

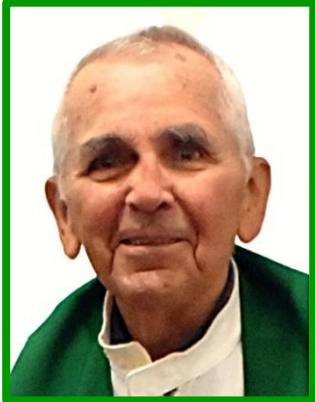


BASILIAN FATHERS MISSIONS

Newsletter of the Apostolate in Mexico and Colombia

Fall - Winter 2025

Father Jess Owens CSB, 1938 – 2025 A Dedicated Basilian Missionary



The death of Father Jess Owens in Mexico in August brings an end to an important chapter in the history of Basilian Ministry in Mexico. Father Jess, a native of Detroit, MI, was ordained in 1967. He came to Mexico for the first time in 1973 to serve in Mexico City. He was the last of

the many Canadian and American Basilian priests who came to Mexico in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Jess led an active life. He loved to walk and would explore the areas where he was ministering.

Jess was a much-loved priest in his parish ministry in Mexico. A young Mexican Basilian priest asked him for advice for when he was going to hear confessions. Jess told him: "People need to leave feeling loved and comforted, not judged, but forgiven."

Jess was active in parish ministry in Mexico and preaching in the USA for the Basilian Missions in Mexico and Colombia until his eyesight failed and he was unable to see to read. However, he was always available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Jess was a true teacher of joy, fraternal love, and simplicity. He was a wise man, full of faith and hope. These are qualities that the later generation of Mexican Basilians will cherish and put into practice.

When Father Jess Owens and his contemporaries arrived in Mexico, ministry was provided by Basilians from Canada and the USA. These dedicated priests saw the importance of bringing the Good News of the Gospel to people, many of whom lived on the margins of society and had not been regularly served by a priest. They also saw the importance of promoting native Mexican vocations to the Basilian Fathers. Progress was slow in this last area, in fact all through the 20th century, the majority of Basilians in Mexico were from Canada and the USA.

However, things have changed in the 21st century. Mexico and Colombia have been blessed with many vocations to the priesthood. In Mexico, Basilians now serve chapels in Mexico City and at the parish of San Lorenzo and its chapels in Tehuacán. In Colombia, Basilians serve at the parish of San Basilio in Medellín, the parish of Nuestra Señora de Egipto in Bogotá, and they direct and teach in a large Catholic school, "Institución Eusebio Séptimo Mari," in the coastal city of Riohacha. Two Basilians, one from Mexico and one from Colombia serve the large Hispanic community in the Diocese of Houma, Louisiana. A Colombian and a Mexican Basilian are missionaries to the USA! The seed planted in the 20th century is now in full flower.



The Superior of the Basilian Fathers, Father Kevin Storey CSB, (center) stands with a group of young Mexican and Colombian priests and deacons. The support of our donors has helped finance their education and formation.

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we have seen his glory.” *Gospel of John, 1:14*

Basilians ministering in Colombia and Mexico labor to make these words of the Gospel a reality for the many people that they serve.



“This is my body, given up for you.” (Riohacha, Colombia)



The youth get encouragement from their pastor. (Mexico City)



(Bogotá, Colombia) The Basilians animate the Youth Group at Nuestra Señora de Egipto parish. The name of this Basilian parish commemorates the flight of the infant Jesus, with Mary and Joseph, into Egypt to escape King Herod.



Basilian scholastics pray for the people they serve, and for the donors who support our ministry. (Mexico City)



At the parish of San Basilio, young women learn to sew and are gaining a marketable skill that gives them a source of income and provides independence in their future. (Medellín, Colombia)



Basilians bring the Sacraments to everyone of all ages.



My name is Luis Alberto Rodríguez Justo CSB. I am the third of five siblings, originally from Villa de San Nicolás Tolentino—a small town in the State of Mexico. I am 43 years old and currently a scholastic (seminarian) in Mexico City.

I have been in formation with the Basilian Fathers for five years. During this time, I spent two years serving in pastoral ministry at the parish of San Lorenzo Teotipilco in

Tehuacán, Puebla. Following my profession of temporary vows, I was assigned to the Vistahermosa chapel, where I worked with various pastoral groups including altar servers, lectors, and students.

