

# *The Work of Resurrection*

-May 2021-

*"Hurry then, take up this work of resurrection, never forgetting that the special end of your institute is, before all, to sanctify youth."*

*-Basil Moreau, Christian Education, 1856*

A classroom is a household that should be managed by loving parents looking to serve their families. Yes, we must have rules and policies and procedures, but above all else, we must have listening hearts that really care about the welfare of those kids and constantly look for ways to set them up for success. If we have been raised in particularly stressful or dysfunctional circumstances, it can be hard for us to shake those tendencies that we carry around with us. We might do things like deal punitively with students, use points as bargaining chips, withdraw our affections when we are angry, lash out at those who annoy us, escalate otherwise trivial situations, lay guilt and shame on others, act in petty ways, or get tricked into a variety of other non-life giving behaviors, but we are nevertheless responsible for those young people who have been entrusted to us!

As Holy Cross Educators we have been blessed with the spiritual legacy of Blessed Moreau who has graced us with a profound vision of family life as the basis for our schools. Indeed, modeling his very community of sisters, priests and brothers on the most Holy Family of Mary, Jesus and Joseph, he invites us to consider the gravity of the task at hand. We aren't just cranking out a product on an assembly line - though the American brand of modern education was designed to do just that! - we are rather engaging in the work of formation, whereby we are called to create homes in our classrooms and form communities of love among those with whom we share that sacred place. And while many of us have a more pressing version of family life at our literal homes that is constantly on our minds and hearts, we learn over time to integrate these two worlds and strive for peace and harmony in a single vocational mindset that simply sees the Holy Family in all that we do.

We learn over time how to engage successfully in this work. We learn to communicate effectively with students, to design relevant lessons and units, to initiate meaningful and intelligent conversations, to establish boundaries that make sense, to share about our personal lives in appropriate ways, to set aside times during a given week or quarter to celebrate together, to settle disputes justly, to make sacrifices, to tell the truth, to be comfortable with spending down time together, to apologize when the situation demands, to show emotion, to take a real interest in the lives of our students, to be gracious, to be merciful, to be firm, to be reasonable. This kind of classroom economy (a word which, by the way, literally means "to run a household") is destined to make a deeply positive impression on the hearts of those kids who spend hours upon hours together with us.

Shocking kids with gratuitousness is an excellent way to create the culture of a loving household. Most of my favorite memories as a classroom teacher involve pulling out a bag of candy at an unexpected time on an unexpected day. I would very carefully pour them into a special bowl, as the kids gazed on in excitement, and then begin to go around the classroom, one student at a time, offering each this token of friendship and affection. This was such an energizing - and eucharistic! - tradition, and while some colleagues would say that this creates a dependence and that the teacher then feels perpetually obligated to buy treats for kids, I say...so be it! Five dollars every couple of weeks is the modest price for a Holy Cross Educator to invest in "the sanctification of youth" and "preparing the world for better times than ours" (*Christian Education*, 'The Formation of Students to the Christian Life').