

The Work of Resurrection

-September 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

My principal says that teaching is a lifestyle. This makes sense to me when I consider how the nooks and crannies of my own brain seem to be constantly filled with the personalities, faces, questions, and needs of my students, even outside of official school hours. There I am grocery shopping and my mind is grinding away on how to make the next lesson land, or having coffee with a friend and the conversation is about how to reach my after-lunch group of sophomores. In a society that constantly preaches the importance of establishing professional boundaries between our personal lives and work - and rightly so - it may seem counterintuitive to embrace this so-called lifestyle. Nevertheless, as Holy Cross Educators, we have been entrusted with a powerful missionary spirit that empowers us to explore new regions of our souls and to expand our capacity to love others.

What does this mean in the ordinary circumstances of our daily lives? First and foremost it means that we are women and men who pray. Whether a half hour of meditation in the morning when we wake up, praying the rosary to and from work, or getting into the habit of an evening examination of conscience, prayer enlarges our hearts (cf. Ps 119:32), thus increasing the various rooms and chambers (cf. Jn 14:2) where we house these relationships. Secondly, it means that we move from compartmentalization to integration. Let's face it, there's truth in advertising: our relationships with students are...relationships(!) and ought to be cultivated as such. It's easy to block people out or think about difficult individuals as incidental to our paychecks, but we know that is not an enduring vision for life, and that when we do in fact learn to make friends with all that school stuff we will begin to feel comfortable in our own skin and sleep easily at night. Finally, it means that we become highly organized: We instinctively know when to move problems from our brains to our calendars so as to focus on them when we actually have the time and mental space; we figure out how to ensure that our families and life of faith have priority in the midst of the whirlwind that is the schoolhouse; and we learn to effectively troubleshoot issues the moment they arise so as to arrive at prompt and trustworthy solutions.

Admittedly, I used to grow impatient and anxious when I would see students while I was out hiking or at a local fast food restaurant or on a date, as if they were infringing on my territory! Or when I would get those late night or weekend emails, I wouldn't even scan them to check for their legitimacy, but would instead disregard all of them in order to preserve my peace of mind. This was all developmentally predictable, but I came away feeling like I was missing the mark as a Holy Cross Educator and began to get serious about this lifestyle as my personal path to holiness, as difficult as it seemed. Today, I can say that there is in fact a place in my mind and heart for each of my students and colleagues, as well as all of the issues that go along with those relationships. Because this mission, which “sends us across borders of every sort” (*Constitutions*, 19), “is the Lord's” (*Constitutions*, 20), we can trust that the willingness and vulnerability and humility that enable us to enter into this way of life will bear fruits that we cannot even begin to imagine. We shall indeed become instruments of the coming Kingdom (cf. *Constitutions*, 14) and people with hope to bring (*Constitutions*, 118).