

FOREWORD

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Ave Crux, Spes Unica!

In their excellent introduction to this volume, the editors feature this motto as the heart of the spiritual theology of Blessed Basil Moreau. They observe, “Learning to love the cross as a sign of real hope was the spiritual core of Moreau’s theology” (p. 45).¹

This makes me wonder how best to translate the phrase *Ave Crux, Spes Unica*. The most common translation is “Hail the Cross, Our Only Hope!” but the word *only* in English is deceiving. Especially in the phrase, “only hope,” it often signifies, ironically, a nearly hopeless situation—a hope that is slim, desperate and unlikely. And when the *cross* is said to be such a hope, the phrase also seems to carry a strong world-rejecting resonance, as though there are no glimmers or indications of hope anywhere in the world. The cross being the lone slender hope left against all contraindications. Further, someone only casually acquainted with Blessed Basil might expect just such a spirituality from him. Hadn’t his hopes been wrenched out of the world by the French Revolution and its wholesale persecution of the Church? Could there be a tinge of Jansenism here?

What this collection of the Blessed Basil’s writings shows is that nothing could be further from the truth. Perhaps, then, we should translate *unicus* in its classical sense as not simply “only” but “matchless.” “*Hail the Cross, Hope Unsurpassable!*” or even, “*Hail the Cross, Our One, Most Awesome Hope!*” could be paraphrases, and maybe, “*Hail the Cross, Our One Supreme Hope!*” could be a translation. In any event, the phrase is intended as an act of praise, not an act of desperation. One may certainly utter it in desperate situations, but as an act of praise, gratitude,

and love—an act of one who “gives thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph 5:20).

For Blessed Basil, the cross was a mystery of hope because, first of all, it *was* a mystery, something essentially “hidden,” something without obvious grounding in any human work, be it one of reason or one of power. Its cause is an unimaginable love, the origin of which is not traceable by human reason, and of which human reason cannot be “proud” as though it were one of its most magnificent achievements. Hope placed in the cross is hope placed not in human reason or human power but, in the first instance, in God. Blessed Basil comments that, “without neglecting the natural means of learning,” we should imitate the saints who “learned more at the foot of the crucifix than in discussions with others or in books” (p. 314).

Second, the cross was a mystery of hope because it, especially, sums up all of the mystery of the Christian life under the aspect of its essential “hiddenness.” To have hope in the mystery of the cross is to believe scripture when it says (in Col 3:3), “You have died and your life is hidden with Jesus Christ in God” (p. 234). The religious life is the “hidden life” *par excellence*, but only because, for Blessed Basil, it is an intensified form of the hidden life “which is that of every Christian” (p. 233).

The life of Jesus Christ is the paradigmatic hidden life, not only in its more obviously hidden stages, meaning those hidden from view by the Gospel narrative, but in an essential and irreducible sense. To consider the life of Christ as “hidden” is to consider the Incarnation itself, “how this God of glory first hid himself under the veil of human nature” (p. 234). Even in the midst of wonders that revealed his divinity, “Jesus Christ remained a hidden God for almost everyone” (p. 236). It is easy not to notice, or else to have contempt for, even the miracles of someone who identifies himself “with all the privations associated with the poor and the outcast of society” (p. 244), people who are never noticed anyway. In the Passion, he is hidden, too, for he is “covered by sins” for which, though not his own, he is abandoned by his father, “as if the

Lord were no longer his father" (p. 237). The extent of the "hiddenness" of God in Christ is the extent of his self-emptying gift of himself as Love.

The Third Meditation for the Feast of the Sacred Heart contains a meditation on the hiddenness of Christ's life, because the Incarnation itself, and all the hiddenness of God's status and privilege as God that flows from it, *is* the revelation of God's love. The Sacred Heart is the "symbol, source, and center of his love" (p. 239). It is a "furnace of love," the "height, width, and depth" (p. 155, citing Eph 3:18) of which cannot be measured. Ephesians 3:18 was frequently taken by St. Augustine to indicate the dimensions of the cross, and as such a summary of the whole Christian life as a life of love in its configuration to the cross. This, not Jansenism, is the Augustinianism of Blessed Basil.

"Love causes love" Blessed Basil reminds would-be teachers (p. 339). As love presently works, still hidden, *par excellence* through the sacraments, but also through devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, through studying the "language of the Gospel" (p. 414), through the work of teachers and the inspiration of the Spirit, it "causes love." The life of the Christian is configured to the love that is revealed by the "life hidden in God or rather God hidden in Jesus Christ" (p. 235).

To say *Ave Crux, Spes Unica* means to not be afraid to live the life of love, even though it is inescapably hidden, for though hidden, it is not erased and is not erasable. Instead, *hid with Christ in God*, it is the risen life of the risen Lord. One does not have to be afraid to leave behind "esteem and honor" (p. 99) and the obsessive quest to be noticed and noteworthy. "Therefore," Blessed Basil invites us, speaking in the voice of Christ, "Hide yourself in God with me, and do not dream of appearing again before I show myself to the world. Hide yourself. Bury yourself willingly in the dust of a classroom or in the obscurity of a rural parish church" (p. 238). This is life in the midst of a "beauty ever ancient and ever new," that is, the "loving kindness" of God's own Trinitarian life (p. 319), the beauty "hidden" in the life of Christ, and all lives configured to His life.

Thus, those who say *Ave Crux, Spes Unica*, who have placed their hope in the mystery of the cross, can live life with confidence in the future. It is the same confidence that Blessed Basil expressed when he said he had not “even for so much as one moment lost confidence in the future” despite terrible scandals, betrayal, and incompetence (p. 452). To say *Ave Crux, Spes Unica* is to place one’s confidence in the love of God and the life of love, no matter how hidden or counter-intuitive it may seem. *Ave Crux, Spes Unica* is an empowering message, enabling us to embrace life fully with a heart like an anvil (p. 390) in the workshop of God, who can forge on it works both great and small, even turning the small into the great, just as he turned the work of an unknown local French seminary professor into the work of the founder of a fully global religious order, the Congregation of Holy Cross.

The editors of this volume have done an excellent job of choosing representative texts from Blessed Basil Moreau in a variety of genres. Their selection reminds us that the charisma and vision of the founder of Holy Cross also set the tone for renewal, for the founding was itself a renewal of sorts, a reorientation to the originating newness of Jesus Christ, whose newness is intrinsic and perpetual. Blessed Basil’s founding vision is local, in that it is the foundation of a specific religious congregation at a specific time to meet a specific need. It was successful, however, precisely because the newness of the foundation was an authentic fruit of Blessed Basil’s openness to the timeless newness of the One who “makes all things new.” Returning to the vision of the founder will mean not a return to the oldness of a time past, but an encounter with the fountainhead of newness and renewal, and not only for Holy Cross, but for anyone seeking a vision of renewed life in the Church. “Hail the Cross, Our Matchless Hope!” means that we have died to all that is old, to death itself and all its power to frighten and shame and paralyze, and that our life, hidden with Christ in God, is bursting with an irresistible newness that transfigures everything it touches. May we return to the sources our editors have so carefully laid open for us, and

allow Blessed Basil to teach us to be open to that beauty which, though indeed ever ancient, is nevertheless ever new and ever renewing!

