



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)

Metropolitan SABA
Primate of the Antiochian
Archdiocese

PRIEST

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

DEACONS

Dn. Christian Manasseh
DnChristian@peterpaulpotomac.org
Dn. Chris Abdelahad
Chris@peterpaulpotomac.org

COUNCIL

Chairperson

Ken Bailey

Vice Chairperson

Jamil Hermes

Treasurer

Scott George

Secretary

Ulisses Santamaria

Members

Ron Cook

Elizabeth El-Hage

Michael El-Hage

Wissam El Hage

Abraham Fannoney

Joe Gavin

Amjad Khalil

Richard Mahan

Vanessa Mourad

Nicholas Nahas

Alexa Tsintolas

Maria Zacharias

CHURCH SECRETARY

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

GIFT SHOP

Antiochian Women

SUNDAY, MAY 11TH, 2025

FOURTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC

HIEROMARTYR MOKIOS, PRIEST IN MACEDONIA; CYRIL AND METHODIOS, EQUALS-TO-THE-APOSTLES AND ENLIGHTENERS OF THE SLAVS

****Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom****

When you are praying alone, and your spirit is dejected, and you are wearied and oppressed by your loneliness, remember then, as always, that God the Trinity looks upon you with eyes brighter than the sun; also all the angels, your own Guardian Angel, and all the saints of God. Truly they do; for they are all one in God, and where God is, there are they also. Where the sun is, thither also are directed all its rays. Try to understand what this means. Always pray with a fervent heart; and t attain to this, never eat and drink excessively. Remember with Whom you are conversing. Men very often forget with Whom they are conversing during prayer, Who are the witnesses of their prayer. They forget that they are conversing with the Vigilant and the All-seeing God; that all the Heavenly Powers and the saints of God are listening to their converse.

- St. John of Kronstadt

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

CHOIR DIRECTOR

Kristopher Reese
choir@peterpaulpotomac.org

ASSISTANT CHOIR DIRECTORS

Marie Hyder
Mark Buchko

BYZANTINE CHOIR

Led by Amjad Khalil

USHERS

Jerry Audi
Michael El Araj
Abe Fannoney
Sam Khalil
Steve Simon

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Sam Khalil

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

Svitlana Sweat

CHURCH SCHOOL

Directors

Samia Zolnerowich
Jennifer Montgomery
SundaySchool@peterpaulpotomac.org

TEEN SOYO

& YOUNG ADULTS

Advisors:

Dn. Chris Abdelahad
Tia Saah
Lina Saah

President: Kiernan El-Hage

Vice President: Samuel Griffin

Secretary: George Manasseh

Treasurer: Dimy Kehdy

Social Media: George Boyle

KOGOK HALL RENTAL

Manager

George Rados

Sales Coordinator

Nidale El Achkar

CHARITIES COORDINATOR

Paula Massouh

ORDER of ST. IGNATIUS

Jumana Mislh

We welcome all our guests and visitors 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 Holy Communion 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 SYNAXARION

On May 11 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate Hieromartyr Mokios, priest in Macedonia; and Cyril and Methodios, equals-to-the-Apostles and enlighteners of the Slavs.

On this day, the fourth Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the Paralytic and, as is right, we celebrate the miracle wrought for him.

Verses

*The word of Christ was strength for the paralytic;
So that this word alone was the man's full healing.*

Jesus healed the Paralytic at the Sheep's Pool, located near the Sheep's Gate of Jerusalem, where people sacrificed their beasts and washed their insides. The pool had five sides, with a porch and arch on each. A number of people, afflicted with various diseases, passed through them, waiting at the water for an angel to come down and stir it. Once it moved, whoever stepped into the water first was instantly healed. One poor man, whose story is recounted in today's Gospel lection in the Divine Liturgy, waited 38 years for someone to lower him into the water, because he was unable to move into the water himself. However, the Savior merely commanded the man to get up and walk, and he was healed.

In Thine infinite mercy, O Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE THREE

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

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.

