

# HOLY WEEK FROM HOME

A HELPFUL GUIDE AS WE APPROACH THE RESURRECTION



*“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” (James 4:8)*

*Publication: April 2020*

**Episcopal Authorization and Permission Granted  
By His Eminence, Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa**

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**2020**

Holy Week and Pascha, the most engaging and spiritually uplifting week of the year for Orthodox Christians, comes this year in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic that is gripping the world. It is causing sickness, fear, anxiety, confusion, disorientation, uneasiness, and even death. However, using the talents that God has given them, Fr. William Bennett and Fr. Jonathan Bannon have endeavored and produced this booklet that you hold in your hands. It will help us in our homes during this time when we cannot gather together as one big family in our churches. We thank them for their efforts to make our house the “little church”. I encourage everyone to celebrate the services and when the time arrives, and it surely will, sing “Christ is Risen” with all your strength and let the world know that God is with us!

+Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa  
Holy Week/Pascha 2020





THE PRODIGAL SON

*“This is not the Lent we had intended, but it is the Lent that we are now challenged to live. With the grace of God, our daily prayers and the support of each other, we will prevail.”*

(Very Reverend Protopresbyter James Dutko)

Like most things in Orthodox Christianity, new practices often come out of necessity. This current publication comes to you in a time of great sickness and uncertainty in our communities. For a time, we are asked to trade the open air of our Father’s House for the sanctuary of our homes.

*“That which is at stake is not the Faith but the faithful.”*

(His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I)

What you hold in your hands at this moment is an at-home guide for a time when we cannot carry out the blessed Holy Week traditions together in our churches; and yet, there are some elements of this guide which may be carried out *every* year. It is a simple but organized effort to better engage our bodies and souls in the symphony of worship of our Lord. The practices you find within are illumined by some of the most beautiful traditions passed down before us. They assume only yourself in your home and call for materials that may be common to most households. Some of you will be able to access church services online, some of you will not. While this book will never hope to replace the Holy Mysteries or the organized worship of our Lord in His Holy Temple, a ‘strange book for a strange time’, we hope it will supplement you and nourish you as you approach the saving Resurrection of our Lord, the Joy of joys, the Feast of feasts!



*Most Holy Birthgiver of God, Save Us!*

## PREPARE A PLACE

*“Everywhere, wherever you may find yourself, you can set up an altar to God in your mind by means of prayer.”*

(Saint John Chrysostom)

Make the sign of the Cross and choose an area in your home to dedicate to celebrating your Holy Week. Be creative! It may be in a corner or a small table along an open wall. Make it an open place everyone in the home can visit all week long.

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Here’s what you can do:

### CLEAN IT

Take the time to clear it, spray it, wipe it, and make it shine.

### SET IT

Hang up a Cross from your home in the middle. Fill the space around the Cross with icons if you have them, maybe Christ and His Mother Mary, maybe a patron saint.

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Keep a copy of the Bible there. Plan to read from it and follow along with the readings in the Holy Week services.

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Place a candle there that can burn safely during services.

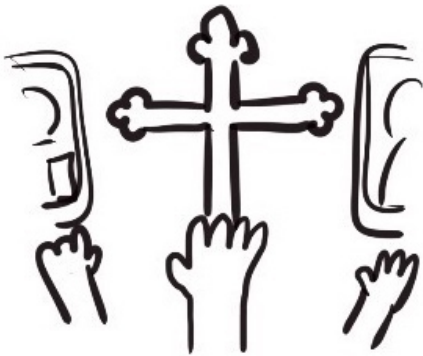
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Other items: prayer book, prayer rope, incense burner w/ incense, a visible computer or television if you are streaming available church services, and a spot to put turned off devices.

### DEDICATE IT

Make the sign of the Cross again and thank the Lord for it.

CLEAN IT!



SET IT!



## PALM SUNDAY

*“Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!’  
The King of Israel!” (John 12:13)*

Well done! You have made it to the Feast of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem! On this day, the people took up branches in celebration and decorated the road with their own cloths and robes as Christ entered on a colt. To them, he arrived to become their king. To us? He arrives right now in order to save mankind from our sins.

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How will YOU celebrate your Lord’s arrival to Holy Week?

### YOU CAN READ

Go to your prayer corner and open up the Bible to the Gospel according to St. John, Chapter 12, verses 1 through 18. If you’re streaming Divine Liturgy online, then follow along.

### YOU CAN DECORATE

If you are able to get newly-blessed branches from your church, take them and decorate your prayer corner. Tuck them behind an icon or cross on the wall, or place them in a vase near where you pray. If you cannot get newly-blessed branches, then for now you can choose some nicer ones from the yard. Bury the ones from last year.

