



## A rich Slovak faith tradition

# Blessing of Foods at Easter

### **Blessing of the Paschal Lamb**

**FATHER**, giver of all good things, you commanded our ancestors in faith to partake of lamb on Passover night. Bless this lamb prepared for our celebration in honor of your Son's Passover from death to life, for he is truly the Paschal lamb by whose blood we are saved. As we enjoy the food which you sanctify for our nourishment, may we also obtain your blessing through the cross and resurrection of your son. Yours is the power, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. AMEN.

### **Blessing of Other Meats**

**O GOD**, through Moses you commanded your people in their deliverance from Egypt to kill a lamb and mark their doorposts with its blood. We understand this to prefigure our deliverance by Jesus shedding of his blood. May it please you to bless and sanctify this meat which we desire to eat in praise of him, our Paschal Lamb, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. AMEN.

### **Blessing of Bread**

**ALMIGHTY**, everlasting God, be pleased to bless this bread. May it be a healthful food for body and soul, a safeguard against every disease, and a defense against all harm. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, the bread of life, who came down from heaven and gives life and salvation to all the world, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. AMEN.

### **Blessing of Dairy Foods**

**O GOD**, creator and author of all being bless these cheeses and butter and other dairy foods. Keep us in your love, so that as we partake of them, we may be filled with your bountiful gifts on account of our Lord's glorious resurrection from the dead. We give glory to you, our Father without beginning, to your Son who is our true food, and to your good and life-giving Spirit, now and forever. AMEN.

### **Blessing of Eggs**

**FATHER** in heaven, let your blessing come upon these creatures eggs. When we break them we see a sign of your Son rising to new life from the tomb. May we eat them in joyful celebration of His resurrection, for He lives and reigns with you for ever and ever. AMEN.

### **Blessing of Other Foods**

**O GOD**, through Moses you directed the Israelites to carry their sheaves to the priests for a blessing. Hear our prayers and shower abundant blessing on us and these assorted foods which we gratefully present to you in honor of your Son's resurrection. Grant that we may find them a remedy against sickness, a source of strength for our bodies, and protection of soul, by calling on your holy name. We ask this through Christ our risen Lord. AMEN.



## BLESSING OF FOODS AT EASTER

### SIGN OF THE CROSS

### WELCOME

### INTERCESSIONS

The Son of God who invites us to the Paschal feast stands ready to help. Let us call upon him in our need.

R. Lord, prepare us for the feast of life.

That Easter may find us cleansed of sin and ready to live anew our Christian faith, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord prepare us for the feast of life.

That the bread we share may be a reminder of the bread of life we share in the eucharist, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, prepare us for the feast of life.

That we may be ready to give from our table to those who hunger and thirst, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, prepare us for the feast of life.

That we may one day enjoy the banquet of the Lord in the heavenly kingdom, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, prepare us for the feast of life.

Christ taught us to pray for our daily bread and so we dare to say:

All: Our Father.....

## BLESSING OF FOODS AT EASTER

In earlier times, meats and dairy products were excluded from the diet during Lent. As the end of the rigorous fast approaches, people showed their joy and gratitude by taking their food to church for a blessing on Holy Saturday. They then reserved it for eating after the Easter Mass. The custom remains widespread in Eastern Europe among Christians of both Eastern and Western rites. Brought to the United States by immigrants, its popularity is increasing, we bless the food which sustains our physical life and our whole being. We express our joy and gratitude for the food which nourishes us.

The foods are basically the same: kielbassi, ham, babka (raisin bread), colored eggs, cheese, butter, wine, beet horseradish and bread (paska). People with Croatian background also include: egg cheese (Hruka or Citic) and green onions. A great deal of symbolism, tradition and religious meaning exists in this Easter custom. The foods represent the family's first post-Lenten meal. The foods traditionally blessed for Easter, the feast of our Lord's Passover from death to life, are the foods which God prescribed for the ancient Passover meal: Lamb, bread, wine and bitter herbs.

**Lamb**, either meat or a symbolic lamb in the form of cake or butter, is the ancient Passover food by whose blood the Israelites were saved. Jesus is our Paschal Lamb by whose blood we are saved.

**Ham** celebrates the freedom of the New Law which came into effect through Jesus' resurrection, in distinction to the Old Law which forbade certain meats. Sausage is an ethnic addition to enhance the celebrating; its links remind us of the chains of death which were broken when Jesus arose.

**Bread** reminds us of Jesus the risen Lord, who in the Eucharist is the food of our earthly journey and the true bread of everlasting life.

**Eggs** are a sign of hope and resurrection. Jesus comes forth from the tomb as the chick breaks the shell at birth. Because of the special meaning, it is fitting that the eggs to be blessed be decorated with symbols of Easter, Alleluia, and so forth.

**Horseradish** represents the bitter herbs prescribed in the original Passover meal as a reminder of the bitterness and harshness of life in Egypt. It reminds us of the bitterness of Jesus' Passion by which he entered into glory.

**Wine** is the drink of the Passover meal and the Last Supper. Its sparkle reminds us of the glory of Easter. Wine gladdens our hearts and helps us enter into the joy of the resurrection.

Everything for the Easter meal may be blessed. The custom is to reserve the eating of the blessed good until after the Easter Mass.