THE KONTAKION OF PASCHA IN TONE EIGHT

Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades, and didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women, Rejoice, and giving peace unto Thine Apostles, O Thou Who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

Commemorations

For the Health of these Parishioners

Samantha Carter	Joyce & Terri	Christo & Mary Christakis
Suad Shammass	Victor & Family	Hanneh Daoud
Mike & Dorothy Marge	Ibrahim Saah	Vilma Bellone
Michael Shihadi	Joanna Khoury	Sherrie Zachariah & Family
Nadim Zarour	Michael Amouri	Nour & Anastasia
Qustandi & Nahida Kaibni	Asma Ayoub	Abdallah, Christiane & Family
Juliana, Metody & Family	Yousef & Ghada	Elias, Taylor & Rami
Isabel Threded	Ghassan & Zakieh Jweied	Margo, Sam & Family
Shakeh Kerjilian & Family	Sylvia & Selma Habib	Barbara Zamer & Family
Frank & Barbara Ellis	Paul Misleh	Edward & Eleanor Husson
Brian, Caroline & Family	Fadia, Rich & Family	Elizabeth Albinger & Family
Steve, Jennifer & Family	Allison Ayoub	Saydeh Shaheen
Mary Sahouri & Family	Hind, Habib & Family	

DEPARTED

- Elias Cremesti
- Sadie Hier
- Frances Cox
- Ann Kalill
- Evelyn Hier
- Ann Kogok
- Katie & Evelyn Kogok
- May Fillah
- Leila Gerdak
- Amal Nassar
- Jamal Gerdak
- Najib Gerdak
- Michel Noufal
- Tony Gerdak
- Joey Noufal
- Henriette Gerdak
- Richard (Dick) Kogok
- Richard (Richie) Kogok

Special Prayer this Week for

Elizabeth Carroll	Lilly Cook	Milena Paskaleva & Family
Ziad, Leila Deeb & Family	Henry Gerdak & Family	James Isaac Jr. & Family

MEMORIAL

- Elias Cremesti (15 years)
- Leila Gerdak (1 year)

LITURGICAL TEXTS

Scan QR Code
To Follow Along
the Service



**Coffee Hour
Available Dates**

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| June 15 | July 20 |
| June 22 | July 27 |
| July 6 | August 3 |

Host Coffee Hour

Offer Holy Bread



Coffee Hour & Holy Bread are offered by the **Gerdak Family** in loving memory of **Leila Gerdak** for her one-year memorial.

If you want to offer Holy Bread or host Coffee Hour please use the QR Codes on the side to do so.

Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

August 11 - 15, *Summer Bible Camp for ages 4 to High School Graduates*

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*

Adult & Teen Volunteers Are Needed For The Summer Bible Camp

You can volunteer as little as half a day or as much as the full week!

Let Us Know Your Interests, Skills, & Talents

Examples are: Arts & Crafts, Music, Lives of the Saints, Holy Bread Making, Prayer Rope Making, Games, Sports, Outdoor Activities

For Volunteering or for More Information

Contact Michelle at (703) 937-7319 michelleboyle@yahoo.com

Graduates Recognition

Congratulations for
your recent achievement!

We want to celebrate
you, so please scan the
QR Code to fill out
the form!



Summer Bible Camp

AGES 4 - High School Graduates

August 11 - August 15
9:30 AM - 4:30 PM

**Deadline for
Registration
May 31**



May Charity Drive World Central Kitchen

WCK is first to the frontlines, providing fresh meals in response to humanitarian, climate, and community crises.

Food is essential to life every single day, all over the world—and it is more important than ever in a crisis. Not only is a thoughtful, freshly prepared meal one less thing someone has to worry about in the wake of a disaster, it is a reminder that you are not alone, someone is thinking about you, and someone cares. Food has the power to be the nourishment and hope we need to pick ourselves back up in the darkest times.

Scan the QR Code For Online Donations



1st & 3rd Tuesday

Bible Study
(8:30 pm/Zoom)



REGISTER HERE

Forever Young!

First Friday of the Month



REGISTER HERE

Join the Order of St Ignatius

Submit your
interest
in the Order here



Ss. Peter & Paul WhatsApp Community

Join a Variety of Chat Groups
And Receive Parish Announcements



Scan QR Code
To Join

St. Raphael's Table First Saturday of the Month

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

**To Participate
use this QR code**



Amazon Wishlist
for Toiletry Bags
is available here.

