

# The Work of Resurrection

-October 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*

Have you ever heard the song [Wake Me Up When September Ends](#)? The title says it all: there is much grieving to do when the carefree days of summer have come to a close and it's time to get back into the grind...an especially stark transition when you work at a school! Indeed, we go from making three decisions a day - breakfast, lunch and dinner - to hundreds of decisions that include how to phrase something for our students, how to respond to an email from a parent, how to handle a delicate disciplinary situation, how to organize an activity, how to design an assessment, in addition to the myriad of psychological and emotional exchanges that we have to navigate in the tight spaces of our hallways, classrooms, cafeterias and gymnasiums. While it is tempting to preserve those vast mental spaces, that we cherish so much during the summer months, for our own purposes, our vocation as Holy Cross educators calls us to be attentive to the young people who have been entrusted to us and to allow the heaviness of their needs to weigh upon our own minds and hearts. Once we have settled in and accepted this cross, our students instinctively recognize it and transition from testing us to see if we care about them to trusting us and being open with us.

It amazes me how much I struggle that first month each and every year, no matter how experienced I am or how prepared I feel: I'm not an effective teacher, this will never be natural for me, the kids don't pay attention when I speak, my lessons don't land, why can't I be more like the other teachers, and a continuous stream of other negative thoughts. Nevertheless, by the grace of God, creative and prayerful ways to deal with the tidal wave of responsibilities always seem to emerge and things level out. Teaching then becomes like accompaniment as we, who know where we stand with our students and where they stand with us, walk with them "not just as their servants, but as neighbors" (*Constitutions*, 13).

If you find yourself struggling as we enter this second month of the school year, maybe it's time to have a conversation with a trusted colleague about what is preventing the transition from happening. Is it the intensity of the classroom? Is it an attachment to the lazy days of summer? Is there a legitimate mental health concern that has simply not been addressed? Is it a vocational crisis? Whatever the case may be, if teaching is going to be a long-term vision for our lives, we must find a way to turn the corner and embrace the weight of the schoolhouse. This dying to self is the true ending point that will awaken us to the unexpected depths of our souls, which shall render us women and men with hope to bring (*Constitutions*, 118): "If we drink the cup each of us is poured and given, we servants will fare no better than our master. But if we shirk the cross, gone too will be our hope. It is in fidelity to our vocation that we will find the dying and the rising equally assured" (*Constitutions*, 121).