

The Archdiocese of Byblos & Botris (Mount Lebanon) prides itself with apostolic roots. The first bishop to preside over the archbishopric of Byblos was Saint Marc the Evangelist. And the first bishop on the archbishopric of Botris was Saint Silas (Silouan). Saint Peter set these two bishops during his journey, together with the apostles, from Jerusalem to Antioch after the martyrdom of Saint Stephen.



In the beginning these two dioceses were under the jurisdiction of the archdiocese of Tyre. The fourth Ecumenical Council (451 A.D.) confirmed this legal situation by freeing these two bishoprics from the dominance of the bishop of Beirut—who had subdued them to his jurisdiction and by declaring the legitimacy of Tyre's litigate.

The orthodox population in the area of the present archdiocese increased in number along the following centuries mainly due to migrations, persecutions, invasions and wars of different characters. Byzantine wars, Crusades, Mamluk invasions—all contributed in the constant demographic reshaping of Mount Lebanon's area—which now was officially subdued under the jurisdiction of Beirut and become known as the Archdiocese of Beirut and all Lebanon.

Starting from 1861, the number of the Orthodox commenced rising again in the province of Mount Lebanon due to the increased migration from Damascus after the wave of massacres that the Christians suffered in these areas (during which St. Joseph of Damascus was martyred). All these demographic modifications made the archdiocese of Beirut and all Lebanon vast and hard for pastoral management.

Some of the faithful of Beirut, who noticed the pastoral deficiency and the poor situation in the parishes of Mount Lebanon, founded the organization of St. Paul to help assisting these parishes. In 1889 this organization demanded, during their annual gathering, that the group of Mount Lebanon's villages should form a separate archdiocese. After the repose of metropolitan Gabriel (Shatila), Lebanon's orthodox wrote to the

Antiochian Holy Synod asking independence for their archdiocese. In November 1901, the Holy Synod decided to separate Mount Lebanon from Beirut, granted it independence and gave it the title: "The Archdiocese of Byblos & Botris (Mount Lebanon)". The archimandrite Paul (Abou Adal) was elected archbishop of the new archdiocese until his repose in the Lord in 1929. In 1935 Metropolitan Elyia (Karam) succeeded him until 1969.

Since 1970, this archdiocese was under the vigilant care of Metropolitan George who is now residing in Brumana (originally the archdiocese' summer residence) after the destruction of the original archdiocese headquarters in the town of Hadath during the Lebanese civil war.



The Holy Synod of Antioch, under the presidency of His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X, in its session of 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2018, conjured at the Patriarchal Monastery of our Lady of Balamand, elected an exceptional pastoral decision to transfer His Eminence SILOUAN (Moussi) from the Archdiocese of Argentina to the throne of the Archdiocese of Mount Lebanon.