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Since his beatification on September 15, 2007, Basil Moreau has become a historical person of increased interest. The variety and number of his works broadly available, however, have remained minimal by any account. The result is that contemporary thinkers have little access to the writings of a man who is credited with saintly accomplishment. This book represents but the beginning of a response to that need. In addition, this book aims intellectually to aid further research concerning the mission and charism of the Congregation of Holy Cross and its apostolates. We have chosen the texts printed here in order to show not only the breadth of Moreau's works but also the depth of consistency with which he worked out various theological and practical matters.

To be certain, nineteenth-century France is not our own day. In editing the translations of Moreau's writings, we have resisted the temptation to update him or to make the translations themselves relevant by criteria that would inevitably be arguable. Where possible, we have tried to explain the references Moreau was making to other theological sources as well as to current and congregational events.

Moreau often quoted scripture from memory, cited the Latin Vulgate, or translated from a scriptural language himself. For this reason, scriptural citations in the translations are not standardized in accord with any current English version of the Bible. We have supplied the scriptural allusions indicated by parentheses, as well as the parenthetical English translations of Latin Vulgate citations.

We are first and foremost grateful to the Congregation of Holy Cross, and in particular to Superior General Fr. Richard Warner, C.S.C., for permission to use the congregational archives and to publish Blessed Basil Moreau's writings.

Many other confreres have supported this effort. Though it is not possible to name them all, we are especially grateful to Fr. Jim Connelly, C.S.C.; Br. Joel Giallanza, C.S.C.; Fr. Jim King, C.S.C.; Fr. Steve Lacroix, C.S.C.; Fr. Thomas Looney, C.S.C.; Mr. Patrick Reidy, C.S.C.; and Benjamin Rusch for their content and editorial help. Mr. Adam Booth, C.S.C., provided archival support, a bibliography, and a timeline.

We acknowledge in gratitude the enduring quality of the translation work of M. Eleanore, C.S.C. (Sermons), and Edward Heston, C.S.C. (Circular Letters). Further, the brothers of the Holy Cross Institute have provided a modern translation of part one of *Christian Education*. The introduction and part three of *Christian Education* were translated afresh by Fr. Gregory Haake, C.S.C. The remaining texts by Moreau were translated anonymously by members of the Congregation of Holy Cross. Perhaps the broader readership of Moreau will serve as partial reward for their humble and careful service.

We are further indebted to Kevin Cawley at the University of Notre Dame Archives. The introduction benefitted greatly from the comments of two University of Notre Dame faculty members: Professor Larry Cunningham of the Department of Theology and Professor Kathleen Sprows Cummings, director of the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism.

Finally, we are grateful to Tom Grady, publisher of Ave Maria Press, and his staff, including Editorial Director Robert Hamma, Managing Editor Susana Kelly, and Creative Director Kristen Hornyak Bonelli, who have continued to dedicate vision and effort not only to Christian

classics but also to the subset of those writings that has emerged from the Congregation of Holy Cross.

K. G. and A. G.
January 20, 2014
The Feast of Blessed Basil Moreau

INTRODUCTION

For Basil Moreau, life was an imitation of Christ. The cross was his only hope. Moreau strove not only to live but also to teach these truths. From the sermons he preached to the spiritual exercises and circular letters he wrote for the Congregation of Holy Cross, his writings bear witness to this primary concern—becoming a living copy of the crucified Savior.

A respected professor of philosophy, dogmatics, and scripture, Moreau founded what quickly became an international religious congregation. As a devoted superior of a fledgling community, he nevertheless continued his study and scholarship. The bulk of Moreau's theological work can be categorized as practical, and he certainly produced much of it to fulfill the apostolic needs of the Holy Cross community. Even so, many of these same texts exhibit a sophisticated and overarching grounding in scripture and tradition, so that Moreau's writings reveal not only careful theological treatment but also markedly consistent application.

This integrated theology flows from Moreau's belief that to imitate Jesus Christ is "to seek to know Jesus Christ. By studying him, you will come to know him. By knowing him, you will come to love him. By loving him, you will be imbued with his Spirit and thenceforth you will imitate him."¹ Thus, for Moreau, a faith that seeks understanding is also a faith that practices imitation. It is this combination of study and imitation that then yields a "knowledge of Jesus Christ that is life-giving, profound, luminous, and practical" (p. 224).²

What makes Moreau's writings so profitable to study, however, is also what can make them difficult to read. Accessing the depths of his works and unraveling their interwoven influences, concerns, and themes requires understanding of the French Revolution and how it affected the Catholic Church of Moreau's time. It also demands familiarity with the French School of Spirituality, which gave Moreau a theological and

spiritual framework that guided his life and ministry. Finally, studying Moreau requires a grasp of the complex history surrounding the work that defined his life for almost four decades—founding and leading the Congregation of Holy Cross. This introduction provides an overview of each of these complex areas.

Moreau's Context: Two French Revolution Sketches

The French Revolution was nearing its conclusion when Basil Anthony Mary Moreau was born on February 11, 1799. By the end of that year, Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) had come to power and declared an end to the Revolution.³ Revolutionary fervor and fears nevertheless continued to grip and shape France for decades, including unrest and uprisings in 1830 and 1848. The latter, which led to the overthrow of the monarchy, became a source of significant concern and trial for Fr. Moreau as superior of his still-nascent religious community.⁴ Even beyond continued political instability, the cultural and religious upheaval of the Revolution cast a long shadow over post-Revolution France and the Catholic Church. What follows are two brief sketches of the political and cultural scene of the time, one national and one local. The first is a glimpse of the overall relationship between the Revolution and the Church; the second shows how this relationship played out for one priest, Jacques-François Dujarié (1767–1838), who came from the same region—and the same diocese—as Moreau and who played an important role in the early life of Moreau and the Congregation of Holy Cross.

1. The French Revolution and the Catholic Church

When King Louis XVI (1754–1793) assembled the Estates-General in May 1789, there was a widespread sense, even among clergy and nobility, that reform of French society was necessary.⁵ The state was facing bankruptcy, much of the population lived in poverty, and a heavy tax burden on the poor, along with a concentration of power among noble

and clerical elites, was leading to growing agitation.⁶ Fueled, in part, by the Enlightenment ideas of Voltaire, Diderot, d'Alembert, Rousseau, and others, the reform many envisioned quickly ignited into full-blown revolution in the summer of 1789, reaching into all corners of French society.⁷ After the storming of the Bastille on July 14 and Louis XVI's subsequent withdrawal of troops, power now rested with the National Assembly.

