



Moreau Moment

October 9, 2006

"You did not choose me, I chose you". Members of the Congregation of Holy Cross recognize this quotation as the special calling of their Founder, Basil Moreau. Basil was born to Louis Moreau and Louise Pioger, and his name was a providential choice, because the Doctor of the Roman Catholic Church, Basil the Great, was to lead his protégé in a path of dedication of spreading the Word of God through education. For more than a century, members of the family of Holy Cross have established, directed, and supported institutions of learning, from maternal or elementary schools through Universities in the U.S., Europe, France, Canada, Asia, Africa, and South America.

As a child, Basil was a student of the Pastor of his parish. Always interested in his studies and anxious to learn more, it is said that while he attended the family animals in nearby fields, he always carried his study books. He loved to read and study, and those who knew him described him as an organizer who gathered his companions to participate in games and other activities which he planned. He was the one to teach pious young boys to serve Mass, perhaps an indication of his personal vocation. Impressed with his desire and success in learning, as well as his piety, the Parish priest of Laigne'-en-Belin discussed his conviction with Basil's father, and made arrangements for the boy to enter the Minor seminary at Chateau Gontier. Basil and his father made the journey to the seminary on foot, a distance covered today by car in an hour and a half. What genuine interest, courage, and devotion was displayed by father and son!

Basil's spiritual formation and secular instruction continued in the major seminary until ordination in Le Mans in 1821. This was supplemented by two years spent with the Sulpicians in Paris. On his return to the Diocese of Le Mans, he was appointed professor of Philosophy, Dogmatic Theology and Scripture.

The example and teaching of Moreau continue to inspire the religious family of brothers, priests, and sisters of Holy Cross which he founded to serve the people of God. In mid-19th century Le Mans, Moreau (now a diocesan priest) faced the turmoil, uncertainties and danger experienced by the Catholic Church in the aftermath of the French Revolution. He dreamed of establishing a religious family of three separate and autonomous groups (priests, brothers and sisters) united in their work and in spirit and dedicated to service. Modeled on the Holy Family, each branch of the new religious family was dedicated to Jesus, Mary or Joseph.

Moreau

