

The Work of Resurrection

-May 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

There is a well-known joke that the three best reasons for teaching are June, July and August. While this is a playful saying that usually receives some chuckles, the point is actually quite profound: we teachers work very hard during the school year, and so we need to fallow our fields during those long summer months. This is something that the Brothers of Holy Cross knew well. They were men who spent themselves running schools - as principals, maintenance staff, teachers, coaches, proctors, bus drivers, secretaries, kitchen staff, band directors and chaperones - but who nevertheless entered fully into the freedom and possibilities of the summer break. They went on retreat, played sports, spent time at the lake or the beach, relaxed at the community house, etc. Even long hours of yard work, reorganizing teaching notes for the following school year, or picking up some summer classes at the local college were a welcomed change of pace from the tedious schedule of the academic year.

As Holy Cross Educators we generally do not live in religious communities with the same kinds of pressures that the brothers had, but we do spend long hours in the emotionally intense confines of the schoolhouse; thus, we too need to decompress and find some mental space to think and have some perspective (especially about the other aspects of our lives beyond the classrooms and hallways of school!). Here are some ideas to consider for such renewal this summer: planning and anticipating a weeklong family vacation, exploring local and state parks, having standing commitments (such as every Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon) with friends we normally do not get to see, going to the library to read about and research topics that interest us, planting a garden in our backyard, going on long hikes or bike rides, getting a fun part time job to pick up some extra money on the side, organizing a picnic for our family, meeting up with colleagues in an informal setting, participating in the parish church or in the local community, working with a counselor who might help us with an issue that we have been carrying around, going on a retreat, making a pilgrimage, taking the time to visit extended family, spending lazy days at the pool, or responding to the endless variety of ways that the Spirit moves us!

My most memorable summer as a Holy Cross Educator was after my hardest year of teaching. At that point I had had four years of experience, but felt completely inadequate in the classroom. I asked myself, "How could God call me to this if I am so bad at it? Could this really be my vocation?" Therefore, at the very start of the summer - painfully aware of this vocational crisis - I went to my parish and lit a candle under the Sacred Heart of Jesus statue asking Jesus to reveal the truth to me, then, on the suggestion of a friend, I bought a fifteen-day bus pass that would take me anywhere in the country. My journey took me on a 2,000-mile tour of the northeast and eastern seaboard with long nights in the bus station, uncomfortable seats, rowdy passengers, lonely highways and involuntary periods of fasting. Nevertheless, those narrow circumstances were just right for my inner ear to take shape, and I heard the Lord's unambiguous response to my deep questioning: "Keep moving forward!"

May this summer be an opportunity for each of us to link our work as Holy Cross Educators with the deep personal feeling of being called. May we, with all of the other women and men who serve in our same mission in Holy Cross, remember that it is Jesus who beckons us (*Constitutions*, 1), "a call that comes to us from without, but also one that rises up within us, as from the Spirit" (*Constitutions*, 4). And as we encounter obstacles in our vocation - as I certainly have - may we trust that "God will draw us along and reinforce our loyalties if we yield to him" (*Constitutions*, 8). Have a great summer!