For online donations,
use **your phone's
camera** to scan this
code and follow the
link to our secure
donation portal.



THE EPISTLE

O chant unto our God, chant ye. Clap your hands, all ye nations.

The reading from the Acts of the Holy Apostles. (9:32-42)

In those days, as Peter went throughout all regions, he came down also to the saints who dwelt at Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who was bedridden for eight years and paralyzed. And Peter said to him: "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; arise and make your bed." And immediately he arose. And all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned back to the Lord. Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha (which means Gazelle). She was full of good works and of charitable deeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her, they placed her in an upper chamber. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him entreating him: "Come to us without delay!" So Peter arose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him into the upper chamber. All the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and other garments which Tabitha made while she was with them. But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body, he said: "Tabitha, arise!" And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up. Then he called the saints and widows and presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

THE GOSPEL

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (5:1-15)

At that time, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Bethesda, which has five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and troubled the water; whoever stepped in first, after the troubling of the water was healed of whatever disease he had. One man was there, who had been ill for 38 years. When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, it is not lawful for you to carry your pallet." But he answered them, "The man who healed me said to me, 'Take up your pallet, and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your pallet, and walk'?" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befalls you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus Who had healed him.

On the Interpretation of the Holy Bible, Part Two

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

The Spiritual Reading of the Holy Scriptures

There is a type of reading we call spiritual or personal, in which the believer reads the text of the Holy Scriptures in a meditative manner, reflecting the words upon his own life. Since "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16), we read the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God addressed to us personally. Believers do not approach the Bible as they would any other book. This is why the Church advises us to pray before reading, invoking the Holy Spirit to grant us the proper understanding that is beneficial for our souls.

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk (+1783) wrote: "If an earthly king, an emperor, were to write you a letter, would you not read it with joy? You have received a letter—not from an earthly emperor, but from the King of Heaven! Yet you often neglect this priceless gift, this treasure beyond measure."

He further explains that opening the Scriptures and reading them means entering into a personal, face-to-face conversation with the living God. He continues: "When you read the Gospel, Christ Himself is speaking to you. And as you read, you are praying and conversing with Him."

The late metropolitan of my home archdiocese, Youhanna of Latakia, used to say: "We should read the Bible with the same passion as a lover reads a love letter sent by his beloved."

St. Mark the Ascetic (5th–6th century) teaches that: "The one who is humble in his thoughts and engaged in spiritual work applies everything he reads in the Holy Scriptures to himself, not to his neighbor." We are spiritually nourished when we read the Bible in this way, applying what we read to ourselves. Thus, the key question is not merely, "What does this passage mean?" but rather, "What does it mean for me?"

St. Tikhon reaffirms this by saying: "Christ Himself is speaking to you." The Holy Scriptures are a direct and intimate conversation between the Savior and the soul—Christ addresses me, and my heart responds to Him.

In this type of reading, every story in the Bible becomes a part of my personal life journey. The fall of Adam mirrors my own falls and my refusal to live according to God's will. Adam and Eve are me. When God asks Adam, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9), He is asking me, and I must answer!

Similarly, when reading the story of Christ calming the storm (Mark 4:35-41), we can see it as a representation of our soul or the Church, being tossed by the waves of trials and tribulations—and Christ as our Savior and Deliverer.

At the Nativity of Christ, we do not merely reflect on His birth in a cave, but we ask ourselves: "*How is Christ born in me today?*" Likewise, we meditate on how we are crucified with Him and how we are raised with Him. When I read Christ's words: "*Give to him who asks of you*" (Matthew 5:42), I ask myself: "*Do I do this? How can I live out this command?*"

Elder Aemilianos of Simonopetra Monastery on Mount Athos taught that the proper way to read the Bible

is to allow God to speak to us through it. He distinguishes between:

- Reading for information or knowledge, which remains at a superficial level,
- And reading to acquire the true essence of Scripture—the Holy Spirit Himself.

He describes this spiritual knowledge as: *"Entering into the life of God and expanding within it; it is the descent of God to dwell among us."*

He advises: "Read the Scriptures, but do not forget your sins. Do not reduce the Bible to mere intellectual study, for when you do so, it ceases to be the Word of God and becomes merely a human text. The measure of your reading should be this: that it brings peace to your heart, union with God, love for your neighbor, and awareness of your own sinfulness, making you feel unworthy to stand before God."

