

About the Blessing of the Easter Food

Since we can't gather for our annual Blessing of Foods, please find some prayers you may use at home to keep the tradition alive. P

The blessing of the Easter food and baskets is a tradition shared among Catholic's of all Rites around the world. The contents of a food basket depend on the region one is from, the family's preferences, and financial means. Instead of ham, for example, some place lamb in their baskets. In wine-making regions, bottles of a superior vintage go into the basket whereas others add green spring vegetables to theirs.

Common Basket Items: While tastes vary by region and family, the basket usually contains certain items: butter, bread, (decorated) eggs, sausage, ham and/or lamb, smoked meats, cheese, salt, and cake. A candle is placed in the basket so it can be lit during the Easter meal, and some families tie a bow or ribbon around the basket handle. Everything is covered with a richly embroidered cloth that rests atop the food.

- Butter symbolizes the goodness of Christ that we should emulate toward others. It can be shaped into a fancy lamb mold or simply packed into a glass container with cloves arranged into a cross on the top.
- Easter Bread--A round loaf of rye bread, sweetened yeast bread or cake studded with orange and lemon peel and raisins. It is a symbol of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life.
- Horseradish is mixed with vinegar which is symbolic of the bitterness and harshness of Christ's passion, and sweetened with sugar or honey as a reminder of the Resurrection.
- Hard-boiled Eggs are symbols of Easter, life, and prosperity, and Christ's Resurrection from the tomb.
- Sausage or Kielbasa links are symbolic of the chains of death that were broken when Jesus rose from the dead, as well as God's favor and generosity.
- Ham or bacon is symbolic of great joy and abundance. Some households prefer veal or lamb, which reminds Christians that the risen Christ is the Lamb of God.
- Salt, a necessary element in physical life, is symbolic of prosperity and justice, and is included in the basket to remind us that people are the flavor of the earth.
- Cheese is symbolic of the moderation Christians should have at all times.
- A candle, which will be lit at the Easter meal, represents Christ as the Light of the World.
- Sweets—Fruit, candy, poppyseed and nut rolls, pastry items are promises of eternal life and the good things ahead.
- Easter Basket Decorations--Although traditions vary from family to family about what goes into the basket that is to be blessed on Holy Saturday, what seems to remain unchanged are the colorful ribbons, greenery, pussy willows, or dried flowers attached to the basket as signs of joy and new life in the season of spring and in celebration of the Resurrection.

The cover over the basket symbolizes Christ's burial shroud. It's often made of linen or other fine cloth and is embroidered with religious symbols related to the Resurrection and the celebration of Easter. These basket covers are often passed down from generation to generation.

BLESSING OF FOODS AT EASTER

I. BLESSING OF 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. For Yours is the power, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit now and for ever. Amen.

2. 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. Amen.

3. 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, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

4. 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 for ever. Amen.

5. BLESSING OF EGGS

Father in heaven, let your blessing come upon these 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.

6. BLESSING OF CAKES AND PASTRIES

Lord Jesus Christ, living bread of everlasting life, bless these cakes and pastries as you once blessed the five loaves in the wilderness. As we eat them may we receive the health we desire for body and soul. We ask this of you, our risen Lord, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

7. BLESSING OF WINE

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, in Cana of Galilee you changed water into wine. Be pleased to bless this wine which you have given us as refreshment. Grant that whenever it is taken as drink it may be accompanied by an outpouring of your life-giving grace, for ever and ever, Amen.