

Welcome to

*Patronage of the Mother of God*

✠ CATHOLIC CHURCH ✠

BYZANTINE RITE

**Baltimore, Maryland**



Welcome to our Church! We are honored by your presence. Our Christian community is a congregation that traces its history to a group of families who came together in 1967 to establish a church — a community of prayer and faith. These founding families were predominantly descendants of Eastern European Christians who came to this country from the high Carpathian mountains at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. They, along with other descendants of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, established a parish for the glory of Jesus Christ and dedicated to Mary under the title of the Patronage (Protection) of the Mother of God. The Feast of the Patronage, celebrated on October 1, remembers the appearance of Mary in Constantinople in the 10th century, and the subsequent deliverance of that city from foreign invaders and destruction. As she held her “mantle” (omophorion) out then as a sign of protection for the city, in her icon she now holds it over us too.

## We are Byzantine Christians



Carpathian Christians, also known as Ruthenians or Rusyns, received the Gospel of Christ through the ministry of two brothers, Cyril and Methodius, whose spiritual background was established in the Great Church of Constantinople, known as Hagia Sophia. Hagia Sophia (Greek: Ἁγία Σοφία meaning Holy Wisdom) was the Cathedral church of the capital of the Byzantine Empire. Thus the spiritual heritage given to the Carpathian people and all the Slavs (from *Slava* meaning *Glory*) includes the liturgical practices and underlying theology and spirituality which came from the patrimony of the Christian Church of the Eastern Byzantine Empire. This heritage is shared among all the Christian peoples, regardless of ethnicity, who are related to the ancient Church of Constantinople. The Rusyn community, like others, interpreted and adapted these liturgical forms and made them their own.

After the fall of Byzantium to the Moslem Ottoman Turks, life among Byzantine Christians became difficult. When the armies of the Ottomans surged northward through the Balkans into Eastern Europe, they overran Hungary and approached the gates of Vienna. The peoples of the Carpathian region sought to preserve their freedom and identity, and allied themselves with the powers of Western Europe, primarily with the Austrian Emperor in Vienna, both militarily and ecclesiastically. Thus, the Carpathian community became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and, without surrendering their ancient ecclesiastical heritage, also entered into communion with the Church of Rome.

Coming to America, Carpatho-Rusyn Christians settled primarily in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Ohio, and, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Byzantine Church has grown across the whole of North America. Patronage Parish is part of the

Eparchy (Diocese) of Passaic, New Jersey, and the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Province of Pittsburgh. Our bishop is the Most Rev. Andrew Pataki, DD, JCL.

## Holy Images — Holy Spaces

In accordance with the Byzantine traditions, a screen separates the sanctuary (with the altar-table) from



the main body of the church building. The screen is covered with icons, which are stylized religious images. On either side of the main opening are two icons representing Christ the Teacher, and Mary, the Theotokos (Greek: Θεοτόκος meaning ‘God-bearer’). The other major icons represent St. Nicholas, the Patron of the Byzantine Church, and the Patronage of the Mother of God. The center gates (called the Royal Doors) depict the four evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). The icons on the Deacon Doors represent St. Lawrence (with the iron grill of his martyrdom) and St. Stephen (with the censer), the first deacon. Above the Royal Doors is the Mystical Supper and, finally, the Cross. The walls are covered with icons representing events from the life of Christ, His Church and His Saints.

Icons are like family portraits and they are put up in the church in the same way that photographs or paintings are displayed in our homes. Icons, however, have an additional dimension to them. The holy persons and events, as portrayed in the icon, “represent” or “make present again” the **reality** of the person or the event. Thus, icons are referred to as “windows” to the world of spiritual reality, and the

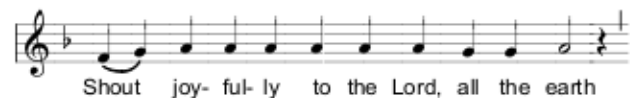
icons are shown the same respect that we would show to the person or persons represented. We, the faithful, are also icons – the living icons of the Church, the body of Christ, Who is the image (icon) of the Father (*Col 1:15*).

