

# The Work of Resurrection

-February 2023-

*"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*

A garden is a classic image in the spiritual life and one that translates well to the life of a Holy Cross Educator. There is the Garden of Eden with its lush foliage and fresh waters, the ideal place for companionship "at the breezy time of day" (Gen 3:8), and perhaps an invitation to cultivate a classroom where relationships may thrive and flourish. The Garden of Gethsemane was a place of intense focus and discernment for Jesus, perhaps an invitation for us to promote an orderly learning environment and a rigorous curriculum for our students. The Little Flower's famous garden, in [Story of a Soul](#), is a place where each flower, however unimportant it may seem, has inestimable value in the eyes of the divine gardener, perhaps an invitation for us to take the time to appreciate the uniqueness and diversity of those souls who populate our classrooms.

Here are some ideas for our consideration as we, in the midst of a new semester, strive to make gardens out of the young persons who have been entrusted to us:

- We can water and feed our plants! Seriously, bringing in a treat and allowing students to make a trip to the water fountain makes the classroom situation much more organic and healthy.
- We can listen to what our students have to say! Often communicating through their behaviors, students will tell us what they need in order to grow. For instance, a student who is constantly disrupting class needs to be engaged and possibly challenged, while a student who does not submit assignments may need clearer and slower directions.
- We can affirm our students! Without making them into caricatures, we can accentuate the positives in our students and give them [unconditional positive regard](#), helping them to relax and take root.
- We can create community! By learning the art of weaving our students' personalities together - grafting one onto another - we can establish a trustworthy classroom space where real sharing is possible and new forms of relating might emerge.

I used to stand outside the doors of a couple of legendary teachers at our school. I was so impressed by the way that they conducted their lessons and the kinds of ecologies they developed in their classrooms that I just had to know the secret! They were methodical and intentional, just like an expert gardener or farmer. I can remember seeing one of them spending his planning periods in the library, alone at a table, studying his notes, preparing for class, even though he had been teaching those classes for over forty years! The other teacher would get to school early, stay late, give any person who came to his door or entered his room his undivided attention, and he would consistently find creative ways to integrate exciting questions or relevant topics into his lessons. Their witness humbled me and helped me to take the risk of cultivating fertile learning spaces in my own classroom.

We should not be surprised that the most famous line written by Blessed Basil Moreau, plastered along the walls and walkways of our institutions, reads, "The mind must not be *cultivated* at the expense of the heart" (*Circular Letters* 36, 184). Indeed, as our vocations as Holy Cross Educators unfold, we discover that each student is herself or himself a garden, constantly on the verge of blooming, waiting to be loved and held caringly in the structures of our classrooms and lesson plans. May we be graced with the skill to till and make fruitful such soil. May we help students to identify and eliminate any weeds that obscure their natural beauty. May we plant within our students seeds of hope for the coming kingdom (cf. *Constitutions*, 12).