The Revolution quickly came into conflict with the Catholic Church.⁸ In many ways, the Church dominated pre-Revolution French society: clerics ranked above nobles as the first order of the realm, the Church owned 10 percent of all land and was exempted from most taxes, and all the king's subjects were legally Catholics. The Catholic Church had founded and administered virtually the entire educational system, as well as most hospitals and services for orphans, the poor, and the sick. As a result, any reorganization of French society required a transformation of the Church in France, and many within the Church saw both the need and the opportunity for such transformation.⁹ The thinking among members of the clergy was not uniform, however, since parish priests, many of whom lived in poverty, favored some sort of revitalization, while the powerful and often-wealthy members of the episcopacy, many of whom came from nobility, were largely opposed to such a change.¹⁰ Despite these differences, most of the clergy agreed that the Church should retain its control over education, its power of censorship, and its standing as the state religion.¹¹ It was these societal influences that had most upset the leading thinkers of the Enlightenment, however, and had, in turn, upset many members of the Revolution.

Consequently, the Revolution ushered in swift and extensive changes throughout the Church in France. Less than a month after the storming of the Bastille (1789), the laws providing monetary assistance for the Church had been overturned, from the tithes and vestry fees for parish priests to the feudal dues for bishops and ecclesiastical corporations, including charitable and educational organizations. Then the Declaration

of the Rights of Man and the Citizen did not declare Catholicism the state religion, thereby stripping the Church of much of its political power and privilege.¹² The National Assembly did not stop there, believing it had the authority to reshape and restructure the French Church for the better. Next it dissolved all contemplative monasteries and convents and banned new religious vows. Then, in the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the National Assembly enacted its most sweeping reform; it reorganized Church structures and even provided for the election of bishops without papal approval.¹³ When the constitution, made law on July 12, 1790, met with strong resistance from the Church and began to engender public polarization, the National Assembly on November 27 imposed an oath by which all clergy had to declare their allegiance to the new constitution and government.¹⁴

Responses to the oath varied widely. In Paris, the center of the Revolution and therefore the most anticlerical sector of the country, most priests took the oath. In some regions outside the city such as Western France, the “nonjurors” (clerics who refused the oath) outnumbered the “constitutionals” (clerics who took the oath) more than three to one.¹⁵ At the same time, many monks and canons, who had been evicted from the cloister when their monasteries were dissolved, found in the oath a means to secure a salary and even a chance for advancement in the constitutional church.¹⁶

The ensuing chaos within the Church continued without official response from Rome until May 4, 1791, when two private letters from Pope Pius VI (1717–1799) to the French bishops became public. The first, dated March 10, criticized the Civil Constitution, and the second, dated April 13, formally asked the bishops not to take the oath. Though the letters did not explicitly condemn taking the oath, everyone interpreted them as doing so.¹⁷ Spurred on by the letters, nearly 10 percent of the clergy who had previously taken the oath rescinded it. Thousands of priests went into exile, and many others were forced underground to avoid imprisonment or execution.¹⁸ By forcing people to side with

either the Revolution or the Catholic Church, the clerical oath divided the two irreconcilably, thereby marking a decisive turning point in the relationship between them.¹⁹

2. Fr. Jacques-François Dujarié and the Diocese of Le Mans

Jacques-François Dujarié, a key figure in Moreau's life, came from a region of France in which most of the clergy remained nonjurors. Born on December 9, 1767, in Rennes-en-Grenouilles, Dujarié was a seminarian in Angers when the Revolution began. When news of the oath of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy reached Angers in January 1791, all of the Sulpician seminary directors refused to take it. Within days of the constitutional bishop's arrival on March 19, most of the seminary's 240 residents, including Dujarié, left.²⁰ Upon returning home to Rennes, Dujarié found the people confused, confronted with both priests who had taken the oath and those who had refused. Although in Rennes and the surrounding region the constitutional priests were regarded as intruders and the people supported the nonjurors, it still was not safe for Dujarié to remain at home; other nonjuring clerics and their supporters at times were tracked down and persecuted.²¹ Dujarié first sought refuge with his sister in Lassay, taking up the weaving trade. That stint was brief, however, and he soon began traveling from village to village, at times needing to disguise himself as a shepherd or lemonade salesman for safety.²²

Although the most violent period of the Revolution, the Reign of Terror, ended on July 28, 1794, any reprieve was short-lived. The National Convention in 1795 reaffirmed the penalty of death for nonjuring clergy and imposed a new oath. Religious ceremonies in private houses involving more than ten people were banned, as were religious garments and emblems.²³ In the midst of these still-dangerous conditions, Dujarié went to Ruillé-sur-Loir in July 1795 to resume in secret his studies for priesthood under the tutelage of the pastor, Fr. Jacquet de la Haye.²⁴ In December, disguised and admitted by password to his rendezvous

point—necessary precautions because other seminarians had been arrested while making the trip—Dujarié went to Paris to be ordained. He was ordained on December 26, becoming one of twenty-nine priests ordained in secret for the diocese of Le Mans between 1792 and 1801.²⁵ After his ordination, Dujarié returned to Ruillé where, side by side with de la Haye, he ministered underground until Bonaparte came to power in 1799.

The four-year span from 1796 to 1799 was marked by continued attempts by the Revolution to bring the Church under its authority, including the institution of new oaths. As a result, Dujarié, de la Haye, and other nonjuring clerics still had to minister largely in secret, careful of the persecutions that flared up.²⁶ At the same time, Catholic culture was far from gone; indeed, some places experienced revitalization. The people became bolder during less violent periods and began to engage in public acts of worship, such as ringing church bells and making processions.²⁷ An increasing number of priests who had taken the oath retracted it and were reconciled with the Catholic Church.²⁸ Nevertheless, the situation for the Church remained tenuous. In the department of La Sarthe alone, which encompasses the diocese of Le Mans, forty-five priests were arrested in the last year of the period known as the Directory (1798–1799), including one who was murdered by the citizen group that arrested him.²⁹ The danger persisted, not fully dissipating until after Napoleon came to power in November 1799.

