

## **Basil the Great - House of Discernment Charter**

Basil the Great House of Discernment (Basil House) is a community of men discerning priesthood for the Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix.<sup>1</sup> Discernment takes place in the apprenticeship model of formation. Members will live, work and pray in community with each other and the parish and pastor of Holy Protection of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic church in Denver, CO. Formation occurs within the four “pillars of priestly formation” (*Pastores dabo vobis*), human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral. Basil House is under the omophor of the Bishop of the Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix.

### **The Human Pillar**

One has to be a *good man* to be a *good priest*. In order to undergo Theosis (Union with God), a good man sustains a lifestyle of asceticism (prayer, fasting and almsgiving) and discipleship (watchfulness of the presence and promptings of Christ).

Specifically, a man desiring fatherhood in the Church must be a man of:

- Freedom; able to think and act deliberately, free from coercion and manipulation.
- Direction; zealous for personal growth culminating in likeness to Christ.
- Virtue; receptive to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and able to put them into action.
- Confidence; able to balance dignity of role with humility of persona.
- Communion; able to maintain deep, generous friendships.
- Communication; able to express his thoughts clearly and with self-possession.
- Affective maturity; responsive to his feelings, but not controlled by them.
- Integration; caring for, and in control of his physical body.
- Discipline; able to follow through on prudent goals.
- Tithing; thankful for, and prudent with material possessions.
- Leadership; desirous and able to imitate the fatherhood of God.
- Example; aware of the impact his behavior has on those around him.
- Obedience; able to embrace, with joy, appropriate obedience to God, bishop, spiritual father, and house father.
- Vocation; understanding that God will work through his specific person and personality.
- Chastity; aware that human sexuality is a gift to be lived in, and given, as a sign and means of the union God with God and each other.
- Detachment; free of “slavery” to addictions to substances and “escapes.” (This includes television, video games, social media, etc. These are to be used in moderation.)

Members of Basil House strive to become/remain *good men* through:

#### **-Community Life**

- Simple and shared living space (at the Holy Protection rectory).
- Frequency of time, and proximity of space with like-minded men.
  - At least one shared evening a week incorporating meal preparation, dinner, and an activity (speaker, discussion, leisure etc.)
- Guidance through the house father and accountability to their brothers in the House.
- Housekeeping and liturgical responsibilities in the House and parish.
- Monthly analysis of the qualities listed above (and those of the other “pillars”) with House Father.

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<sup>1</sup> Applications from other Byzantine Catholic Eparchies will be considered if accompanied by written permission of the applicant’s local bishop.

- Engagement in the wider community
  - Responsibilities to a secular “boss” through a job outside the house/parish (Part-time employment is ideal, allowing for fuller participation in House activities.) Please discuss your availability with the house father before making any employment commitments.
  - Social gatherings with parishioners of Holy Protection and the Ft. Collins Outreach.
  - Participation in secular cultural and social events where basic social skills are developed.

(Any exceptions to the above norms must be made in conversation with the House Father.)

### **The Spiritual Pillar**

A man is not just an individual man, but a man in relationship with God. This relationship is lived out through both a participation in the *communal life* of the liturgical Church, and the *private life* of a unique relationship with Christ.

Specifically, a man desiring fatherhood in the church must be a man of:

- Prayer; yearning for constant communication with God.
- Conversion; receptive to the formation and movements of God.
- Humility; understanding of his place in the Body of Christ.
- Faith; confident of Jesus’ Divine Sonship.
- Perception; aware of God’s unconditional love for him and of all humanity.
- Joy; able to be joyful within the cycle of sin and repentance/forgiveness.
- The Mysteries; receptive to the place of the Holy Mysteries in the life of the Christian.

Members of Basil House live out their *relationship with God* through:

- Full participation in the liturgical life of Holy Protection Church and Outreach.
  - Attendance at all scheduled liturgies which are not in conflict with their employment.
  - Through attendance, members will experience and learn the structure of the Divine Liturgies, Matins, Vespers, the Hours, Molebens, Akathists, the Panachida/Parastas, the Paraklesis, as well as the Holy Mysteries.
- Attendance at daily communal prayer (at Basil House).
  - Daily Vespers and Matins are celebrated at the house if not scheduled at the parish.
- at least 1/2 hour of silent meditation a day. (The specifics of this will be arranged by one’s spiritual father.)
- Frequent reception of the Mystery of Penance.
- Spiritual Direction (at least once a month) and a resulting personal prayer rule.

(Any exceptions to the above norms must be made in conversation with the house father.)

