



# What is the Vision of the Basilica Parish?

The very first lesson of the Baltimore Catechism is titled, “On the End of Man.” In order to be a good Catholic, isn’t it interesting that the catechism starts with our end or our goal—which, by the way is heaven! For many, starting with the end is counter intuitive. They want to start with the “beginning.” But if we don’t know where we are going, how can ever get there let alone know what our purpose is in life?

**What is our goal or our “end” here at the Basilica? Where are we headed? And how are we equipped to get there?**

Our goal at the Basilica comes from Christ. When a scholar of the law approached Jesus and asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life,” Jesus responded by saying: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27).

In other words, Jesus clearly defined our goal as heaven/eternal life. And the way (the only way!) to get there is to love God with everything we have and then to love neighbor.

## **Step 1: Love God**

To love God we have to attend Mass every Sunday with devotion and reverence. We have to regularly confess our sins in the sacrament of reconciliation. And we have to devote time—real time—to prayer. It is in prayer that we become friends with God. It’s in prayer that we learn to fall in love with God. And it is in prayer that we learn to hear His voice.

The highest form of prayer is the Mass. We learn to hear God’s voice in the readings, in the prayers of the Mass and in the homily. But what happens when Mass is over? How do we hear God’s voice throughout the week?

Said simply and bluntly: **Eucharistic Adoration.**

For two thousand years, Catholics have prayed before the consecrated Host outside of the Mass to spend time (to commune with) God. The Eucharist is Jesus. Jesus is God. Therefore, the Eucharist is God.



**Eucharistic adoration gives us direct access to God—and His love—at all times.**

Pope St. John Paul II said this about Eucharistic adoration, "The Church and the world have great need of Eucharistic adoration. Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of love. Let us be generous with our time in going to meet Him in adoration and contemplation full of faith. And let us be ready to make reparation for the great faults and crimes of the world. May our adoration never cease." (Dominicae Cenaе: Letter to Priests, Holy Thursday, 1980)

As our saintly pope said, the Eucharist is the sacrament of God's love. And it is access to God's love that we need most of all in Baltimore. Our churches were meant to be places where people can enter and encounter God and experience His love—all the time! God's love does not "close" just because it gets dark outside. We don't think the Basilica should ever close!

God-willing, the Basilica will become a place of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration in May 2021—so that at any time (day or night) people can come be with Jesus and experience His undying love in the Eucharist.

To do this, we will have to make some improvements to our small adoration chapel in the Undercroft. The Basilica staff will have to bolster up its security—which includes hiring a guard for the night/early morning hours. And we will have to find about 400 people to commit to come and adore Jesus in the Eucharist throughout the week—as you need at least 2 people per hour to have Eucharistic Adoration.

Our Rector and our lay leaders will be inviting priests, deacons, religious and laity from all over the Baltimore area to come pray at the Basilica. This historic church is the heart of the City and of the Archdiocese. Think about how powerful it will be when our gates are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week! Think about what will happen when Jesus is radically available to Baltimore...

Marriages will be strengthened. Vocations to the priesthood and religious life will increase. Hearts will be converted. People who are not Catholic will become Catholic. Crime in the city will decrease.

When you bring Jesus—who is Love—into a place, that place gets better. Period. Love always makes us better! It is in adoration that we learn to love from the source of love—as Saint Pope Saint John Paul II explains so beautifully:



"Our communal worship at mass must go together with our personal worship of Jesus in Eucharistic adoration in order that our love may be complete." (Redeemer of Man).

**So where are we headed at the Basilica? We are working to become a place of perpetual Eucharistic Adoration! We are working on becoming a center of Divine Love—open to all people of good will.**

### **Step 2: Love Neighbor**

Once you experience the love of God firsthand at the Mass and in Adoration, that love has to spill over to our neighbor. And this leads to the second major effort we are working on at the Basilica: **Source of All Hope Mission**.