On July 15, 1801, Napoleon signed a concordat with the Church that was later celebrated in a solemn Mass on Easter Sunday in 1802 in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. The concordat restored public worship and reconstituted the Catholic Church in formal relationship with the state, but it did not restore the pre-Revolution Church by any means.³⁰ The Catholic Church had been stripped of much of its land, its wealth, and its political power. Monastic orders had been disbanded and cloisters of nuns closed. Almost half of the parish clergy had been killed, deported, or had fled into exile. The clergy and hierarchy who remained were left

to wrestle with reconciling the schism brought by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, and much of the Church's institutional infrastructure—particularly in education and health care—had been decimated. As the French Revolution historian William Doyle writes, “No wound of the revolutionary years went deeper.”³¹

Education statistics provide a useful metric for assessing one aspect of the Revolution's effect on the Church and society; the Revolution's suppression of the Church produced an entire generation that was essentially unschooled. Although the Revolution declared education a basic human right and envisioned a new educational system, it was never able to achieve its goals. An 1801 *Report on Public Education* observed, “Public education is practically nonexistent everywhere. The generation now reaching the age of twenty is irrevocably sacrificed to ignorance.”³² Prior to the Revolution, in the diocese of Le Mans alone, there were 321 parochial schools—180 for boys and 141 for girls.³³ The crumbling of the Church's extensive network of primary schools during the Revolution, schools that had taught not just the Catholic faith but also reading, writing, and mathematics, led to more than a 70 percent drop in the number of students in universities and a decrease in the national literacy rate from 37 to 30 percent.³⁴

Moreau's Intellectual Formation

The aftermath of the French Revolution affected the education of the children of the Moreau family. Much as the time before the Revolution, the parish pastor played a key role in education, especially in small villages. In Laigné-en-Belin at the time of Basil Moreau's birth (1799), the pastor was a constitutional priest, and the Moreau family, along with many others in the town, rejected the constitutional clergy and sought the sacramental care of nonjuring priests in hiding.³⁵ By the time that Basil received his own religious instruction, the parish was back under the care of a nonjuring pastor, Fr. Julien Le Provost. Le Provost opened a school for boys and taught the catechism, reading, writing,

and mathematics.³⁶ Having identified Basil as intelligent and a candidate for the priesthood, Le Provost took it upon himself to educate him in the study of classics and Latin. He assured Louis Moreau, the boy's father, that either a benefactor or Le Provost himself could provide Basil further education at the College of Château-Gontier, a twelfth-century college known for its educational quality.³⁷ Basil studied there from October 1814 until 1816, when he entered major seminary at St. Vincent's Seminary in Le Mans.³⁸

The intellectual culture in the seminary at the time was marked by a strictly determined doctrinal content.³⁹ Faculty had to submit their notes for inspection by superiors, and students likewise could have their class notes examined. Etienne and Tony Catta, biographers of Moreau, describe the quality of education at the seminary as likely quite low. For instance, they describe one philosophy text used in the seminary as "a manual in three small volumes, written in shabby Latin and marked with a very Cartesian touch."⁴⁰ The seminary education was further marked by Gallicanism, which, since its codification in the Declaration of 1682, affirmed the spiritual authority of the papacy but proscribed the pope's temporal authority in favor of French control.⁴¹

Four years after entering the major seminary, Moreau was ordained a deacon by Bishop de la Myre and then ordained a priest on August 12, 1821.⁴² Moreau's first solemn Mass was in his hometown with his own pastor, Le Provost, assisting. As a newly ordained priest, Moreau asked his bishop to send him to the Foreign Mission Seminary, but Jean-Baptiste Bouvier (1783–1854), his seminary director, and Bishop de la Myre had already decided that Moreau would continue his studies in order to become a faculty member at the seminary. De la Myre sent Moreau to Paris to continue his studies under the guidance of the Sulpicians, from whom Moreau received exposure to the ideas of the French School of Spirituality, especially those of Pierre de Bérulle and Jean-Jacques Olier.⁴³ During the first phase of his studies in Paris (1821–1822), the young Moreau wrote to a friend that he had "never taken so many notes" as

he had at Saint-Sulpice.⁴⁴ The faculty also was able to offer training in Hebrew for more sophisticated study of scripture, as well as in-depth exposure to dogmatic and moral theology.

While studying with the Sulpicians, Moreau kept a correspondence with Fr. Louis-Jean Fillion (1788–1861), the rector of the seminary in Tessé, where Moreau himself later became a member of the teaching faculty. Moreau wrote to the rector:

If I fall into your hands, I shall sing a *Te Deum* even while trembling, for I am frightened by the prospect of hearing seminarians' confessions and passing judgment on their vocation. But if they send me to preach in some country parish, I shall thank God and my bishop. I am burning with this desire, and should love to be already engaged in this work. Need I tell you? At times, this desire is so strong that I feel my whole heart on fire. When I get into my bed, which I regard as my grave, I should like to wake up and find myself in the midst of some poor peasants. How I would teach them! How I would bring them back to God! Do these sentiments indicate a desire to be prominent, betray self-love or pride, or are they pious sentiments and holy inspirations? God alone knows. But I know that this desire is consuming me. While I am studying *Beth* and *Resch*, while I am toying with an *atqui* and an *ergo*, the soul of my brother is being lost. As for the rest, God will take care of everything, and at the first signal.⁴⁵

This letter gives early evidence of the importance of teaching for Moreau, beginning with the continual development of his capacity to teach scripture by working on languages. Even though he grew frustrated with the amount of time that it required, he devotedly worked on his Hebrew (*Beth* and *Resch*) and wrote his own scholarly texts in Latin (*atqui* and *ergo*). One interpreter of Moreau described this letter as exhibiting a stifled desire to evangelize, but a more plausible interpretation is that the letter reveals an early connection for Moreau between teaching and evangelizing.⁴⁶ When he writes of “preach[ing] in some country

parish," he exclaims, "How I would teach them!" As became more evident in his leadership of Holy Cross, Moreau saw education as the key to evangelization.⁴⁷ Whether this happened in a country parish—as the young Moreau's pastor had done for him—or in the seminary, Moreau's apostolic desire was to spread faith through teaching.⁴⁸ The letter indicates that Moreau knew he was going to be a seminary professor and looked forward to working with Fillion. Moreau's reservations were simply that he would have to make judgments about the vocations of young men, and thus make judgments concerning their call from God to the priesthood.

