sake, let it go.

To become a reconciler is our call.

Through Christ our mission is Mercy, for mercy sake!

*According to developer of the technique, Kevin Anderson, a nested meditation is "not quite a poem and not quite a prayer" and can be either or both. It uses a single line that makes a complete sentence. The next stanza repeats and so on but the punctuation and wordplay creates shifts that may be surprising.

Diversion to Insight – Ann Beisch, Los Angeles

My plan is just that. A plan,
My needed place to start.
It keeps me from aimless ramblings.
Such directed efforts, focused and mindful,
Agendas and plans, all sound so rigid.
They yield product, accomplishment, success. And these are good.
But maybe it would better, be called a way, or path.
There, is a space for change.
Fluid with inspiration.
A retreat, a way of stepping away, allowing the wanderings.
And could it be that openness to wandering might also lead to the Spirit?
Possibly the unexpected, the mystical, the deep, the reconciler?
And so these words and thoughts are case in point.
The diversion along the way, so not in my plan.
But I followed this path, finding Him, our pardon and our peace.
I wandered into retreat, losing fear of the feeling of being lost.
And felt the God of compassion, warm my heart, to love the broken-hearted.
So here I am.
The wandering became a grace, so unintended.
I step into the day cherishing this newness, and with a plan, it is who I am.
But the insight of the retreat stays with me.
Wanderings that lead to more than I know, blessing me to embrace and not resist.
That is a good plan.

When 1+1 can equal 3 - Don Sommese, Boston Associate

Springsteen on Broadway

In the Lake George Walgreen's parking lot, listening to the last song on a musical journey that began in NH and ending here on the asphalt, near a sign offering free shingles shots. All the while thanking my friend Mark for this Christmas gift which had remained unopened, waiting for the right moment to tear off the wrapper. Yes, the final song before getting back on 9L for the short drive to

#3535. With Bruce's surprise, personal take on the Lord's Prayer ending the record, I knew my retreat was ready to begin.

My apologies for the odd form of wordsmithing, but here she goes...

Flightings, Findings and Hiatus

Where two or more are gathered....in this place, in this space. Thoughts will lead: Bring on the Cavalry....Mike, Frank, Frank, Steve, Paul...yes Paul, a Paulist's Paul...what grace, what beauty, what stick-to-itiveness.

IT'S GONNA BE DIFFERENT THIS TIME. Isn't that what they always say before the next Great Depression? Or the next Great Retreat? Leaving with More and Keeping the More. Maybe this time?

Drop the bags off and set out. It's Sunday and no other Associate is here yet. So, it's off to the races....an appointment with a game of Pinball down in the Village. God Bless that Arcade for harboring a few machines! So, I brought quarters, many quarters. But the game has gotten away from me. Now it's credits (3) to start up this game of skill (so-called). It's all Crypto-Currency to me. A money card to swipe and try to earn a free game. (Popping we called it growing up in NJ.) Free game, free reign, and now.... I am CAGE free, ready to retreat!

So, it's back to the ranch...visualizing the names, the names...retreatants ALL.

Waiting for God - Perfect light. A reading Wednesday night.

Steve and Frank: Perfect cadence. The solemnity of Spirit over matter as the Script progresses. The Twain SHALL Meet – in Prison, in Court, in homes, in Theatres, in workplaces, in down-spaces, crude races – To the Top! NO STOPPING. Never in doubt – A life of crime or a Life in Christ. Our choice - we viewers from the South and North, East and West and Midwest. Again, this reading...It was SCRIPTural! Steve and Frank invading their characters with grace and power. Nora, translucent in her supporting role. Honoring the story. The strength of the Spirit, indomitable. Growing, growing, growing...Soft Light after Hard Time. Beckett... left it... to us, to you. To Play, to Heal. Helping us to leave this evening with More and to *Keep* the More.

Romancing the Stones

On the path, on the walk to the Dock, to Wiawaka off 9L, just down a pace.

It was all so mystical. This week. For me. Rising higher than my human understanding of time and place. Events, talks, looks, light. Oh the light. To see as God sees. Now that's a retreat. That's Life.

