



# SS. PETER AND PAUL ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

*"All Things Are Possible to Him Who Believes" (Mark 9:23)*

### SUNDAY, APRIL 5TH, 2026

## PALM SUNDAY ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST INTO JERUSALEM

**\*\*Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom\*\***  
**(Search for the text of the Liturgy in the  
Service Book in the Pews)**

The Kingdom of God is a kingdom of peace, love, joy, meekness, and other virtues. We shall not be admitted into it with traits directly contrary to these. We must master ourselves, grieve over the rottenness of our souls and, like the leper, beg the Lord to heal and cleanse us. Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you (Matt 7:7). What shall be opened unto you? The doors of repentance, tears and tenderness of heart. This will give birth to peace and salvation. It will –truly it will!

*Elder Nikon Vorobiev of Russia*

**Metropolitan SABA**  
Primate of the Antiochian  
Archdiocese

#### PRIEST

Rev. Fr Luke Toumi  
frluke@peterpaulpotomac.org  
(301) 765-3400 office  
(610) 844-2583 cell

#### DEACON

Dn. Christian Manasseh  
DnChristian@peterpaulpotomac.org

#### PASTORAL ASSISTANT

Steven Roberts  
Steven.Roberts@peterpaulpotomac.org

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#### CHURCH OFFICE MANAGER

Nidale El Achkar  
office@peterpaulpotomac.org  
(301) 765-3400 ext. 0  
WhatsApp 301-755-0320

**Great Vespers:** Saturday 6:00 pm  
*Check the Calendar  
for possible cancellation or changes*  
**Matins:** Sundays 9:20am  
**Divine Liturgy:** Sundays 10:30am  
**Confessions:** By appointment

#### CHOIR DIRECTOR

Kristopher Reese  
choir@peterpaulpotomac.org

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Led by Amjad Khalil

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Sam Khalil

#### ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

Svitlana Sweat

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Samia Zolnerowich  
Jennifer Montgomery  
SundaySchool@peterpaulpotomac.org

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Antiochian Women

Please note that we livestream our services on the Church's YouTube channel

@SaintsPeterPaulAntiochian

We welcome all our guests worshipping with us at the Divine Liturgy. Please let our ushers know that you are visiting with us today. We would love to stay in touch!

Please know that we take Holy Communion very seriously and is offered to Orthodox Christians, **after** preparing themselves through prayers, fasting, & confession. **Non-Orthodox** visitors are welcome to receive blessed bread at the end of the Divine Liturgy & share food with us at coffee hour. The reason is simple following the advice of Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11: 27-31:

*"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning*

## THE SYNAXARION (Plain Reading)

On this day in the Holy Orthodox Church, the Sunday of Palms, we celebrate the radiant and glorious festival of the Entrance of our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem.

### *Verses*

*Riding a colt, He that with a word stretched out Heaven,  
Seeketh to loose mortals from brutish want of reason.*

Jesus came to Bethany on the Sunday falling before the six days of the Mosaic Passover. On the following day He sent two of His Disciples, who brought Him a donkey on which He sat to enter the city. And when the great multitude heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they immediately took palm branches in their hands and went out to meet Him. All cried, "Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord, King of Israel!" The branches of palm trees were a symbol of Christ's victory over Satan and Death. And the meaning of "Hosanna" is, "We pray Thee, save." The donkey's colt, which was still an untamed animal, and impure according to the law, as well as Christ's sitting thereon, symbolize the former savagery and impurity of the Gentiles; and their subsequent taming and obedience to the holy law of the Gospel.

By Thine ineffable compassion, O Christ our God, make us victors over our deceitful passions, and deem us worthy to behold Thy brilliant victory over death and Thy radiant and lifebringing Resurrection, and have mercy on us. Amen.

### THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF PALM SUNDAY

Blessed is He Who cometh in the Name of the Lord: God is the Lord and hath appeared unto us. Save us, O Son of God, Who didst sit upon the foal of an ass, who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

### APOLYTIKION OF LAZARUS SATURDAY IN TONE ONE

In confirming the common Resurrection, O Christ God, Thou didst raise up Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion. Wherefore, we also, like the children, bearing the symbols of victory, cry to Thee, the Vanquisher of death: Hosanna in the highest; blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.

### APOLYTIKION OF PALM SUNDAY IN TONE FOUR

As by baptism we were buried with Thee, O Christ our God, so by Thy Resurrection we were deemed worthy of immortal life; and praising Thee, we cry: Hosanna in the highest; blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.

