



BASILIAN FATHERS MISSIONS

Newsletter of the Apostolate in Mexico and Colombia

Spring - Summer 2026

St. Basil the Great: (329-379)

A Shepherd with a Heart for People

St. Basil the Great is remembered as one of the towering figures of the early Church—not only for his brilliant mind, but for his deep compassion and practical love for ordinary people. Basil is honored as a theologian and an educator and a defender of the Faith. He is also remembered as a pastor who cared for the poor, the sick, and the forgotten.

Born into a devout Christian family in Cappadocia (modern-day Turkey), Basil received the finest education of his time. Yet after tasting the prestige of academic life, he felt drawn to something deeper. He returned home, was baptized, and dedicated himself to a life of prayer, ministry, and simplicity. This turning point shaped everything that followed.

As bishop of Caesarea, Basil faced a world shaken by poverty, famine, and theological division. Instead of retreating into his study, he stepped directly into the needs of his people. He organized relief efforts during a famine, personally serving meals to the hungry. He founded what many consider the first Christian hospital—a large complex known as the *Basileias*, which offered medical care and shelter for the poor and for travelers. In an age without social services, Basil's ministry was nothing short of revolutionary.

Basil also played a crucial role in shaping Christian belief. At a time when confusion about the nature of Christ and the Holy Spirit threatened to fracture the Church, he wrote with clarity and courage. His teachings helped lay the foundation for the Nicene Creed that Christians still profess today. Yet even in his theological writings, Basil's pastoral heart shines through—he wrote not to win arguments, but to guide people toward the truth that leads to life.

What makes St. Basil so compelling for us today is the balance he lived so well: deep prayer paired with active service, strong convictions joined with humility, and a brilliant mind anchored by a generous heart. He reminds us that holiness is not abstract. It is lived out in concrete acts of generosity, kindness, compassion, courage, service and love. Your kind contributions to the Basilian ministry bring light into darkness.



**A good deed is
never lost.**

**Those who sow
courtesy, reap
friendship ...**

**and those who
plant kindness,
gather love.**

St. Basil the Great

The Congregation of St. Basil (CSB)

The Basilian Fathers were founded in France in 1822 in the wake of the French Revolution, over 1400 years after the death of St. Basil. France was still reeling from the effects of the conflict as religious orders, and consequently Catholic education, were subjected to persecution by the government. A group of ten French priests saw the need to provide a Catholic education for boys and, even before 1822, began to gather students and teach them in clandestine schools.

One of the schools was in a remote chateau in the mountains near the small village of Sainte-Basile. Besides their classes, these intrepid priest-teachers saw the need of celebrating the Eucharist in the village church and the locals began to call them "Prêtres de Sainte-Basile" (Priests of St. Basil).

Obviously, St. Basil is not the founder of the Basilian Fathers. But in 1822, when this small group of priests were choosing a name for their new community, St. Basil seemed to them to be an obvious choice. Today Basilians minister in the USA, Canada, Mexico and Colombia. There are two Basilians in France.

“God has saved us and called us to a holy life.” 2 Timothy 1:9



The members of the parish of San Lorenzo gather to celebrate the Eucharist on their patron's feast day. The Basilians came to this parish in 1978 when worship took place in a small colonial chapel that still stands nearby on the property. (Tehuacán, Mexico)



Padre René Espejel CSB celebrates First Communion at his Parish of San Pedro Acoquiaco. Padre René was one of the first Mexican Basilians and he continues his ministry today. (Tehuacán, Mexico)



Padre Anderson Úsuga CSB welcomes Jorge Mario Rodríguez, a new Basilian Associate, as he begins his journey to the priesthood. Parish of San Basilio. (Medellín, Colombia)

Last year three Associates were accepted in Tehuacán, Mexico: Diego Alejandro Martínez, José Yonni Villa de Jesús, José Juan Téllez



*Padre Erick de Jesús Enríquez CSB gathers with some parishinors during a day of retreat for the **Miserere Group**, a ministry for families who have gone through a divorce. (Mexico City)*



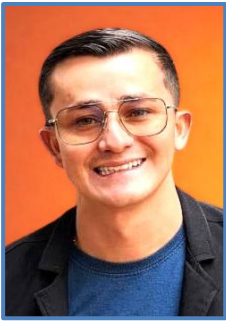
The Parish of San Basilio (Medellín, Colombia) has a long tradition of feeding the hungry elderly and children. The mural behind Sister Yolanda shows Jesus feeding the crowd, assisted by St. Basil.



The community of Nuestra Señora de Egipto (Bogotá, Colombia) celebrates a successful retreat for the parish youth. This historic parish had been long neglected until 2023 when it was entrusted to the Basilians. Now it is a thriving faith-filled community.