### **The Intellectual Pillar**

*“He who devoutly strives to attain wisdom and is on his guard against the invisible powers, should pray that both natural discrimination - whose light is but limited - and the illuminating grace of the Spirit abide in him. The first by means of practice trains the flesh in virtue, the second illuminates the intellect so that it chooses above all else companionship with wisdom; and through wisdom it destroys the strongholds of evil and pulls down 'all the self-esteem that exalts itself against the knowledge of God' (II Cor. 10:5).” -Maximos the Confessor*

A man discerning the life of a priest is discerning a life of spiritual and intellectual integration. The human intellect that searches for God in what is comprehensible, works in union with the Spirit of God that reveals the incomprehensible. Together they lead the man to wisdom and union with God. Specifically, a man seeking fatherhood in the church must be a man of:

- Study; actively observing the order that God has created in the world.
- Attention; having “eyes to see and ears to hear” what God is revealing.
- Contemplation; taking the necessary time and energy to let new-found knowledge impact his life.
- Observation; having his finger on the pulse of the culture around him, and desirous to intellectually conquer, as much as is possible, the “great human questions.”
- Instruction; desiring to share what he has learned with his flock.

Members of Basil House *pursue wisdom* through:

- The reading of, and discussion about:
  - The Holy Scriptures
  - The Philokalia
  - The books on the “Eparchy of Eparchy of Phoenix Recommended Readings List for Men Discerning Major Orders.”
- Use of the Basil House Library, Libraries at Holy Protection Church and the Fort Collins Outreach, and the extensive Cardinal Stafford Theological Library one block from the House.
- Opportunities to teach Mystagogy and Catechesis at the parish and outreach.

(Any exceptions to the above norms must be made in conversation with the house father.)

### **The Pastoral Pillar**

*“Whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” -Matthew 20:26-28*

A Christian man desires above all to be like Christ. He cannot avoid then, a life of service since service is at the heart of the person of Jesus Christ. He desires to be “great” by serving others. He knows that by emptying himself, he is, through Christ, building up the entire Body of Christ. He seeks after the purest and most sincere charity that can only be accomplished through real union (Theosis) with the One who sacrificed everything.

Specifically, a man seeking Christ-like service must be a man of:

- Kenosis (Self-Emptying); appreciating self-denial as the first step towards Communion with God and others.
- Engagement; listening to, and processing, the concerns of the people he serves.
- Self-Evaluation; checking his own motivations to make sure his ministry is truly effective, and not merely self-serving.
- Diakonia (Service); seeing himself as a essential part of Christ’s service to humanity.
- Priesthood; mediating the Love of God at the “intersection of God’s Word and human experience.” (PPF 5th Edition 239)
- Discipleship; always willing to learn and grow in his ministry.
- Variety; comfortable serving in a variety of capacities, especially as a minister to the hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked and imprisoned (Matthew 25).
- Boundaries; Having a support system separate from his ministerial subjects so that he can serve without needing affirmation in return.
- Interdependence; able to receive charity from others with humility and gratitude.
- Gratitude; realizing and appreciative of the charity he has received from God and others.
- Submission; willing and able to hand off care of a soul’s needs to others more qualified when this would benefit them.
- Stewardship; putting the entirety of his skills and talents at the service of the Body of Christ.

Members of the Basil House pursue *Christ-like charity* through:

- Full participation in the “Mercy Ministry” activities at Holy Protection.
- Leadership roles in the parish and its ministries.

(Any exceptions to the above norms must be made in conversation with the house father.)

### **General Guidelines**

Members of Basil House commit to six month terms of residency. Discussions with the House Father during the fifth month of the term determine continuation in the program.

Space for material possessions is very limited. Residents are expected to refrain from letting their possessions becoming a burden to the others.

Members are expected to pay \$100.00 a month to Holy Protection Church for rectory rent.  
Members are expected to pay \$100.00 a month to Basil House for formation activities (including one lunch and dinner every week, small stipend for outside presenters etc.)  
Cost to members will be reevaluated periodically.

The House Father, in consultation with the Eparchial bishop, may dismiss a member from the program at any time.

### **Application Guidelines/Requirements:**

Applications to participation in Basil House will include the following:

- A document including applicant’s:
  - Full name and contact information (address, phone number, email address).
  - Date of birth (must be between 18 and 35).
  - Ritual church (Roman Catholic, Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic etc).
  - Parish
  - Academic degrees acquired.
- Written/emailed recommendations from applicants pastor and spiritual director (only one letter is required if these are the same person), and one family member or long-time friend. Recommendations should be sent from the recommender to House Father’s address or email address (see below).
- Contact with House Father regarding a personal interview.
- Evidence of compliance with the Eparchy of Phoenix Safe Environment Program.
- Hard copy evidence of Health Insurance.
- Proof of reception of the Holy Mysteries of Initiation (or at least evidence of participation in the Catechumenate.)

### **Basil House Contact Information**

Basil House  
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