The Postulator - He spoke with a still small Voice

And then it was Paul's talk. We heard him! We heard him...in our own native tongues. We understood! This was a Pentecostal moment. This was Mary sitting at the feet of Christ, now joined by Martha. Every one of us, honoring Paul's labor for the Hecker cause for sainthood. Yes, we understood! "Mr. Pope, that was the first miracle." (If the only one, so be it.)

The End

Yes, there are times, moments when 1+1 does equal 3. God's presence tripling the pleasure as two sit, chat, finding a new/old way towards reconciliation, of thought, of deed, of action. It's when this troublesome addition problem is solved.

Then POOF...I'm home....ahhh. But it is different this time. A continuance, or as we say, a labor.

Faith as a Bag of Riches – Kathleen Lossau, Austin Associate

I found myself thinking (too much perhaps)... on Fr. Frank's concept of "faith not as a box with carefully defined take-or-leave elements, but as a huge bag that contains centuries of riches; people, in their struggles of their lives, take from the bag what is going to help them survive."

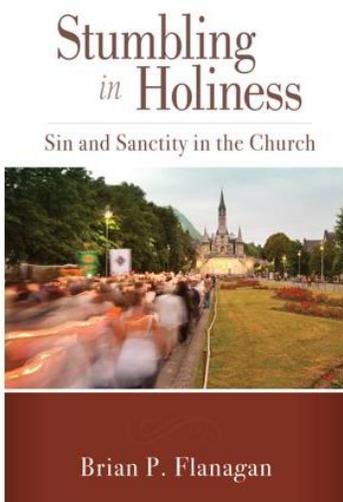
It is a beautiful way of describing how people use the tools/gifts that God has given us through the church. The fear (wrongly) that I had was that it sounded very cafeteria-like. It isn't. Instead it is a beautiful way of describing the rich set of gifts that God has given us and continues to give us.

I was able to get my head around it once I thought of this "bag" like a "tool-box" of gifts that God has given to us through the church. Some tools (ancient or new), while equally a beautiful gift, are not used by us for the task at hand. We also may not tackle a task as eloquently as we would if we used the tools (gifts) given us more effectively. Still we do tackle the task, often with the tools we are most comfortable with. I often use the hammer, screwdriver and wrench. When in fact I should use some of the other tools in there more often (e.g. the level, drill, and tape measure).

This bag or tool-box is filled with so many gifts from God given to us to help us grow in our faith and ultimately reconcile with him. We should appreciate the fact that, although God himself does not change, He isn't through providing new tools or gifts for us to use. And perhaps, we should even take the time to explore and appreciate how others use the rich container of gifts/tools he has given us. It might allow us to not only recognize how God is working in our world through other people but also allow us to learn how we also can use some of these tools/gifts, ancient or new.

Thank you Fr. Frank for the gift of time and insight. Much appreciated..

Associate wins Publishers Award



Congratulations to Dr. Brian P. Flanagan for winning 1st place at the 2019 Association of Catholic Publishers Awards in the category of Theology for his book "Stumbling in Holiness: Sin and Sanctity in the Church". Brian is an associate in Washington D.C.

Dr. Brian Flanagan is an associate professor of theology at Marymount University and a Paulist Associate since 2006 currently living in the Washington DC area.



Congratulations to our Paulist Deacon Affiliates

At St. Paul the Apostle Church, July 20, 2019, at the 5:15 Mass Deacon Tom Casey (wife, Rachel) and Deacon Drew Dickson (wife, Victoria) made their first Promise as a Paulist Deacon Affiliate; Deacon Dennis Dolan (wife, Deb) renewed his Promise as a Paulist Deacon Affiliate for another year. Deacon Casey will work with Deacon Dolan in Florida in various outreach projects for young adults and inactive Catholics; Deacon Dickson is exploring with his pastor various outreach projects in northern New Jersey. (Deacon Billy Atkins will renew his promise in Austin, TX).



Deacon Affiliates are those able to serve as ordained members through preaching, teaching, and organizing charitable outreach. They make a promise to give some of their deacon time to Paulist-type ministries, with the agreement of their bishops and pastors.

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>.