### APOLYTIKION OF SS. PETER AND PAUL IN TONE FOUR

O foremost in the ranks of Apostles, and teachers of the world, Peter and Paul, intercede with the Master of all to grant peace unto the world, and to our souls the Great Mercy.

### KONTAKION OF PALM SUNDAY IN TONE SIX

Being borne upon a throne in Heaven, and upon a colt on the earth, O Christ God, Thou didst accept the praise of the angels and the laudation of the children as they cried to Thee: Blessed art Thou Who comest to recall Adam.

**For the Health of these Parishioners**

Mike & Dorothy Marge	Victor & Family	Hanneh Daoud
Michael Shihadi	Ibrahim Saah	Vilma Bellone
Nadim Zarour	Michael Amouri	Jennifer Brown & Family
Ann Marie Moses	Asma Ayoub	Nour & Anastasia
Mary & Nada Ishak	Yousef & Ghada	Abdallah, Christiane & Family
Isabel Threddeh	Zakieh & family	Mary Christakis & Family
Shakeh Kerjilian & Family	Hind, Habib & Family	Margo, Sam & Family
Frank & Barbara Ellis	Paul Misleh	Barbara Zamer & Family
Brian, Caroline & Family	Fadia, Rich & Family	Edward & Eleanor Husson
Mary Sahouri & Family	Allison Ayoub	Elizabeth Albinger & Family
Saydeh Shaheen	Nico Michels	John & Bette Adam
Jesse Daumit	Heidi Saba & family	Antoinette Najmeh & Family
Nancy Dahir & Family	Michele Forzley	Leila Elaraj & Family

**DEPARTED**

Michael Elaraj  
 Stacey Franetzki  
 Naimeh Fawzi Rafidi  
 Bill Ezzy  
 Joseph Charley  
 Najat Kheiralla Kehdy

**Special Prayer this Week for**

Tanya	Jennifer Buchko
Garrett Ayoub	Kaston Ayoub
Mona Ayoub & Family	Habib, Aline & family

*To offer Holy Bread or host Coffee Hour, please scan the **Multilink QR Code** on the next page.*

## Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

Saturday, May 2nd, **OCMC Spring Gathering** @ St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church

Saturday, May 9th, **Antiochian Women's 17th Annual Luncheon & Fashion Show**

**LENT SCHEDULE OF SERVICES IS AVAILABLE IN THE NARTHEX AND ON THE CHURCH CALENDAR... Mark your calendar and come join us!**

## LITURGICAL TEXTS

Scan the QR Code To Follow Along the Service

Got a Question about **Orthodox Christianity** or Our Faith & Worship

Join Us every Sunday **in the social hall** after the Divine Liturgy for a Catechism Class

## Join the Order of St Ignatius

Scan the QR Code To Submit your interest in the Order

## St. Raphael's Table First Saturday of the Month

Preparing and distributing meals and toiletries to our neighbors in need.

Scan the QR Code To Participate

## Forever Young!

First Friday of the Month

Scan the QR Code To Register

## Prayer Request

For Living and/or Departed

Scan the QR Code To Request a Prayer

## Pursuing Christ as a Community Bible Study (8:30 PM/ZOOM)

April 21

May 5, 19  
June 2, 16

## Men's Bible Study

In person and over Zoom

**EVERY FRIDAY  
8:15-9:45 PM**

Scan the Multilink QR Code To RSVP

## FOCUS North America

*Love Made Visible*

Make a special Lenten gift today!

Scan the Multilink QR Code To Donate

## OCMC Missions Dinner

Saturday, May 2, 2026 (6-8:30 pm)

4:00 pm: Vespers

5:00 pm: Social

St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church

3149 Glen Carlyn Rd, Falls Church, VA 22041

Scan the Multilink QR Code To RSVP (By April 18)

## NOTICE

The Main Hall  
Will Remain Closed Until After  
the Divine Liturgy Has Ended

*Thank You in Advance  
For Your Understanding!*

## Bakeless Bake Sale

## Endowment Fund For Our Beloved Widowed Clergy-Wives

Scan the Multilink QR Code To Donate

## Naach Decoration

Submit the names of your loved ones to be commemorated during the Divine Liturgy on Great Saturday morning and when preparing the gifts for Paschal Divine Liturgy.