From what he later communicated to his own seminary students, we can get a sense of Moreau's own approach to learning. Moreau suggested to them that the study of theology be undertaken with a spirit of zeal, humility, and love of God. Zeal was ardor for the task of learning. Humility meant both resisting the temptation to study for the sake of reputation and admitting that some divine truths would remain shrouded in mystery. Love of God required plunging the heart ever more deeply into the fire of charity; Moreau believed meditation on divine truth was impossible without it. He had concerns in particular about the danger of the study of theology—namely, that a topic inherently concerned with divine truth did not always provoke a correlative response of increased prayer or charity, both fruits of a deepening encounter with and knowledge of God.⁴⁹ This caused Moreau consistently to suggest to students that their study of theology must be coupled with markedly consistent work at its daily application, both in their lives and in their ministry.⁵⁰

Moreau did not immediately begin as a seminary professor after finishing in Paris; he spent a further year at the Sulpician Solitude of Issy (1822–1823). This year provided Moreau with a time of prayer, solitude, study, and labor analogous to a religious novitiate, which is a dedicated time of apprenticeship in the religious life in preparation for the profession of religious vows. At this point, however, Moreau was still a diocesan priest. Years later, as part of his work founding Holy Cross

as a religious community, Moreau would publicly profess the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, thereby entering religious life and becoming a religious priest.⁵¹ During this period Moreau committed himself to silence, rose during the four o'clock hour of the morning, studied scripture and Hebrew daily, and engaged in a rigorous rule of life that included prayer, fasting, and mortification.⁵² He also made a very detailed and deliberate effort to stem his vices of pride and anger in day-to-day activity.⁵³ He continued to attend theology classes in the mornings, using the afternoons to study French history, Church history, and geography, and to write his own compositions.⁵⁴ Not a requirement, this was Moreau's personal rule of life encouraged by the Sulpician spirituality of the Solitude. Moreau also began weekly spiritual direction with the Solitude rector, Fr. Gabriel Mollevaut (1774–1854), a relationship that would remain important for Moreau until Mollevaut's death more than three decades later. Mollevaut was a confidant to the young scholar in his personal life and a guide during his early years as superior of Holy Cross, often offering advice on how to set up the governance of his young society.⁵⁵

Moreau as Scholar and Teacher

1. Formation in a Time of Debate

Moreau's scholarly development took place alongside a contemporary debate in Parisian theology concerning the inadequacy of human reason in ascertaining truth.⁵⁶ Hugues-Félicité Robert de Lamennais (1782–1854) wrote the four-volume work *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion* from 1817 to 1823. Consistently critiquing the work of Rousseau and other philosophers—such as Descartes, Kant, and Locke—Lamennais argued that the philosophical social contract, emerging especially from Rousseau, was insufficient to ground a free society. In Lamennais's understanding, after dethroning God and then the king, the concept of a general will in such a contract would ultimately “dethron[e] man and

reduce him to the level of an animal."⁵⁷ In such a society, he thought, "force alone" would be "the final arbiter."⁵⁸ The ruin of religion and the ruin of society were coterminous for Lamennais.⁵⁹ Moreau's engagement with the Lamennais controversy, seen in letters from Moreau to the director of his first seminary, provides a glimpse of how the young scholar wrestled with a complex issue involving theology, philosophy, politics, and a reconsideration of the French Revolution. In these letters, Moreau details all of the current scholarly objections to Lamennais's work and the responses to those objections.⁶⁰ Moreau himself took up the intellectual questions of the certainty of belief, continuing to follow the debate through his time in the Solitude and later as a new professor, beginning with teaching philosophy at the minor seminary in Tessé.

The debates surrounding the work of Lamennais and Moreau's involvement in them likely began to solidify his Ultramontane, or pro-Roman, position.⁶¹ The division between Ultramontanism and Gallicanism was a French manifestation of the inherent tension within the Catholic Church between its local and universal aspects. Ultramontanism valued the universality of the Church, in part, by upholding papal authority, whereas Gallicanism favored the autonomy of the local Church, temporally and sometimes theologically.⁶² This theological division undergirded a number of significant personal frustrations and struggles in Moreau's life. Moreau experienced Gallicanism firsthand through Jean-Baptiste Bouvier (1783–1854), the seminary rector during Moreau's time at St. Vincent's Seminary and then bishop of the diocese of Le Mans when Moreau was leading his newly formed religious community. Bouvier's Gallican perspective manifested itself in concrete actions, particularly when dealing with Holy Cross and the monastic foundations (e.g., Solesmes) of the Le Mans diocese. The bishop forestalled Holy Cross's recognition at the papal level, preferring a more localized, diocesan oversight. There were smaller disagreements as well. Bouvier shuffled Moreau between seminary professorial posts in an apparent attempt to suppress the teaching of Ultramontane theology.⁶³ Moreau, in obedience

to Pope Pius IX himself, stopped wearing a Gallican clerical collar in favor of a Roman one.⁶⁴ Moreau also ceased using Bouvier's own theology manual for the instruction of Holy Cross seminarians.⁶⁵ The disagreements between Moreau and Bouvier had a personal component, but also exemplify the ill will that was caused by fundamentally divergent theological dispositions.

2. A Personal Rule and a Professor

Moreau was keenly aware and strikingly forthright about how his conversations concerning Lamennais and other thinkers affected his own spiritual life and that of his students. Moreau writes about his personal reactions to these debates and how they stirred his anger. Consequently, he tried to keep such debates within the bounds of his seminary classroom, since conversations outside, at his own initiation, had caused "tempers [to] flare, and charity [to be] wounded in more ways than one."⁶⁶ Moreau did not avoid complex positions and continued to treat them in his philosophy courses at Tessé, but he reflected often on his reactions to them, writing to Mollevaut with concern for his own spiritual disposition and that of his students. In this sense, his scholarship was never isolated from the rest of his life; he rigorously committed himself to a spiritual life in continuous dialectic with the difficulties and joys of intellectual engagement.

As a young professor, Moreau continued much of the rule of life he had established at the Solitude of Issy. He evaluated his own actions in correspondence with Mollevaut and continued habitual scholarly practices, including beginning each day with a regimen of Hebrew-language studies. He also maintained a regular routine of prayer and fasting. After just a short time teaching philosophy at the minor seminary at Tessé (1823–1826), Moreau was sent to the major seminary of St. Vincent's as a professor of dogma under the direction of Bouvier. Then, after nearly four years in that post, Bouvier informed Moreau that he would be moved to teach sacred scripture. Moreau's writings indicate that he knew Bouvier

was the driving force behind the change.⁶⁷ The dogmatic theology post was the one in which Moreau's understanding and articulation of the position of Lamennais in favor of the papacy ran most afoul of the strong Gallican commitments of Bouvier.⁶⁸ This move both surprised and disappointed Moreau, but—with Mollevaut's help—he came to appreciate the skill he brought to the study and teaching of scripture. Moreau wrote that he was pained by the “lack of straightforwardness” and “distrust” with which he was treated. Nonetheless, he accepted the new position in “a spirit of obedience,” though his Ultramontane intellectual commitments did not change.⁶⁹

