

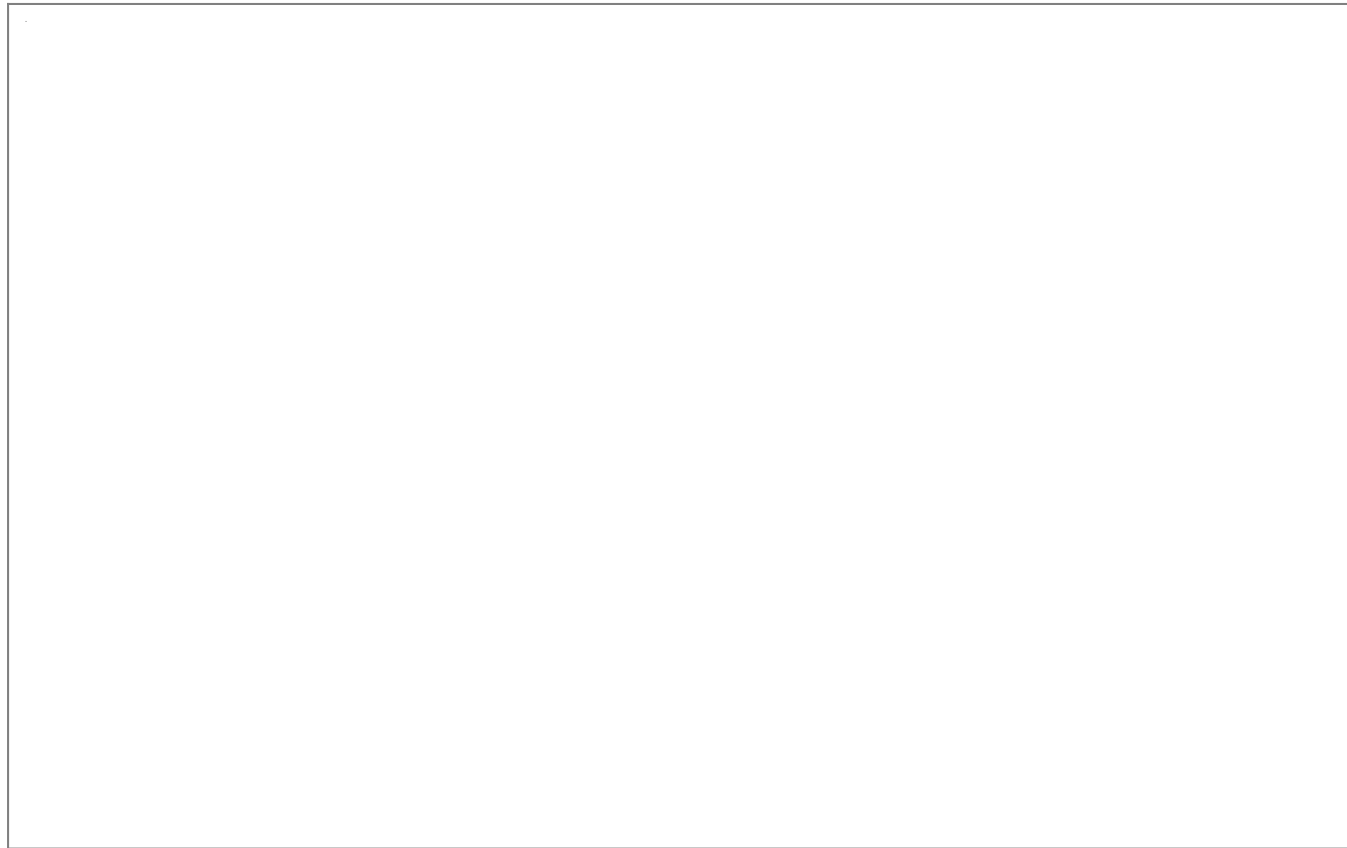


THE CONGREGATION OF ST. BASIL

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HISTORY



The Basilian Fathers were established as a religious congregation in France in 1822. As a result of the closing of seminaries in France during the French Revolution, two diocesan priests opened a secret school in the mountains of central France. After several years of operation and after a change in French laws, ten priests serving there openly bound themselves into a religious community. They reasoned that the school, by then located in the nearby city of Annonay, would have a better chance of continuing if it were conducted by a Religious Congregation that could accept and train new members to continue the operation of the school after the founding fathers' retirement.

The original members chose St. Basil the Great, a fourth century teacher, bishop and doctor of the Church, to be the namesake of the new community.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the French Basilians came to Canada on invitation of Bishop de Charbonnel of Toronto who had been a student at Annonay. They opened St. Michael's College in 1852, offering, in the French style, a combination of what we would call high-school and university education. Today, the University of St. Michael's College and St. Michael's College School continue the work begun in 1852.

The Congregation grew in numbers and activities in the New World. Assumption College in Windsor, Ontario was opened as well as several parishes. Work in the United States began in a permanent way in 1886 at Ste. Anne's Parish in Detroit, Michigan and by the end of the nineteenth century the community was working also in Texas.

During the 1930's the Basilians in Texas began to work with the Mexican people who had settled in the countryside to the southwest of Houston. Gradually their small mission congregations developed into self-sustaining parishes.

In 1961 two priests were sent to open a parish in Mexico City as the first of many to serve in Mexico. In 1987, the Latin American apostolate expanded to include a parish, school, and health care centre in Cali, Colombia.

It is from these simple beginnings that Basilians are inspired to continue to live and serve throughout Canada, the United States, Mexico and Colombia.



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