



# SERVANT OF GOD

Newsletter of the Hecker Guild

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## Prayer for Fr. Hecker's Cause

Heavenly Father, you called Isaac Hecker to preach the Gospel to the people of North America and to know the peace and the power of your indwelling Spirit. Like St. Paul the Apostle, he spoke your Word with a zeal for souls and a burning love for all who came to him in need. Hear our prayer through the intercession of Father Hecker, grant (state the request). We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit. One God, forever and ever. Amen.

## Hecker Guild Monthly Masses

The New York Chapter of the Fr. Isaac T. Hecker Guild will sponsor a special Mass at St. Paul the Apostle Church for the intention of the cause of Fr. Hecker every month (except April). The Mass will usually be followed by a meeting in the Parish Center focused on some aspect of Fr. Hecker's life or his Cause. All are invited. Hecker Guild Masses will be celebrated on Feb. 16, March 8, May 17 and June 14 at 10 a.m.



Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York (center) points out some features of a bronze medallion he was given featuring the likeness of Paulist founder Fr. Isaac T. Hecker to Paulist president Father John F. Duffy (left) as medallion designer Father Frank Sabatte, C.S.P., looks on. The moment took place after the Mass after which Cardinal Egan formally opened the cause for the canonization of Father Hecker Jan. 27 at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle in New York.

## Cardinal Egan Opens Fr. Hecker's Cause

The Archbishop of New York, His Eminence, Edward Cardinal Egan, officially opened the diocesan inquiry into the life and virtues of Fr. Isaac Hecker at St. Paul the Apostle Church in New York City on Jan. 27. This formally initiated the diocesan phase of the process leading (it is fervently hoped) to the eventual beatification and canonization of Fr. Hecker, who will henceforth be referred to as "The Servant of God, Isaac Thomas Hecker."

The ceremony took place at the conclusion of a Mass celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the founding of St. Paul the Apostle Parish and of the Paulist Fathers in July 1858. As Bishop of the Diocese in which Fr. Hecker lived, died, and is buried, the Cardinal officially accepted the petition presented by Fr. Paul Robichaud, CSP, the Paulist Postulator of the Cause. Then he and the other officers of the diocesan process – Rev. Msgr. William Belford (Del-

egate Instructor, who will preside at the inquiry in the Cardinal's absence), Rev. Msgr. Douglas Mathers (Promoter of Justice, who will question the Cause so that the inquiry may arrive at the full truth), Rev. John Sean Foley, CSP (Notary, who will certify all records and documents), Rev. Paul Robichaud, CSP (Postulator, who will promote the Cause on behalf of the Paulist Fathers) and Rev. Ronald Franco, CSP (Vice Postulator) - each publicly took and signed an oath, swearing "to fulfill faithfully my duties for this diocesan inquiry regarding the life and virtues of Servant of God Isaac Thomas Hecker and to maintain the secrecy prescribed."

Hecker Cause Prayer Cards are now available through the Postulator's Office in Washington, DC. A reliquary card and a DVD of the ceremony of the opening of Fr. Hecker's Cause will also be available later in the year.

# Exploring Father Hecker's tomb

In recent years, it has been the custom on or near the anniversary of Fr. Isaac Hecker's death for Paulists and parishioners at St. Paul the Apostle Church in New York City to gather at Fr. Hecker's tomb to recall his life and pray for his eternal rest. More recently, on Jan. 26, Paulist Fathers, Paulist Associates, and parishioners celebrated a special Vigil of Prayer was held at Fr. Hecker's Tomb in anticipation of the Opening of his Cause the following day, when Cardinal Egan, before beginning the Mass led the assembled Paulists and congregation in remembering Fr. Hecker at the very site where his body lies in rest.

After Fr. Hecker died on December 22, 1888, he was initially buried in the vault of New York's Old St. Patrick's Cathedral on Mott Street (where the first of the original four Paulists to die, Fr. Francis Baker, C.S.P., had earlier been buried in 1865). Later, when the crypt below the South Tower of St. Paul the Apostle Church was completed, Fr. Hecker's remains were transferred there. Then, on Jan. 24, 1959, at the conclusion of celebration of their centennial year, the Paulist Fathers dramatically reinterred Fr. Hecker's body in a new 20-foot high sarcophagus in the northeast corner of the church.

The sarcophagus was designed by sculptor Lumer Martin Winter and executed in botticino marble in Pietrasanta, Italy. At the base of the sarcophagus are six images. The first of the six images shows Isaac Hecker as a sick child, in danger of death from smallpox, reassuring his mother: "No, mother, I shall not die now; God has work for me to



Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York stands in front of the tomb of Father Hecker after blessing it on Jan. 27, the day Father Hecker's cause for canonization was formally opened at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle.

do in the world, and I shall live to do it." The second image shows him as a young man delivering bread from his brothers' bakery. The third shows Hecker searching for God at Brook Farm in 1843. The fourth image depicts his ordeal in Rome after his dismissal from the Redemptorists in 1857. The fifth image portrays his preaching as a Paulist missionary, while the final image shows his establishment of the Catholic World magazine and the beginnings of the Paulist Press. Above, a heroic angel of the resurrection, enfolding within its wings the figures of St. Paul the Apostle and Fr. Hecker, stands in silent vigil over the Paulist Founder's remains.

## What is the Hecker Guild?

The Father Isaac T. Hecker Guild, an association of members and volunteers committed to support a coordinated effort to promote the cause for canonization of Servant of God Father Isaac T. Hecker, founder of the Paulist Fathers.

The mission of the guild is: to foster daily prayer for the cause of Father Hecker's canonization; to provide opportunities for the story of Father Hecker's life, accomplishments, and sanctity to become more widely known; and to encourage prayer for favors and to keep a record of petitions and favors granted.

Members commit themselves to promote the cause of Father Hecker primarily by praying daily for Father Hecker's cause.

Volunteers commit themselves to assist the Office for the Cause for Canonization of Father Isaac T. Hecker by implementing the mission of the Guild in their local community. Local chapters will sponsor periodic Masses for the intention of the cause of Father Hecker and other events to support his cause.

Membership in the guild is open to all. All are invited to learn more about the life, accomplishments, and sanctity of Father Hecker and to promote his canonization.

## How do I join?

Simply e-mail [heckercause@paulist.org](mailto:heckercause@paulist.org), call 212-265-3495 or write: Hecker Guild c/o Father Ron Franco, Church of St. Paul the Apostle, 405 W. 59th Street, New York, NY, 10019. It's that easy!