3. Moreau's Exegesis

The best treatment to date of Moreau's exegetical work is Cécile Perreault's *To Become Another Christ: Identification with Christ according to Basil Moreau*.⁷⁰ She develops her thesis concerning Moreau's vision of the imitation of Christ around his exegesis of Galatians 2:20. When teaching Galatians, Moreau relied on Bernardin de Picquigny's *Explication des épîtres de saint Paul* (1706).⁷¹ By lining up a particular Galatians verse from the Vulgate, the Picquigny commentary, and Moreau's notes, Perreault identifies where Moreau's exegesis either departs from or builds on the work of Picquigny. In one instance, Moreau connects the “I live” statements in the Vulgate text with a baptismal reading, suggesting that Christ living in the disciple precipitates transformation in virtue. Picquigny had suggested this living in Christ meant a “spiritual and divine life.” Moreau made this connection more concrete and connected it to the sacramental life as *imitatio*. Christ comes to live in a disciple through baptismal death and rebirth as well as the Christlike practice of virtue. In later writings, Moreau would point to explicit examples of this change, such as in the life of St. Vincent de Paul (1581–1660). In spiritual writings, Moreau would encourage retreatants to consider Christ from Galatians 2:20 as speaking through their mouths, praying on their lips, and acting in their limbs.⁷²

As Moreau developed a synthesis of former teachers' courses, material recommended to him by Mollevaut, and his own reading of scripture and commentaries, he began to emerge as a more mature scholar.⁷³ His sophisticated library went beyond the manuals of his time and included many patristic sources and spiritual writings.⁷⁴ His own treatise entitled *De religione et ecclesia* is perhaps the clearest evidence of this scholarly maturation. Written specifically for seminarians in Holy Cross, the work is, in many respects, a paradigmatic example of Moreau's thinking. First, it acknowledges a specific, local theology (i.e., the Gallican theology of Le Mans)—even if only to state its limitations. Secondly, it addresses the broader Catholic tradition as well as the philosophical underpinnings of natural religion. Finally, it includes a historical treatment of salvation, the nature of the Bible, *creatio ex nihilo*, the flood, and Abraham, before it segues into the life of Christ, including his plan of redemption, birth, infancy, and public actions.⁷⁵ Thus, a treatise that represents the grand synthesis of Moreau's work as both a scholar and teacher, *De religione et ecclesia* demonstrates Moreau's sensitivity to local theology, his concern for the universality of the theological enterprise, and the presentation of these concerns so as to be accessible to student members of Holy Cross.

4. Developing a Pedagogy of Christian Education

Moreau's experience as a seminary professor, both in teaching and in curriculum development, laid the foundation for his philosophy of education. After Bouvier was made bishop of Le Mans in 1834, Moreau served as the vice-rector of St. Vincent's. In this capacity, Moreau made a genuine innovation in seminary education at St. Vincent's by establishing a course in physics and by hiring a physics professor.⁷⁶ This action satisfied a dual need. It assumed that those educated to be clergy would need to teach, but also—unlike Moreau's parish priest who taught him Latin lines—assumed that the new generation of teachers needed to be conversant with the demands of science as well. It also satisfied Moreau's perceived need for broad intellectual inquiry and engagement

in Christian education. Moreau, in a later conference on how to study, cited scripture, Aquinas, Cicero, and Francis Bacon in the same lecture. He saw no reason that a seminary education—and later a Holy Cross education—should not have the same breadth and depth as other types of education.⁷⁷

This concern is also evident in Moreau's writings as superior of Holy Cross. In some of his most famous lines on education, the mutually demanding synthesis of faith and reason is quite plainly stated in a way remarkable for Moreau's time:

No, we wish to accept science without prejudice and in a manner adapted to the needs of our times. We do not want our students to be ignorant of anything they should know. To this end, we shall shrink from no sacrifice. But we shall never forget that virtue, as Bacon puts it, is the spice which preserves science. 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. (p. 417)⁷⁸

While the *telos* of education for Moreau was heavenly beatitude, he understood that both the rigorous education of the intellect and the formation of virtue were constitutive in the development of students. Preparing them to be citizens of heaven meant training them to be contributing citizens in this world.

Intellectual and Spiritual Influences on Moreau

As a young professor, Moreau revealed himself as a thinker with diverse abilities and interests. His intellectual influences came primarily from three sources: Sulpician and French School spiritualities, Ignatius of Loyola, and liturgical spirituality through Dom Guéranger at Solesmes (Benedictine) and silent retreats at La Trappe (Cistercian).

1. Sulpician Spirituality and the French School

Through his education at Saint-Sulpice and his year at the Solitude of Issy, Moreau incorporated a great deal of Sulpician and French School spiritualities into his own prayer and writing. He later instilled this spirituality into his religious community. Sulpician and French School spiritualities are not synonymous, but rather the former is one example of the latter. Moreau's encounter with both came through the Sulpicians, first in Paris and Issy and then through his ongoing relationship with Mollevaut, his spiritual director.

The French School first originated in the thought of Pierre de Bérulle (1575–1629). A French cleric and later cardinal who participated in an early seventeenth-century mystical circle, Bérulle formulated an abstract mysticism that then underwent a Christological turn around 1605–1610.⁷⁹ As a “school,” however loosely termed, the French School responded to a number of influences. The Council of Trent had instituted seminaries for priestly education, but they had not become law in France.⁸⁰ Those considered primary members of the French School—including Bérulle, Jean-Jacques Olier (1608–1657), and St. John Eudes (1601–1680)—were all somehow involved with the education or spiritual formation of priests.⁸¹ Bérulle said that authority, holiness, and doctrine concerning priests—that is, the priestly office, spirituality, and learning—had been divided. The priestly office was relegated to bishops, spirituality to the religious, and learning to professors. None of these included the regular or secular clergy for whom all three were intended.⁸²

Bérulle's solution was in part a theological one. He returned to central theological mysteries for insight into daily life that would reintegrate priesthood, spirituality, and learning for the regular cleric. He stressed the Incarnation as an extension or expression of the Trinity. Echoing the prologue of the Gospel of John, Bérulle wrote, “He who is, becomes: the Uncreated is created . . . the One who enriches the world becomes poor.”⁸³ Pope Urban VIII (1568–1644) later called Bérulle the “apostle

of the incarnate Word,” since Bérulle argued that Jesus Christ was God’s unique and highest revelation.⁸⁴ Echoing the Irenaeian and Athanasian formulae on divinization, Bérulle believed that God became man in order to make humans divine. This Christology formed something of a metaphysics of the Incarnation, because the love in which humanity was assumed by the divinity of Christ could not, for Bérulle, pass away. Consequently, the effects of the Incarnation resonate in all human beings and prompt the need for direct meditation on, and participation in, the life of Christ.⁸⁵ Though this meditation would take different forms in the work of Olier and Eudes, both exhibit a strong incarnational focus with a clear Trinitarian background. These themes are also present in Moreau. The unity of the family of Holy Cross, for example, was inspired in part by the relations of the three persons of the Trinity.⁸⁶ Further, the *telos* of life in Holy Cross was imitating, loving, and thereby becoming another Christ.⁸⁷ Teaching this end would be the purpose of its educational mission.