**Source of All Hope Mission** was created to: 1) Form millennials into disciples of Jesus Christ; 2) To have those millennial missionaries bring the love of God to the poor, the addicted, the mentally ill and the homeless of Baltimore. These people are our neighbors!

Let's break those two components down for a minute.

1. **Form millennials into disciples**: The Church has long bemoaned the fact that we do not see millennials in the pews at Mass. Source of All Hope is a missionary program, created at the Basilica, to form millennials into disciples—through evangelization, catechesis, communal living and prayer.

As of right now, we can accept up to four men and four women to come live at/near the Basilica for an entire year. The men live in the old convent on the Basilica grounds. And the women live in an apartment on Charles Street. During this missionary year, these young men and women will not work a job or go to school. They will simply be formed in the love of God—just like the first apostles were. They will go to daily Mass, pray for an hour in front of the Eucharist each evening, attend weekly talks on the faith, participate in parish activities, go to spiritual direction every month, go to confession every week, etc. In other words, they will experience the love of God in their lives in a very deep and profound way.

2. **Empower the Millennial Missionaries to share the love of God with the homeless of Baltimore**: Once the missionaries have experienced the love of God in the Mass and personal



prayer (especially adoration), they will take that love to the streets of Baltimore and share it with the homeless, the addicted and the mentally ill. They will form friendships with our less fortunate neighbors. They will serve them, accompany them and love them—all in the name of the Catholic Church...all in the name of God. They will literally serve as missionaries in Baltimore City. Gone are the days when you have to go to a faraway land to be missionaries. Baltimore is mission territory. We need missionaries here!

What fruit will be borne from this missionary program?

1. Our millennial missionaries will attract other millennials to come to the Basilica and to go deeper in their faith.
2. The mission work will also provide **Basilica parishioners of all ages** with a way to engage our neighbors by hitting the streets with the missionaries, making sandwiches for their meal ministry, donating money to this amazing work, and committing to praying for their success.

To date, Source of All Hope has been an amazingly successful initiative. Right now we have two male and two female missionaries. And very soon we will add to those numbers.

Said simply: Source of All Hope Mission is one tangible way in which the Basilica is loving our neighbor— both the millennial generation and the homeless population of Baltimore. And we want to continue to build up this dynamic program.

While forming millennials is important work, how is the Basilica empowering its current non-millennial parishioners to become true disciple of Christ?

### **Knowledge is Power**

Angelus Virata, our Director of Evangelization, is working with the Rector to create a “formation tract” so that all Basilica parishioners can constantly learn and grow in the faith. We cannot love someone we do not know. So part of learning how to love involves, well, “learning.” Think of it this way: you cannot fall in love with your spouse until you know him/her—well. The same is true about God and His Bride—the Catholic Church. The main reason people don’t love God and the Church is because they do not know them. Without knowledge, no one is equipped to love.

Beginning this Fall, there will be many avenues for parishioners to grow in knowledge of our Loving God and Church. Here is what we will be offering to equip you to become Catholics-on-fire-for-God:



1. **RCIA or “Becoming Catholic”:** This program will meet weekly beginning in September and will introduce everyone to God, his creation (the pinnacle of which is man and woman), sin and the moral life, the Catholic Church and her sacraments and teachings. “Becoming Catholic” is open to anyone who is not Catholic and wishes to become so. It is also open to those who were baptized Catholic but have not practiced the faith or received Holy Communion and Confirmation.
2. **Discovering Christ:** This is a 2-month introduction to Jesus Christ and His radical love for you! This “course” is meant to equip you to have a deep and intimate relationship with God—at the level of the heart. It will also help create and sustain friendships between you and other people in the parish—so that you never have to walk the path to heaven alone. You will be placed into a group with about 10 other parishioners. And you will remain in that same group for the entire course. This is a pre-requisite course for anyone who wishes to be a leader in the Basilica parish. It is open to all.
3. **Catechism with Fr. James:** Beginning in September, Fr. James, our Rector, will offer a weekly Catechism class after the 10:45AM Mass. Over the course of about 30 weeks, he will systematically take you through the Catholic faith—from our “end,” to knowing who God as He has revealed Himself, to learning about creation, man/woman, sin, the Incarnation and Redemption, the sacraments, the 10 Commandments and the rich prayer tradition entrusted to the Catholic Church. This class will be open to all adult parishioners.
4. **Small-Groups:** Angelus, our Director of Evangelization, has and will continue to create many small-group opportunities for Basilica parishioners who desire to learn and walk together in the faith. These small communities of believers will have the opportunity to go deeper in topics such as: prayer, the Blessed Mother, the Eucharist, and many other important Catholic subjects. The idea is to simultaneously grow in friendship with God and with the members of your small group or community. This is open to all adult parishioners.
5. **P3 Baltimore:** This is a weekly gathering of young adults (21-35). P3 stands for “prayer, penance and pub.” Every Thursday, young adults (student and professionals) meet in the Undercroft of the Basilica for Adoration, a talk that is specifically written for them by Basilica clergy, confession and benediction. Then the group heads over to Mick O’Shea’s Pub for free appetizers and fellowship. P3 is open to all young adults from 21 to 35.
6. **Men’s Group:** Fr. James, Deacon Bob and Deacon Sean are currently working together to form a men's group that will meet twice a month—to provide men with the skills needed to be holy Catholic gentlemen. This group is still in the works. Stay tuned for more information. But this group will be open this Fall to all men.
7. **Lenten Soup Supper Series:** Each Lent Angelus runs a 6-week series to help all parishioners grow in the faith. Past topics have included “how to discern your vocation,” and “the Eucharist.” Each year the topic will change. This Lenten series will help you grow in knowledge and in love with our Savior. This is open to all parishioners.
8. **Basilica Speaker Series:** Several times a year, the Basilica invites the best Catholic speakers in the world to come to the Basilica to impart their knowledge and love of God to us. Past speakers have



included: George Weigel, Fr. Charles Connor, Janet Smith, Matt Fradd, John Pridmore, Bishop Barron, Fr. Chris Alar MIC, and many others. This series is meant to expose Basilica parishioners and visitors from all over the state to the truth, goodness and beauty of our Catholic faith. These talks are open to all adults of good will.

All of these “courses” are meant to lead us to Jesus Christ. So the “goal” of all of these talks, classes and courses is to encourage you to sign up for an hour (or more) of Eucharistic Adoration every week. Once we offer Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration beginning in May 2021, this will be the backbone of our parish life. It is in the silence of prayer before our humble God that our formation really begins. We are empowered, most of all, by God Himself.

So...

These are the “ways” in which the Basilica will equip and empower you to love God and neighbor. Will everything be perfect right away? No. But we will not let perfection get in the way of seeking to grow in knowledge and love of God. Sometimes we won’t hit the mark. That’s ok. We will change and try again. God will never get upset if we fail. He only gets upset if we never try.

Again, our goal here at the Basilica is heaven. Everything we do is aimed to love God and neighbor—so as to inherit eternal life. It’s not “our vision.” It is the Lord’s vision.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. James Boric, Rector  
Deacon Bob Shephard  
Deacon Sean Keller  
Ana Farias, Pastoral Council President  
Celena Hoey, Pastoral Council Vice President  
Leonor Castel-Branco, Pastoral Council Secretary  
Stuart Pope, Pastoral Council  
Ed and Lynn Muhler, Pastoral Council  
Claudia Zohorsky, Pastoral Council  
Lee Donelson, Basilica CFO  
Angelus Virata, Basilica Director of Evangelization  
Maura Belton, Basilica Office Manager  
Sam Rowe, Basilica Director of Music  
Mark Marozza, Basilica Sacristan