Upcoming Pilgrimages, Retreats, Events

Landings 40th Anniversary Pilgrimage to Rome - April 28-May 3, 2020

Visits to the Vatican Museum, Catacombs of Santa Priscilla, Tre Fontane, and St. Paul's Outside the Walls. Possibility of private audience with Pope Francis or Mass with Pope Francis. Daily conference on reconciling and welcoming returning Catholics. Pilgrimage limited to 20 registrants. Full details will be posted here and will be e-mailed to Landings International and Paulist Pilgrimages newsletter subscribers as they become available.



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

Submitted by Mike Kallock, CSP.

(It is strongly suggested during the Bicentennial Year of Hecker's Birth that all groups follow the basic theme for the designated month as taken from Isaac Hecker for Every Day edited by Ronald Franco, CSP)

THEME: The Holy Spirit and the World

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 theme of the Holy Spirit and the World, I can't help but think of the role of God's Spirit in the two creation stories in the first two chapters of Genesis. In the First Creation Story, Genesis 1:1-2:4, the Spirit of God is spoken of as a "mighty wind sweeping over the waters," bringing order to the 'formless wasteland and darkness.' In the Second Creation Story Genesis 2:5-25, often referred to as the story of Adam and Eve, God blows into the nostrils of man "the breath of life" (Gen 2:7) so that man becomes "a living being."

No one wonder that our more developed Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit is as a creative energy, unifying force permeating all creation (Gen 1); and that in the Nicene Creed that we profess every Sunday, the Holy Spirit is simply described as "the giver of life."

We pray, "Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created." Simply put, there is no World without the Holy Spirit.

FROM THE WRITINGS OF FATHER HECKER:

"The Holy Spirit fills the whole earth," acts everywhere & in all things, more directly on the minds & hearts of rational creatures, dwells substantially in the souls of the faithful, and is the light, life, soul of the Church. This all-wise, all-powerful action now guides, as He ever has & ever will, all men & events to His complete manifestation and glory. Pentecostal days! Were the promise of His universal triumph. (The Paulist Vocation, pp169-170)

Each one share within your group how Hecker's belief that the Holy Spirit, "acts everywhere & in all things," effects your own life and sense of the future. Does it give you hope in the future? In the scaredness of life?

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>

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PAULIST ASSOCIATES NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Mike Kallock, CSP
Paulist General Office
P.O. Box 20606
New York, NY 10023
kallockcsp@paulist.org



BOARD MEMBERS

Carol Wagner Williams
Tucson, AZ
831professor@gmail.com

Frank Desiderio, CSP
frankd@paulist.org

Katherine Murphy Mertzluft
Columbus, OH
ktmm608@gmail.com

Joe Scott, CSP
frjoe@oldsaintmarys.org

David Rooney
Chicago, IL
drooney@ymail.com

Mary Sullivan
Boston, MA
maryjsullivan6@gmail.com

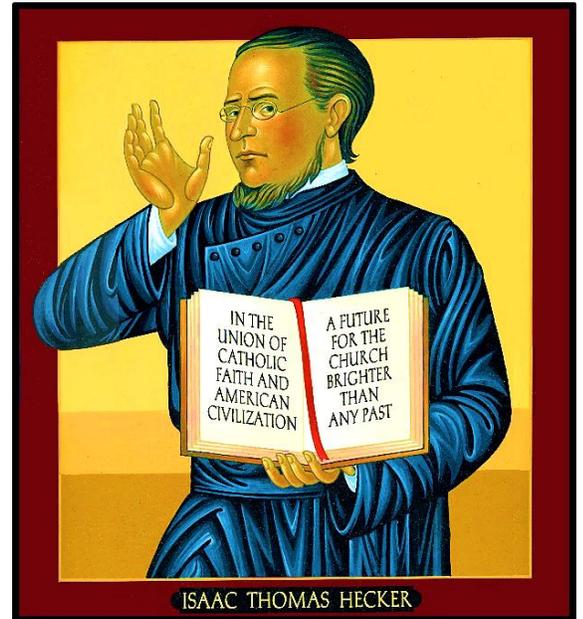
PRAYER FOR THE INTERCESSION OF FATHER ISAAC T. HECKER, SERVANT OF GOD

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.