**You Can Also Choose to**

Make a Donation Towards the Naach Decoration

Scan the Multilink QR Code To Submit the Names & Make a Donation

## Parenting Toward the Kingdom Project

Thursdays at 8 PM Via Zoom

April 16

May 14

June 11

Scan the Multilink QR Code To Participate

## 17th Annual Luncheon & Fashion Show

May 9 (11:30 am - 2:30 pm)

Westwood Country Club

Scan the Multilink QR Code To RSVP

## April Charity Drive

**Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese - Lebanon Relief**

Donations will be used to help the severe humanitarian crisis in the Archdioceses of Mount Lebanon and Zahle.

Archbishop Saba is asking every parish, mission, family, and individual to prayerfully consider making a financial offering to support these urgent relief efforts.

Scan the QR Code  
For Online Donations

## MULTILINK QR CODE

For your online donations, registration for events, and participation in activities

- 1- Use **your phone's camera** to scan the QR code
- 2- Click on the Appropriate Link



## **THE EPISTLE**

*Blessed is He Who cometh in the Name of the Lord.*

*O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever.*

### **The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians. (4:4-9)**

Brethren, rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice! Let your forbearance be known to all people. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think about these things. The things which you both learned and received, and heard and saw in me, these things do; and the God of peace will be with you.

## **THE GOSPEL**

### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (12:1-18)**

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus who had died was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at table with Him. Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. But Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, one of His Disciples (he who was to betray Jesus), said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not because he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the moneybox he used to take what was put into it. Jesus said, "Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of My burial. The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me." When the great crowd of the Jews learned that He was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus also to death, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus. The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is He Who cometh in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass's colt!" His Disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of Him and had been done to Him. The crowd that had been with Jesus when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet Jesus was that they heard He had done this sign.

# **Pastoral Clarifications on the Holy Sacrament of Anointing**

*By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

The Sacrament of Holy Unction, or the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, is a liturgical sacrament celebrated through a special service of prayer over oil, which is then used to anoint the sick "for the healing of soul and body," as the service itself states. This sacrament may be celebrated either in homes or in churches. Unfortunately, in many places this practice has been forgotten, as if it had fallen out of use.

The Holy Church celebrates this sacrament in the days preceding the great feasts — such as the Nativity, Theophany, Pascha, and others — as a preparation for receiving the feast and for preparing the faithful who will approach Holy Communion.

## **Why is This Sacrament Celebrated Communally in Church before the Feasts?**

It is celebrated in order to prepare spiritually for the feast and to ready the faithful to partake of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Holy Communion requires preparation, readiness, and repentance.

Another reason for celebrating this sacrament before the feasts is the ancient custom whereby the faithful would approach Holy Communion only a few times during the year. Since these occasions were often associated with the great feasts, the Holy Church developed the practice of celebrating this sacrament for all the faithful in the church, preparing and blessing them beforehand.

## **When Did This Service Begin?**

The Epistle of Saint James in the New Testament gives us this instruction:

"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." (James 5:14)

A prayer for the blessing of oil is also mentioned in the Apostolic Constitutions, a work dating back to the third century:

"O Lord our God, sanctify this oil and grant the gift of sanctification to those who distribute it and to those who receive it. With it kings, priests, and prophets were anointed of old. Grant that we also, being anointed with it, may receive health of soul and body."

## **Why is the Service Celebrated on Holy Wednesday Evening?**

This service entered the Antiochian and Greek liturgical traditions on Holy Wednesday during the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries.

If we read the text of the service, we notice that it speaks of both bodily and spiritual healing and therefore places great emphasis on repentance, a word that appears many times throughout the prayers. The service of Holy Unction is therefore, above all, a service of repentance.

For this reason, the service concludes with the Gospel Book being placed over the heads of the faithful while they bow down, and the priest reads the prayer of absolution for sins—the same prayer that is normally read over the penitent after the completion of the Sacrament of Confession.

In the Antiochian tradition, this sacrament is celebrated annually on Holy Wednesday because many of the faithful receive Holy Communion on Holy Thursday morning, when we commemorate the institution of the Mystical Supper.

Some parishes celebrate the Divine Liturgy on that day very early—before sunrise—so that workers and students may be able to attend. This is a practice that I encourage and leave to the pastoral discretion of the priests of the Archdiocese. Celebrating the Liturgy early is a great blessing and gives all the faithful the opportunity to participate and to approach the Holy Chalice.

When I began this practice in my parish as a priest, with the blessing of the metropolitan—starting Orthros and the Divine Liturgy at four o'clock in the morning on Holy Thursday—many people initially objected. Yet when I entered the church at 3:30 a.m. to prepare the Holy Gifts before the service began, I was surprised to find the church already full, with people seated and others standing because no seats remained!