The Basilians pray for our donors. You are our partners in mission. Basilian Associates in Casa San Felipe. (Tehuacán, México)



A Basilian Journey

My name is **Ciro Alfonso Cárdenas Balaguera** and I am a Basilian novice. I was born in Las Mercedes, Norte de Santander, Colombia on August 24, 1993, into a family rooted in values, a hard-working people dedicated to agriculture.

My childhood was divided between my primary school studies and helping my parents on the farm. I learned early that dreams are achieved little by little through patience and determination. Although it was not easy, I resolved to keep moving forward. In time I completed high school and continued pursuing my dreams. Little by little, I achieved my objectives and, with God's help, I obtained other degrees, including a degree in production technology.

Some years later, a friend told me that he had met a very good religious community and asked me if I would like to get to know the Basilian Fathers. I had long felt a quiet call to the priesthood and his invitation stirred that call again. He introduced me to the Basilian Fathers in Medellín, Colombia. After a year of discernment, with God's help, I entered the Basilian novitiate where I am continuing my formation today.

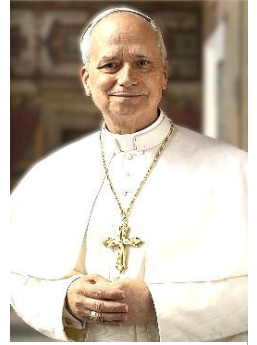
For me, the Basilians give a testimony that the Catholic faith is not monolithic, but rather it expresses itself in a beautiful diversity of rites, languages, and cultures. Basilians share a life of prayer, preach, baptize, comfort the dying, witness weddings, minister to the poor and marginalized, celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and do much more. For Basilians, knowledge and culture and faith are not abstract things, but concrete ways to serve the People of God. Each Basilian, through his presence and personal gifts, contributes to the evangelization and the formation of faith in every place where we are found.

The presence of the Congregation of St. Basil in Mexico and Colombia is not a coincidence, but rather a mission of great value, one that enriches the life of the local church. Through Basilian spirituality and tradition, our religious community offers a testimony of faith that complements and broadens the Catholic experience.

As a member of the Congregation of St. Basil, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those who donate to support our Congregation in its ministry of evangelization. Your generosity sustains our mission and allows us to continue serving God's people. I thank you and encourage you to continue accompanying us in this work. May God bless you and abundantly reward your generosity to our Basilian ministry.

Words from Pope Leo

After proclaiming the Beatitudes, Jesus addresses those who put them into practice, saying "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world." (Mt 5:13-14) Indeed, it is genuine joy that gives flavor to life and brings light where darkness was before. This joy springs from a way of life that must be chosen. It is the life that shines in Jesus, the new flavor of his words and deeds. Brothers and sisters, let us be nourished and enlightened by communion with Jesus. Without any boasting, then we will be like a city set on a hill, not simply visible, but also inviting and welcoming: the city of God where everyone desires to live and find true peace.



Courtesy of Vatican Media

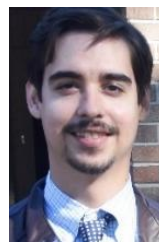
The Vatican, February 8, 2026

**"...LOVE
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

Dear Friends,
The parish of San Basilio in Medellín began serving the hungry with a food line for the needy where people would come and receive food but not stay to eat. Take a look on page 2, and you can see now there is a room for the disadvantaged elderly and children to have a nutritious meal together. Ministries like the food bank in Medellín help to build healthy communities, and they would not be possible without your contributions. Thank you for your kind support of the Missions, and may you have a blessed Lent.





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Faith in Focus: A Reflection by Father Maurice Restivo CSB

Greetings once again from Bogota, Colombia, during this holy season of Lent! Each year I am always so impressed by the line from the first Lenten Preface that mentions that each year we await Easter, "with the joy of minds made pure." Pope Leo, in his Lenten Message, has suggested that we fast from criticism of others and of cutting others down. As I try to live this, I realize how incredibly fortunate I am to live with our two novices, *Ciro* (who is featured in this Newsletter) and *Fabien* and our four scholastics (seminarians) in Bogota. The Basilian Fathers are truly privileged to have such fine men in formation here in Colombia, as well as those in Mexico. They are receiving excellent formation, on both an academic and a spiritual level.



I am also very happy to report that on May 31 our two novices will be making their first vows as official members of the Congregation of St. Basil. It is thanks to your prayer and financial support that we have been able to accept and form such fine men; I am convinced that they will enrich the Church of the future. Would that we had as many candidates in North America as well!

Please be assured of my continued gratitude and prayers for each of you. Without your prayers and generosity, we would not be here. You make a real impact for the future of our Church. May God fill you with blessings and new life at Easter.

God bless you.

Father Maurice Restivo CSB

Director of the Mission Center