### YOU CAN SING

As you decorate, sing or listen to *“Holy, Holy, Holy!”* (*“Sujat, Sujat, Sujat!”*), a hymn sung in every Divine Liturgy. It contains many of the same words the people sang for Christ at His entrance into Jerusalem. Share your joy.



"Hosannah in  
the Highest!"



## HOLY MONDAY – TUESDAY - WEDNESDAY

*“Behold, the Bridegroom is coming; go out to meet Him!”*  
(Matthew 25:6)

Your Holy Week now begins. You will see many services. Bridegroom Matins is one unique service done in this time. It is often prayed at the start of each of the first three days in the presence of the icon of “Christ the Bridegroom”, a copy of which you will find in Appendix A of the back of this booklet. You may choose to remove it and place it in your prayer corner.

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Look closely at the icon. In it, you see Christ getting ready for His Bride, the Holy Church. His wedding suit is the robe the soldiers gave Him. His wedding crown is the crown of thorns. His head is bowed low and his arms are crossed in humility, laying down His life for His Bride. The wedding will be His Crucifixion on the Cross just behind Him. Later this week, we will be invited guests to the wedding. We must prepare as well.

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How will YOU prepare for the wedding?

### YOU CAN DO IT EACH MORNING & EVENING



Stand at your prayer corner and venerate the Cross and icon(s). Light the candle and, if you have it, the charcoal and incense. Open the Bible and mark the appropriate Gospel passages (to the right). Follow an online streaming service and if you cannot, read these Gospel passages out loud with the morning and evening prayers in your prayer book.



### MONDAY GOSPEL READINGS

*Morning*

Matthew 21:18-43

*Evening*

Matthew 24:3-35

### TUESDAY GOSPEL READINGS

*Morning*

Matthew 22:15-23:39

*Evening*

Matthew 24:36-26:2

### WEDNESDAY GOSPEL READINGS

*Morning*

John 12:17-50

*Evening*

Matthew 26:6-16

## HOLY WEDNESDAY EVENING - UNCTION

*“And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up!” (James 5:15)*

Performing the Sacrament of Holy Unction at the halfway point of Holy Week has been a long-standing tradition. It is a special time of forgiveness and healing, including in times of great sickness among the people.

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How will YOU look to God for healing?

### YOU CAN ADD TO YOUR PRAYER CORNER

Lay down a special cloth in your prayer corner, perhaps a ‘Ručník’ of some sort. On it, place a bowl from your household, fill it up with either flour, rice, or wheat, then light a candle in it for your Wednesday night prayers. If you’re streaming a service online tonight, you can have this during the service.

### YOU CAN CREATE A LIST FOR THE SICK

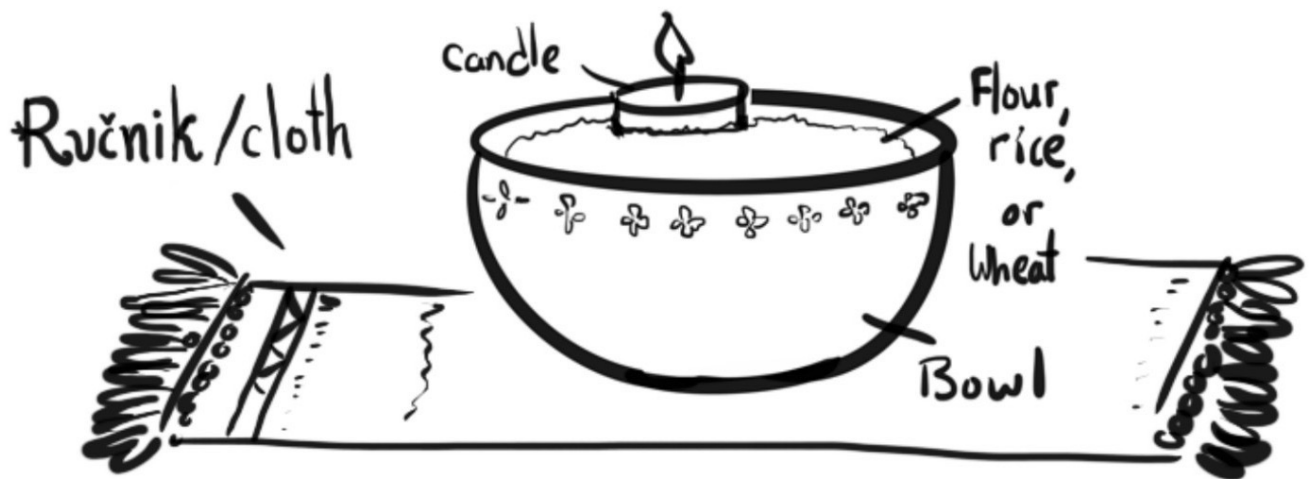
Who do you know that is injured or sick? These are times of great sickness, no doubt you can come up with some. Write as many as you can think of. Use them in your evening prayers when you say the following prayer:

