



Dear Friends of the CIC,

Happy Easter! Christ is alive! And in this season of grace, we are invited to deepen our new life in Christ.

Prayer is one of the pathways to building and deepening our relationship with God in the life Christ has won for us.

For over 30 years I have advocated and practiced Ignatian meditation and imaginative prayer. I instruct people that it is okay

to use their imagination to allow God to communicate with them. Inevitably, someone will express reluctance, “how is this different from a child playing house or pretend? Am I not just making this all up?” No, not if you are properly grounded.

The proper grounding for this type of prayer (or any prayer) starts with the personal intention to meet God in real, personal, mutual relationship. Then, for prayer to work as a conduit for building and deepening our personal relationship with God, we must shift away from a “willpower alone” approach. My personal will cannot be the primary engine for building a relationship through prayer. Like every genuine relationship we encounter, we share in both giving to and receiving from the other person. The opposite of “my will be done” is willingness. Such willingness is characterized by openness, humble engagement, obedience, and even surrender. It is important to share my deep desires and wants with God. It is equally important to listen and respond to God’s wants and desires for me.

This conversion of our willfulness to a willingness is embodied in the third petition of the Lord’s Prayer - “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” When he instructed his disciples to pray this way, Jesus deepened our understanding of true interior prayer with our heavenly Father. He showed us how much he himself had been formed by that prayer intention, when he spoke in the garden of Gethsemane, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will.” Through his instruction on how to pray, Jesus invites us to allow God’s grace to form and transform us in becoming more open and willing to be fashioned by God’s will each and every day.

Here at the Center, we offer opportunities to nurture a willingness, openness, and faithful obedience in our response to the invitation to new life that Christ offers through the Holy Spirit. We invite and encourage you to participate in our upcoming programs which embody this same openness.

As always, we humbly extend our gratitude for your generous financial contributions which make our ongoing work possible. May you continue to share the love of God with those around you as you live out the Easter message, *He is risen and alive in our midst!*

Christ’s Peace and Joy to your hearts always,



Sean Donovan
Director of Religious Education

Pray for:

Sarah Denny
+Kathryn Edens
Catie Heynen
Angie Ruiz
Thomas Seppala
Thora Wease

**April Mass for CIC
Intentions:
Sunday, April 14
5:30 p.m. at the
Cathedral**

Please include your prayer intentions with your green envelope or email them to cicoffice@catholicinformationcenter.org

Upcoming Programs

Freedom from Judgement, Guilt and Fear of Punishment

Tuesdays, April 2, 9, 16, 23
7-8:30 p.m. ET



Does what we were taught as children about God work for us today? Based on book, *Who Told You, You Were Naked?* **Paulist Father Joachim Lally and Fred Johnson** will lead an exploration of the path to deepening our relationship with God. Plan to attend all 4 sessions.

“Let Me Live Until I Die”

Thursday, April 18
10-11:30 a.m. ET

These words of Sr. Thea Bowman in her last year of life inspire us to approach our own death through love rather than fear. **Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS** will explore how we celebrate our lives, remember those who have gone before us, and begin planning for our own funeral. This presentation is part of the 55 Plus Series, exploring spirituality and vitality in the second half of life.



Spirit of Hecker Awards

Watch online
Saturday, April 27
8:30 p.m. ET



The Paulist Fathers will host the 4th annual Spirit of Hecker Awards on April 27, airing at 8:30 p.m. Eastern / 7:30 pm Central.

This year's theme is "Advancing God's Mission through Charism and Community" - highlighting the exceptional work done by individuals and parish groups embodying the spirit of Isaac Hecker.

Previous honorees from Grand Rapids include:

- The Catholic Information Center Digital Ministry Team
- Rob Frans and the Parish Council
- Crystal Bravo
- Daniel Pierson
- Irene Strom
- Fred and Joyce Johnson

The awards will be broadcast on the Paulist Fathers website, paulist.org/heckerawards and on their Facebook page.

Your generous and regular contributions help ensure a vibrant and enduring future for the Paulist ministry at the CIC. All donations, no matter the size, make a significant impact.

Become a monthly contributor through online giving by scanning the QR code below or by visiting our website.



Follow us on Social Media for the latest updates and news.

For information about upcoming programs, visit catholicinformationcenter.org or call 616-459-7267

Friendship Corner

CIC Evening Receptionist
Claudia Hallberg



Born and raised in Mexico, Claudia Hallberg studied Industrial Engineering at IEST-Anahuac University in Altamira, Tamaulipas, Mexico. In 1999, Claudia moved to West Michigan where she took ESL programs at GRCC and English courses at Baker College. Currently she lives in Newaygo with her husband Ed. They have a daughter, a son, and one grandchild.

Claudia has been actively involved in the community with various nonprofit organizations. She has devoted 23 years of volunteering service at St. Bartholomew Church, guiding parishioners of all ages through their Sacraments, directing the youth group, contributing as an Administrative Assistant, Director of Religious Education for the Hispanic Ministry, and as a reader during the Spanish Mass. Additionally, her engagement with the Diocese of Grand Rapids includes serving as a member of the Steering Committee for the Pastoral Plan and the V Encuentro and Technology Coordinator for the Leadership Formation Institute for the Hispanic Ministry.

In January, Claudia was hired as the evening receptionist and administrative assistant at the CIC, aligning with her commitment to serve the Lord in various capacities. Her favorite verse is Philippians 4:13 - "I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me."