### **May the Faithful Take Some of the Blessed Oil (Holy Unction) from this Service to Anoint Themselves?**

It is important to understand that the distinction between clergy and laity increased after the thirteenth century and became more pronounced after the fall of Constantinople, partly out of concern that sacred things might fall into the hands of non-Christians. Over time, this distinction became exaggerated to the point that it obscured the royal priesthood that belongs to every baptized Christian.

It should also be remembered that the Church sometimes corrects improper practices by introducing a temporary restriction in the opposite direction. At times this corrective measure may appear contrary to the original tradition, but its purpose is to correct an abuse that has developed over time.

For example, when dozens of small containers filled with oil were lined up for distribution to the faithful, some people — whether out of ignorance or lack of reverence — mishandled the holy oil. For this reason, certain pastoral directives were issued at times forbidding the distribution of containers of holy oil to the faithful, in order to emphasize the sacredness of this holy sacrament and to prevent disorder, negligence, and irreverence.

However, when such directives remain in place for many years, people begin to regard them as a "sacred tradition." As a result, the faithful may be deprived of the blessing of the holy oil in times of need—such as illness or various hardships.

In our time, it is often very difficult to call a priest to celebrate the full sacrament in homes (which requires at least an hour and a half) whenever someone becomes ill or enters the hospital. In addition, the number of priests is often insufficient to provide this service in every situation.

At the same time, the lived Orthodox tradition knows the practice of the faithful receiving blessed oil from churches or monasteries and anointing themselves with it as a blessing in times of illness, trials, or need.

### **What Should Be Done Today?**

The question therefore arises: Should we forbid the faithful from keeping holy oil in their homes, or should we give it to those who request it? And how should it be preserved?

First, we must distinguish between anointing with blessed oil and celebrating the sacrament itself, which may only be performed by a priest. Keeping the holy oil and using it does not mean that we have celebrated the sacrament; rather, we have received a blessing through the anointing.

For this reason, I advise priests to allow the faithful to take the oil after a brief pastoral explanation guiding them on how to use it and preserve it reverently in the home. Orthodox tradition recognizes its use particularly in times of illness or pain, as well as during periods of trial, sorrow, or distress. The faithful should first say a prayer and then anoint their foreheads or the place of pain with the holy oil, making the sign of the Cross.

### **How Should it Be Kept?**

The oil should be kept in the place dedicated to God in the home—the prayer corner, as it is often called in the Orthodox household—where the icons of Christ, the Theotokos, and the patron saints of the family are placed along with the vigil lamp. (I hope there is a prayer corner in every home.)

May God grant that these holy occasions return to you again and again with everlasting blessings.



**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE  
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Palm Sunday, April 5, 2026

Beloved hierarchs, reverend clergy, esteemed faithful in Christ,

Christ is in our midst! As we enter the solemn and life-giving days of Holy Week, our hearts turn with love and filial devotion to our Mother Church of Antioch and to our Father in Christ, His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X. Each Palm Sunday, the Archdiocese takes up a special collection to support the Patriarchate in its sacred witness. This year, more than ever, your generosity is indispensable.

Our Mother Church continues to endure profound hardship. The ongoing war and strife throughout the Middle East have inflicted deep wounds upon the faithful, the clergy, and the parishes that have stood for centuries as living testimonies of the Gospel. Violence and economic instability have placed unbearable weight on families already struggling to survive. Many of our brothers and sisters face daily uncertainty, and entire communities that once flourished are now diminished.

Yet, the Patriarchate remains steadfast in its mission. With limited means, it tirelessly provides food, housing assistance, medical care, education, pastoral support, and the simple but essential reassurance that the Church has not abandoned her children. His Beatitude and those who labor beside him do all they can to help the faithful who remain, so that their lives may be stable, dignified, and rooted in hope and so that our Christian presence and witness remain steadfast.

For this reason, I ask each of you to give generously to the Palm Sunday collection in your churches for the Patriarchate. Your offering — no matter its size — becomes an act of solidarity, a gesture of compassion, and a tangible expression of love toward those who endure suffering with remarkable faith. Together, we help sustain our brothers and sisters and strengthen the apostolic mission entrusted to the Church of Antioch.

May the Lord Who entered Jerusalem in humility and love, grant you a solemn Holy Week and a joyous and grace-filled Feast of the Resurrection.

With paternal love in Christ,

+SABA

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America