

Basile Moreau: A Passionate and Prophetic Life

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“Receive all that I have written as the outpouring of a heart which burns with the desire to help you.”

“If I can still do you some good, I will do it at once; have no more doubts about it than the sincerity of my love and faithfulness.”

The above statements are separated by more than 30 years. They come from a man on fire with love for God, a passion to serve, and a vision for a world that will know better times than ours. The fire that consumed Father Moreau throughout his life and directed his considerable energies was not self-ignited. Its kindling was his relationship with and response to God. That fire spread to others and brought Holy Cross into existence that we might be a passionate and prophetic presence in our world.

The fire that guided Father Moreau and illuminated the landscape before him was not self-fueled. It was kindled and rekindled over his 74 years by those faith-based values with which he lived every day. Seven values are presented here briefly.

Preeminent among those values is conformity to Jesus Christ. There was no greater priority for Basile Moreau. He consistently and insistently calls us to discover ways in which our daily life, even in its finest details, can reflect Jesus’ example and teaching. This is what we are to do and why we are to do it. That conformity will be our greatest glory.

Moreau’s trust in providence was unshakable. He believed that just as God had founded Holy Cross, so God would sustain it and bring it to perfection. God is ever-present and always at work, however mundane a particular activity may appear to be. Our cooperation with providence will assure the transforming influence that Holy Cross can have in our world. Zeal distinguished Basile Moreau in every aspect of his life. His passion for ministry and his prophetic stance, whenever fidelity, integrity and justice were threatened by compromise, were ignited by his zeal. He wanted this virtue to be a hallmark of all those who shared with him in this great adventure called Holy Cross.

It was noted by his contemporaries that Father Moreau was especially animated and energized when he spoke about the Eucharist. Through reception of this sacrament and by adoration, our relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist is, from Moreau’s perspective, a direct support for all that we are to be and to become as religious of Holy Cross.

The standard for our union in community that Moreau established was nothing less than that for which Jesus prayed in St. John’s gospel and that which St. Paul proclaimed to the early Christians. He used the models of the Holy Family and the Holy Trinity to reinforce that. Lived in

our community and promoted through our efforts in mission, union with Jesus and union of hearts will be among the most powerful means for transformation at our disposal.

From his experiences, Basile Moreau learned the profound truth of the cross as our only hope. He trusted that and, as a follower of Jesus, he expected to encounter the cross and he did throughout his life. He was convinced that those encounters held the seeds of resurrection. So too for us, Spes Unica must be more than a proclamation, it must become our liberation, our transformation and, ultimately, our salvation.

Father Moreau did not make his journey to glory alone. At the very beginning of Holy Cross, he entrusted himself and his companions to Our Lady of Sorrows. Her fidelity and fortitude in remaining at the foot of the cross endure as an illustration for what we must be, and an inspiration for what we are called to do. It is no wonder that Moreau gave her to Holy Cross as patroness.

Basile Moreau lived these values passionately and prophetically. He wanted to make a difference in the world. By his life and through Holy Cross, he did. His biographers, Etienne and Tony Catta, articulate this well. "There burned within him an ardor which was ceaselessly aflame along with a compelling necessity to undertake and to resurrect projects lying on the verge of ruin and to bring into existence others which were destined to live" (Vol. I, pg. 142). We are called to continue his legacy.