When we read the Bible in this way, we are enriched by reflecting on those who came before us.

Take, for example, St. Symeon the New Theologian. In one meditation, he reads the Book of Exodus in a spiritual manner, seeing:

- Egypt as a symbol of the land of sin,
- Pharaoh as a representation of Satan,
- And Moses as the guide toward salvation.

He applies these biblical figures to his own spiritual journey and writes:

"What can I say about what I have seen in Egypt? He came down to me and found me, a poor and lowly slave, and said, 'Come, My child, and I will lead you to God.' But from the depths of my disbelief, I responded, 'What sign do You give me so that I may trust You? Can You truly deliver me from Egypt and snatch me from the grip of the tyrant Pharaoh?' I did what He commanded me. Yet Pharaoh held me tight, and his overseers forced me to labor in the mud and straw."

In another meditation, he transforms Gospel images into a personal prayer and dialogue with God: *"Tell me, O listener, what is the mustard seed (Matt. 13:31)? How do you imagine it? This seed is the grace of the Holy Spirit, and the garden is the heart of every person. There, a man plants the seed and hides it deep within himself, tending to it with care until it grows into a great tree, reaching toward the heavens."*

"Now is the time for work, and the future is the time for the crown. If you are wise, I will be for you in this world the hidden pearl, the grain of wheat, the mustard seed, and the leaven that transforms your dough. I will be for you water and a dewy breeze, a protection and all sustaining nourishment. If you acknowledge Me here, then there, you will possess Me, and I will be everything for you. But if you depart from this world without knowing My grace, you will find Me there as an unyielding Judge."

"O my Christ, O my God! Do not judge me! Do not condemn me, though I have dishonored You greatly. Accept me as the least of Your laborers... (Luke 15:19) Grant me to see You for all eternity!"

May the Lord grant us the grace to read His Word in this way, that it may lead us to salvation.

Church History - Fifth Century

The Robber Council

Unfortunately, not everyone was satisfied with the results of the Third Ecumenical Council and the Formulary of Peace. In particular, Saint -Cyril's more extreme followers resented the fact that he had not insisted on one particular phrase concerning Christ: the "one nature of the Word of God Incarnate." Saint Cyril occasionally had used this phrase, but he had never insisted upon it, perhaps realizing that the term "one nature" could imply that Christ does not have a full human nature. The more extreme Alexandrians, however, feared that by not using it, the Nestorian tendency to overemphasize Christ's two natures, and especially His humanity—to the point of giving it an independent existence (a personal center of being, or hypostasis)—which would make Jesus two different persons (the Son of God and the Son of Mary), would not be fully rejected.

An uneasy peace was maintained until Saint Cyril's death in 444. But he was succeeded as bishop of Alexandria by Dioscorus, another fiery Alexandrian, who wished to attain full recognition of the phrase "one nature of the Word of God Incarnate." His associate, Eutyches, even went so far as to say "Christ's humanity is different from ours."

With the support of Emperor Theodosius II, Dioscorus arranged a major council to be held in Ephesus in 449, which affirmed the extreme Alexandrian position that the divinity of Christ virtually eclipsed or even destroyed His humanity. Pope Saint Leo of Rome (r. 440–461) had sent to the council a doctrinal statement, called Leo's Tome, which strongly affirmed the ongoing reality of the two natures of Christ—one fully divine, and one fully human. But Dioscorus was so much in control of the council that Leo's Tome was not even allowed to be read there, and bishops suspected of Nestorian tendencies were deposed. When Leo heard later what had happened, he exclaimed that it was a "latrocinium," a Council of Robbers.

There was widespread resistance to this council, and yet it was the law for the Church and the Empire as long as Emperor Theodosius lived and did not change his mind. Providentially for the Orthodox, in July of the very next year (450), he fell from his horse and died. This brought his distinguished and extremely pious elder sister, Saint -Pulcheria, to the throne, along with her distinguished consort, a retired military general who would become Saint Marcian. This Pulcheria had been a champion of the Theotokos during the controversy with Nestorius; it was partly due to her efforts that popular devotion to the Theotokos increased in the first half of the fifth century.