## Byzantine Worship

Byzantine Christians, like our ancient Christian and Jewish forebears, are people of the calendar. We mark special days with specific services and, with periods of fasting, prayer and anointings, we prepare for the major feast days that commemorate the events of salvation history. There is a rhythm and harmony to our life of worship.

Our central celebration is the Divine Liturgy (Mass) during which we proclaim the Kingdom of God here on earth and participate in His Mystical Supper. Byzantine prayer and spirituality is Trinitarian: during the liturgy we often give blessings in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Other celebrations are Vespers (evening prayer that begins the new day), Matins (morning prayer), the Divine Hours, and the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts during the Great Fast (Lent).

In keeping with the Byzantine tradition, all liturgical celebrations are sung without the use of any musical instrument accompaniment. Following a centuries old Carpathian tradition, we, both clergy and people — the entire congregation (assisted by the important ministry of the cantors) — “lift up our hearts” to God in predominantly sung worship.



## Theology and Sacraments

Holy Tradition is the ongoing life of the people of God. It is the life of the Church itself as it has been given over to us from the time of Christ and the apostles, and it is guided by the Holy Spirit. Holy Scripture is first and foremost Holy Tradition as written word.



We celebrate the presence of Christ in our lives through the SACRED MYSTERIES — THE SACRAMENTS. “That which was visible in our Redeemer now has passed into the Sacraments” (Pope St. Leo I). Through **Baptism** in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we *put on Christ* (*Gal 3:27*) and are *born of water and the Holy Spirit* (*Jn 3:5*). As a *royal priesthood* (*1Pe 2:9*) we are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit in **Chrismation**. Since Jesus tells us *he who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him* (*Jn 6:56*), we receive Him frequently in the **Holy Eucharist**. When we fail to live according to the image of God we sin; in confessing our sins, we receive **Reconciliation** with God and those around us. In **Crowning (Holy Matrimony)** a man and a woman are crowned with the grace and strength to grow together in love and build up the Church. Those called to serve as deacons, priests and bishops receive **Holy Orders** with the laying-on of hands. When we receive **Holy Anointing** with blessed oil the Church extends to us through prayer and human touch the healing ministry of Jesus.

Byzantine Catholicism is a way of life. We are a Church that celebrates the Eucharist and worships the Holy Trinity. As the Body of Christ (*1Cor 12:27*), we share the truth of our Faith, and proclaim the good-news of our Savior Jesus Christ to all, until He comes again in glory.

## Come join us!

Our community enjoys a rich and varied life. The parish encompasses people from many different backgrounds, not just those whose roots are in the Eastern Churches. **All are welcome to join our liturgical celebrations.** Come and learn about us. Come and learn with us about our wonderful Catholic Faith.

If you do not have a church home, or if your church is not a home, we invite you to consider making Patronage *your* spiritual home. We celebrate Divine Liturgy on Sunday at 9:15 a.m. followed by the School of Religion for children. Adult Education and other programs are also offered, along with many social activities. Sunday Divine Liturgy is also offered at two missions: St. Francis de Sales Church in Abingdon, MD (Sunday evening at 5:30 p.m., weekly); and the Chapel of St. Ann’s Church, Hagerstown, MD (Saturday evening, twice a month).

**LOCAL CONTACTS FOR MISSIONS IN:**  
**HARFORD COUNTY MD:** Theresa and Anthony Kotlar  
410-676-8509 or 410-734-6973  
**WASHINGTON COUNTY MD:** Joseph & Marie Repasi, 301-797-5847 or Helen Mondak, 301-791-6809

*Slava Isusu Christu! Slava vo v'iki!*

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!  
GLORY FOREVER!

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**Eparchy of Passaic**

BYZANTINE RITE

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