

The Work of Resurrection

-April 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

It is a little known fact that the Brothers of Holy Cross did not originally take solemn, or perpetual, vows. Rather, each year, they would gather together in the summer for a retreat and community time to discern whether they felt called by God to renew their annual vows. While this is not the norm for religious life as we know it today, there is something very spiritually healthy about this practice: each brother was tasked with recommitting himself to his vocation in a real and not a token way year in and year out. Indeed, instead of resting in the security of being in final vows, in which a religious community is canonically responsible for a member for life, the early Brothers of Holy Cross lived a life of precariousness in order to ensure the deep listening that makes one's vocation ever fresh.

As Holy Cross Educators, we participate in a very similar system. There are no tenured jobs in the schoolhouse, but instead, each year, when the contracts are out, we are invited to discern how to move forward in our vocations. Some years - such as during this pandemic - are harder than others, and so we must assess how we have experienced God's call through it all and areas for future growth. Maybe we feel excited about committing ourselves to the mission for another year, maybe we feel anxious because of the particular stresses of our ministry, or maybe it is time to consider whether we need a change of pace, to serve in some new capacity at our school. Being intentional about the contract process will strengthen our hearts and help us to clarify what it means to be a Holy Cross Educator - nothing less than “to live in the image of Jesus, who was sent in love to announce God's rule and who beckons to us to follow him” (*Constitutions*, 43).

It is true that some years I just blindly picked up a contract from my mailbox, opened the envelope and signed away without even taking the time to read through it or think critically about my vocation. There were, nevertheless, those years when the Spirit seemed to be telling me to slow the process down: pack your contract in your bag, take it home, set it on your desk, wait for the right moment to read through it, understand the commitments involved, how they resonate with the feeling of being called by God, read the principal's reflection questions, process her expectations for Holy Cross Educators in our school community, pray about it, and actually consent to another year under the mantle of “crossing borders of every sort to make God known, loved and served.” In doing so, we shall be united with the professed members of the Holy Cross community as “willing and complementary partners in shared mission” (*Constitutions*, 44).