The theology of Bérulle was made practical by the work of Olier. Olier knew St. Vincent de Paul (1581–1660) and St. Francis de Sales (1567–1622), both models for Moreau in his own life and in his teaching. Olier was a pastor and a founder of seminaries. His primary foundation was Saint-Sulpice in Paris, but he also organized a missionary society that went to modern-day French Canada. His *Introduction à la vie et aux vertus Chrétiennes* provided a programmatic manner of following Christ in fifteen chapters, focusing on the removal of vice and the cultivation of virtue.⁸⁸ This and other works of Olier put into perspective the rigorous rule of life that Moreau established for himself during his year at the Sulpician Solitude of Issy.

Eudes, a third figure from the French School, would shape Moreau’s devotional practices. Although passages about the heart of Jesus can be found in both Bérulle’s and Olier’s writings, Eudes presented meditations on the Sacred Heart of Jesus and connected the heart of Mary with the heart of Jesus—a union laid out most completely in the culminating

work of his life, *The Most Admirable Heart of the Most Sacred Mother of God*.⁸⁹ In order to categorize that which Mary held in her heart (Lk 2:19, 51), Eudes spoke of interconnected divisions within the hearts of Mary and Jesus. These divisions allowed him to maintain distinctions between earthly and divine, and between bodily and spiritual, within the context of human flesh's incarnational sharing in the heart of Christ.

Accordingly, the French School described the mysteries of Christian salvation in strong, affective language for the purpose of shaping an individual's relationship to Christ and his body, the Church. For instance, the heart became a central trope for the description of God's love for humans and humans' love for God, as well as for the meeting of both.⁹⁰ Francis de Sales would describe the Mount of Calvary as a "mount of lovers," a martyrdom of love that takes place primarily in the heart.⁹¹ Conformity with Christ brought about a union of hearts, not only between the person and God, but also between the person and the Church. The corresponding ecclesiology of the period was strongly tied to the Pauline imagery of the head, body, and members; it was precisely together that believers were growing to full stature as the whole Christ.⁹² This affective language was derived from and gained its strength of expression from careful exegesis of scripture and patristic commentaries. Though Moreau did not utilize all of the divisions within the Eudist system, he nevertheless placed the various constituencies of Holy Cross under the heart of Jesus (priests), the heart of Mary (sisters), and the heart of Joseph (brothers). Union within Holy Cross stemmed from a union of hearts with one another and with the Holy Family.⁹³

In addition, from the time of Bérulle onward, the French School thinkers—and subsequently Moreau—were committed to an understanding that the mystery of the Church was lived in liturgical prayer and mission.⁹⁴ Liturgical prayer, particularly grounded in an emphasis on preaching the scriptures and praying before the Blessed Sacrament, provided the most important way to contemplate and conform one's life to Christ's Incarnation and the paschal mystery. The work of

missions or retreats was the extension of the Incarnation into their own day. Examples of these two principles abound in the writings and activity of Moreau as he organized parish missions—and shortly thereafter, international missions—to enrich the life of the Church. In addition to preaching, Moreau’s missions and the later missions of Holy Cross also involved a rich liturgical experience: reciting the Stations of the Cross, praying benediction, and celebrating the sacraments—all for the purpose of education in the way of imitating Christ.⁹⁵

2. *St. Ignatius of Loyola*

Along with the French School, St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) became another major influence on Moreau. Moreau had read Ignatius in the past for personal spiritual nourishment, but he now turned to him with a new and quite practical purpose: the ongoing development of the spiritual lives of the members of his religious community.⁹⁶ Moreau’s *Spiritual Exercises* are structured around the model provided by Ignatius with Moreau’s own added insights. The *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius are set out in a series of four weeks, each with different spiritual emphases in relation to the life of Christ.⁹⁷ Moreau follows an essentially Ignatian meditation structure with a series of two or three preludes drawn largely from scripture but occasionally from other sources. The exercise invites the retreatant to engage the imagination in drawing closer to Christ, through a meditation either on an action of Christ or on one’s own sin and need for repentance. The retreatant then works through the exercises as they are helpful; the object is less efficiency or completion than a deep engagement with Christ. Finally, at the end of the exercises, Moreau, like Ignatius, often writes either a colloquy—a conversation of gratitude with Christ or Mary—or a preparation for sacramental action, such as confession or Holy Communion. Although Moreau borrowed from the structure and writing of Ignatius, he did not consider himself strictly bound to its content or form. His first and most significant departure from Ignatius was to write directly for the retreatant, rather than for

the spiritual director or retreat master. Moreau's model eliminated the intermediary.

Moreau was not the first in the French School to borrow from Ignatius. Bérulle himself had integrated Ignatius into his own spirituality after making his early seventeenth-century incarnational and mystical turn.⁹⁸ Vincent de Paul used Ignatian ideas in setting up the rules of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity.⁹⁹ The French School and Ignatius also shared a common affinity for Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* because of its emphasis on the interior life and the active modeling of one's life on Christ's.¹⁰⁰ Ignatius provided the French School a mode of contemplating the human Christ that complemented their incarnational spirituality. Perreault rightly summarizes that "Moreau's thought focuses on Christ, the Word made flesh, through whom God's life is restored to us."¹⁰¹ Ignatian structures provided a natural fit as Moreau worked out ways for his religious to become more "conscious" of and "committed" to this central, spiritual insight.¹⁰²

3. Solesmes and La Trappe

Given Moreau's liturgical interests, he also found inspiration in two nearby monasteries—the famous abbey of Solesmes and La Grande Trappe of Mortagne. An eleventh-century Benedictine foundation in the area, Solesmes had been abandoned during the French Revolution but was revitalized under the vision and leadership of Prosper Guéranger (1805–1875). Contemporaries, Moreau and Guéranger became personally acquainted. At one level, they had a great deal in common: both were leaders of religious communities near Le Mans, and both struggled with Gallican Bishop Bouvier. Some of their correspondence survives in sixteen brief letters in the Solesmes archives (addressed from Moreau to Guéranger).¹⁰³ For example, Moreau's letter of February 12, 1852, to Guéranger indicates shared advocacy on the part of both Moreau and Guéranger for the Roman liturgy in the diocesan synod of 1852 in Le Mans. Catta and Catta suggest, however, that a deeper connection

and friendship between the two would have been impossible, since a relationship between the two would have been threatening to Bishop Bouvier.¹⁰⁴ Ultimately, it was Guéranger's liturgical thought itself that would have the most profound intellectual effect on Moreau. The abbot's *Liturgical Year* prompted the overhaul of Moreau's own meditation writing, bringing it more in line with the rhythm of the liturgical year.¹⁰⁵