I am now in my third year of Theology studies at the Intercontinental University in Mexico City. Through my academic and spiritual journey, I have come to deeply appreciate the presence of Jesus Christ in both community life and personal faith. My formation has helped me grow intellectually, spiritually, vocationally, pastorally, and as a human being.

Alongside my fellow Basilian, Alejandro Balderas, I currently serve the Atocpa South neighborhood (*photo below*) in Mexico City. Together, we prepare children for their First Communion and Confirmation. In this ministry, I have embraced and practiced the Basilian charisms: closeness to the people, humility, service, understanding, respect, and equality.

I am profoundly grateful to God for the generous support of people like you who contribute to the Basilian missions. Your donations enable us to continue our ministry in Mexico and Colombia. I pray to God our Father, to Jesus Christ our Brother, and to the Spirit of Love, that you may be blessed abundantly—both materially and spiritually. I also ask the Blessed Virgin Mary of Guadalupe to intercede for all of us.

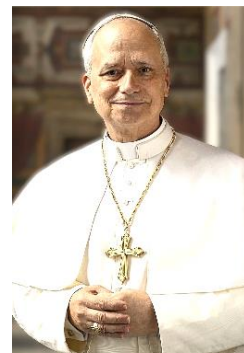
Thank you for all that you do for the Basilian Fathers.



The small community of Atocpa Sur gathers every Sunday for Eucharist and faith sharing. The Basilian scholastics provide catechesis for the children and bring a Basilian priest for Mass.

Words from Pope Leo

God never turns his back on us when we come to him, even if we arrive late to knock at his door, perhaps after mistakes, missed opportunities, or failures. Indeed, in the great family of the Church, the Father does not hesitate to make us participants in each of his loving gestures.



Courtesy of Vatican Media

When we recite the Our Father, in addition to celebrating the grace of being children of God, we also express our commitment to responding to this gift by loving one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We cannot pray to God as “Father” and then be harsh and insensitive towards others.

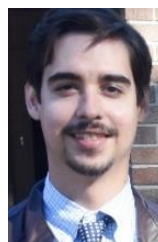
Rome, July 27, 2025

"...LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR..."



How to donate: An envelope is enclosed with this *Newsletter* if you wish to donate by mail. If you would prefer to donate securely online, in your browser please type: www.basilianfathersmissions.org or scan the QR CODE to access the Website. Every donation is important.

Message from Aron Fernandez



Director of Operations, Mission Center

I am happy to have known Father Jess Owens: good-humored, benevolent, and patient. He would visit Texas every year, and from there, travel to preach across the United States in appeal for the Missions. May his legacy live on in our younger Basilians, to whom he ministered for so many years. To our donors, thank you as always for your support. Each unfolding chapter of the Basilian Fathers Missions would not be possible without your generosity. God bless you all.





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Faith in Focus: A Reflection by Father Maurice Restivo CSB

Greetings from Bogotá, Colombia!

The prophet Isaiah, quoting the Lord, wrote: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are my ways your ways" (55:8). It seems that, for me, truer words were never spoken. I was happily ensconced in Houston in my role as Mission Procurator, when Father Kevin Storey, our Superior General, asked me to consider taking on the role of Director of Novices in Colombia! So, as of this past June 1, I am taking a year off my Mission duties to help form two young men. The novitiate is a year of spiritual growth. Upon completion, the novices will take vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience as Basilians, and then, hopefully, go on to ordination.



I am aware of the responsibility that the Basilians have given me, and I ask for your prayers. I have always found that when I allow myself to be surprised by God—often speaking through my religious superiors—good things happen. And even though it is sometimes easier to coast along in my routines, when I allow God to challenge me, better things happen. In addition to prayers for me, I invite you to pray for our two novices, Ciro (from Colombia) and Fabien (Mexican resident, originally from the Congo). We are here because of your past generosity, and we are deeply grateful for your support.

I invite you even more to be open to the surprises that God may have in store for you. They are most likely beyond your imagining... and will bring you more than you thought possible.

God bless you.

Father Maurice Restivo CSB

Director of the Mission Center