

## **Fr. Moreau and Holy Cross as Educators in the Faith**

This weekend the Church celebrates Catechetical Sunday. We also celebrate the Beatification of Fr. Basil Moreau, CSC, founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross. These celebrations fit well together as the Holy Cross community of priests, brothers, and sisters founded by Fr. Moreau are called to be “Educators in the Faith.”

In one of his letters to the members of the Congregation of Holy Cross, Fr. Moreau wrote about how we should approach the work of education. He wrote, “We shall always place education side by side with instruction; **the mind will not be cultivated at the expense of the heart. While we prepare useful citizens for society, we shall likewise do our utmost to prepare citizens for heaven**” (Circular Letter 36)

Of course, as one would expect, Holy Cross priests, brothers, and sisters are very interested in communicating the truths of the faith. Fr. Moreau stressed evangelization – spreading the word of God – as a primary mission of the Congregation of Holy Cross. As educators in the faith, we desire to make God known, loved and served.

However, following the example of Fr. Moreau, members of Holy Cross feel that being an “educator in the faith” includes more than just preaching or talking about religion. Fr. Moreau had a modern and practical approach to education. As one can see in the quote above in the second paragraph, Fr. Moreau always insisted that education was to prepare people for living – useful citizens for society. Holy Cross schools should not only teach philosophy or theology, but also the sciences. In fact, Fr. Moreau went so far as to require that seminarians study physics. He believed that education was extremely important, describing it as a “work of resurrection,” to prepare people for real living.

Education is not merely the transmission of information. The way that we communicate information should touch the heart and form the whole person. Fr. Moreau knew that the entire person needed to be engaged in the learning process – touch the heart as well as the head – so that the learning can have a lasting effect shaping the person’s life. Educators must be witnesses of Christ to others, teaching virtues through example, and not just by memorization.

If teachers touch the heart, not just the head, then education becomes a means of formation and transformation by God. Just as it was important to Fr. Moreau to teach the sciences, it was equally important to him to integrate religion into education. No matter what subject is being taught, the way it is taught can instill values that will influence the way students make decisions for the rest of their lives, creating a heart full of the love of God.

As we celebrate the beatification of Fr. Moreau, and catechetical Sunday, we pray that all catechists may have the same zeal and energy for spreading the Catholic faith that Fr. Moreau had. Evangelization, sharing the word of God, was extremely important to him. We also pray that the faith our catechists teach penetrate both mind and heart so that we all may not only know God, but also to truly love and serve the Lord.