Another religious foundation in the Le Mans area, the Trappist monastery La Grande Trappe of Mortagne, provided Moreau with spiritual retreat and solace.¹⁰⁶ As a young priest, he had made a retreat at a different Trappist foundation, and he often sought out the silence of La Grande Trappe for his own prayer. His last spiritual testament of 1867 was written from his retreat at La Trappe. Moreau even took the Auxiliary Priests there in October of 1836 to discern how they would live and work together, and thus La Trappe played an important role in the founding of Holy Cross. Moreau later wrote to the abbot: "Holy Cross began in your monastery."¹⁰⁷

4. *Synthesis*

Moreau was able to draw on any number of these theological influences, integrating them into his own synthesis. A good example is his sermon to his religious on how to meditate.¹⁰⁸ In an attempt to cultivate a life of prayer, he taught that those who pray will be just, have love for those around them, look hopefully to heaven, and yield rich fruit in the harvest of the Lord. Those who neglect meditation are "tepid" and "languishing." They "are like plants on an arid plain, withered by the heat of a torrid sun." In an effort to cultivate a habit of meditation, or drinking in of the "dew of God's grace," Moreau presents his religious with a number of options. Moreau walks carefully through a modified form of Ignatian prayer, giving exercises for memory, understanding, and will. He is able to shift quickly, however, and explain that while directed at the same end, the Sulpician mode of prayer is somewhat different, addressing prayer directly to the Savior. Moreau mentions the differences

that the Visitandines and the Carmelites, especially St. Teresa of Avila (1515–1582), offer on these two methods and explains them accordingly. Moreau's concern in setting forth a spiritual program for his religious was first and foremost that they were praying. He knew well the various prayer resources at his disposal and presented them all.

The fluidity with which Moreau drew from different parts of the tradition ought not be seen as scattered or diffuse. Moreau was actually marshaling all the resources at his disposal in order to promote a singular goal: the complete conformity of his disciples to Christ. This singularity of purpose reveals the enduring influence of the French School on Moreau. Even years removed from Saint-Sulpice and the Solitude, the French School—particularly its incarnational Christology—remained the most defining characteristic of Moreau's intellectual formation and subsequently his theological thinking. To understand Moreau's writings means to look at them through the lens of imitating Christ, a practice he first and most deeply learned from the Sulpicians and the French School thinkers, even as he enriched it with the wider tradition.

The Early Developments of Holy Cross

With this understanding of Moreau's intellectual formation and his spiritual influences, one can now consider the work into which Moreau would apply much of his theological study and thought: the Congregation of Holy Cross. He dedicated twenty-nine years—over half of his priesthood, from 1837 to 1866—to founding, shaping, teaching, and leading this international congregation of educators. The roots of the Congregation of Holy Cross, however, actually predate Moreau and go back to Jacques Dujarié and the Brothers of St. Joseph. When Moreau was given charge of the Brothers of St. Joseph, he joined them with his own Auxiliary Priests, and Holy Cross was born. Within a few years, Moreau added a branch of sisters, and his new association was complete. This complex history will set the stage and provide the context for his greatest theological works.

1. The Brothers of St. Joseph

After the ending of the French Revolution and the signing of the concordat, Dujarié was appointed pastor in Ruillé-sur-Loir in 1803. Within three years, he had assembled a group of ten young women to assist him with the instruction of children and care for the sick—two immense needs in the wake of the French Revolution.¹⁰⁹ At a diocesan retreat in 1818, with his community of women growing quickly, Dujarié was approached about founding a community of teaching brothers.¹¹⁰ By September 1820, he had received his first three recruits (although one was quickly dismissed, and neither of the other two persevered beyond the first few years).¹¹¹ The lack of training and formation, coupled with poor living conditions, led to a lack of retention and a high turnover rate. Given the pressing need for brothers in parishes and schools, many of his recruits, including some as young as sixteen years old, received only a few months of rudimentary training before they were sent out to teach.¹¹² Moreover, although they took the title “brother,” the Brothers of St. Joseph did not take formal religious vows, and their spiritual formation was often as lacking as their educational training.¹¹³ These departures, setbacks, and challenges, however, were offset by a steady stream of new candidates and new schools. Within five years of their founding, the Brothers of St. Joseph had seventy-three members, and they worked in thirty-two schools.¹¹⁴

Moreau’s connection with the Brothers of St. Joseph goes back to their earliest days when Dujarié asked him to preach the community’s annual retreat in 1823.¹¹⁵ He returned multiple times to lead the retreat, and Dujarié also relied on Moreau for guidance in stabilizing his community when the political instability in 1830 lowered retention.¹¹⁶ At Moreau’s encouragement, the brothers drew up a “Pact of Fidelity” at their annual retreat in 1831, seeking to deepen the moral bonds of the members to the community and its work.¹¹⁷ The following year, again largely at Moreau’s inspiration, the community developed a plan for improvement, aimed at both structural reorganization and spiritual

renewal, including a proposal to examine the addition of religious vows. The plan also called for a spiritual director, and Moreau was chosen for the position.¹¹⁸ Many of these other proposals, however, would go unfulfilled.¹¹⁹

Given his strong connections with the organization, the brother-directors who helped lead the community unsurprisingly turned to Moreau in 1835 when it came time to find a successor to their ailing, virtually bedridden leader.¹²⁰ Moreau expressed his willingness to serve in a letter to Br. Leonard on June 17, provided that he was given full authority and that the brothers' headquarters was moved to Le Mans.¹²¹ Two days later, on June 19, Moreau met with Bishop Bouvier, who asked him to assume leadership of the Brothers of St. Joseph. Over the ensuing weeks, Moreau worked carefully and respectfully with Dujarié to ensure a smooth transition, which would take place at the community's annual retreat.¹²² On August 31, the last day of the retreat, Dujarié formally asked the bishop, in the presence of the assembled community, to name Moreau his successor. With the approval of Bishop Bouvier, Moreau responded with characteristic trust in divine providence: "Abandoning myself entirely to God, I accept the burden of this task out of obedience, and I hope, my very dear Brothers, that, as I make this sacrifice of myself, I shall find in you men who will be docile and ready to cooperate with my efforts to insure the welfare of this congregation."¹²³ Dujarié died less than three years later on February 17, 1838, after spending his last years with the community at Moreau's invitation.

Moreau quickly implemented many of the proposed spiritual and temporal reforms that had not been fully realized, and he moved their novitiate to the Sainte-Croix quarter of Le Mans.¹²⁴ Moreau's post as professor of scripture and vice-rector at St. Vincent's Seminary in Le Mans certainly was a factor in the move. The proximity with Sainte-Croix allowed him to direct the brothers personally while he continued to work at St. Vincent's, at least for another year. The move also allowed Moreau to "procure for the novices the kind of training demanded by the