

# The Work of Resurrection

-February 2022-

*“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*

For many years, entering into religious life was designed to be a kind of crisis. A young man who wanted to be a Brother was confronted by a strict schedule, rules, formalities and authority all for the sake of pressuring him to make a decision about the meaning of his vocation. While modern-day psychology would probably not look favorably upon this method of discernment, there is an important principle at play: each of us is responsible for our own lives and we must take ownership at some point. The word “crisis,” in fact, literally means, from its Greek root, “to sift.” We have to sift through all of our feelings, attachments, memories, intentions, dreams and desires in order to lay claim to the deep truth within our hearts.

The global pandemic - which appears to finally be winding down - has been a natural crisis for all of us. Confronted by heavy and unexpected circumstances, we have each been forced - just like those young Brothers! - to make decisions about what is important to us. Many of us came to realize how truly precious our families are, or how much we really do rely on the salary and benefits of steady employment. Indeed, the long quiet hours, especially early on, was the universe’s way of inviting us to self-reflect and get in touch with our priorities.

As Holy Cross Educators, the global pandemic has been an occasion for us to think more deeply about our life of faith. Yes, it has been very frustrating and oftentimes exhausting to go from in-person learning, to hybrid, to remote, and then back to in-person when we were least expecting it. And yes, we have been tasked with mentally juggling mask policies, testing procedures, confidentiality laws, and new instructional methods all while teetering on the brink of emotional burnout. Nevertheless, it has also been a graced time to ask ourselves: Is the struggle and hardship of the cross really a worthwhile enterprise? Does a vision of resurrected life continue to captivate my mind and heart? How might God be not just presiding over but actually in the muck of it all? In this way, we shall affirm the wisdom of the Chinese word for “crisis,” which is a combination of the two characters for “danger” and “opportunity.”

We had one particularly challenging year in the schoolhouse. There were personality conflicts and politics with colleagues jockeying for position and lots of hurt feelings. I went to talk to the principal one day and she reminded me that when things start to swirl around, it is important to stay the course and “do the next right thing.” I could not stop thinking about the women who went to anoint the body of their long-hoped-for Messiah. Truly a crisis of faith! Nevertheless, they honored the deep truth within, and, according to Jewish law, “did the next right thing” by going to the tomb where they, of course, encountered the resurrection in a profound way. May the rest of the global pandemic, like entering religious life, be an “apprenticeship” (*Constitutions*, 62) in learning how to decide our priorities in life, and may we, like the Brothers of Holy Cross, allow ourselves to be led, crisis by crisis, to a more “wholehearted” (*Constitutions*, 8) commitment to our vocation as “educators in the faith.”