### A PRAYER FOR THE SICK

*O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servants (say their names). Through the prayers of the Mother of God, deliver them from sickness and bitter pain. Heal them so that they may sing to You and always praise you – for You alone love us.*

*(From the Diocesan “Come to Me” Prayer book)*

Is any among you suffering?  
Let him pray. James 5:13



*Save the flour, rice, or wheat! Use it to bake/cook the next day!*

## HOLY THURSDAY MORNING - THE LAST SUPPER

*“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” (Matthew 26:26)*

Blessed morning! On this day, the Church commonly celebrates the Vespereal Divine Liturgy (a combined service of Vespers and Liturgy) and in it, we read the Gospel of the Last Supper, the foundation for Holy Communion. For this special occasion, the Priest prepares the Body & the Blood of Christ as usual but then sets Communion aside and reserves it for the sick and the shut-in. In Appendix B, after your Bridegroom icon, you will find an icon of the Last Supper you can remove and have visible in your prayer corner.

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How will YOU celebrate the Last Supper of our Lord?

### YOU CAN READ

Go to your prayer corner this morning and in your morning prayers, open up the Bible to the Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 26, verses 21 through 39. If you're streaming Vespereal Liturgy online, then follow along.

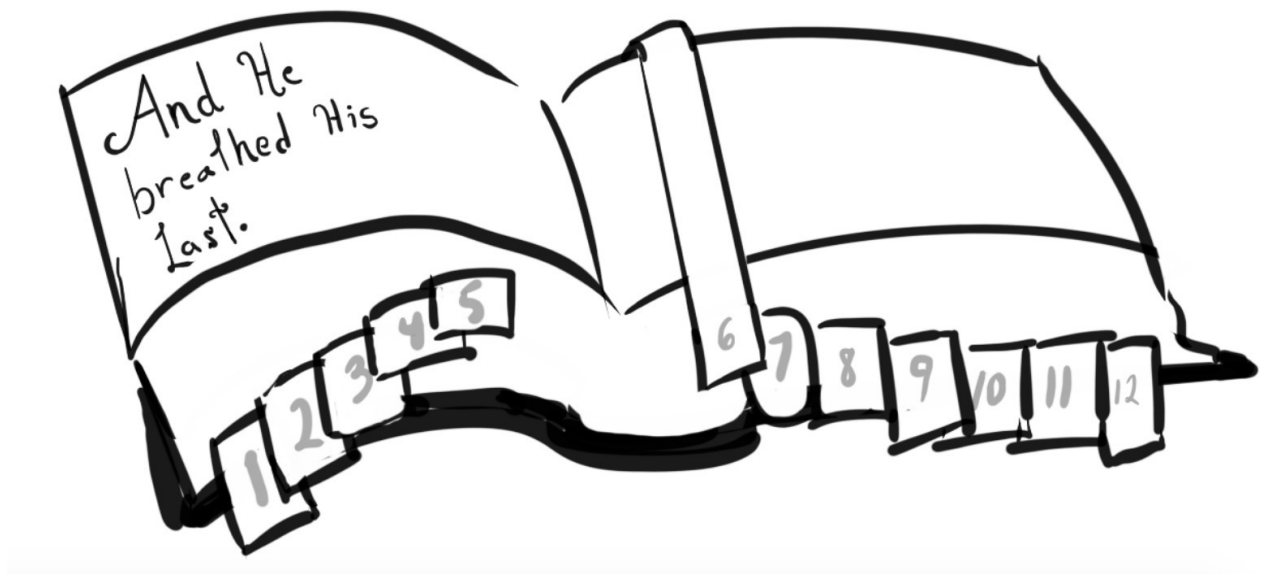
### YOU CAN BAKE OR COOK A SPECIAL MEAL



Do this as an act of devotion, sing hymns or play the hymns of the Church while you do it. If you used flour or wheat in your bowl the night before for prayers, use it to bake bread! If you used rice, use it in your supper for the day.

*Consider washing one another's feet as well, as Christ did!*

## HOLY THURSDAY EVENING – THE CRUCIFIXION



*“Truly this was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:54)*

On Holy Thursday evening, the Church celebrates the reading of the Twelve Passion Gospels, where the faithful experience the Passion, Crucifixion, & Death of Christ together. Below are the Gospel passages. You can mark them and have candle(s) lit for the reading. If there is more than one member in the household, perhaps take turns reading aloud to one another. If you are streaming the service online, follow along.

- 1) *John 13:31-18:1*
- 2) *John 18:1-28*
- 3) *Matthew 26:57-75*
- 4) *John 18:28-19:16*
- 5) *Matthew 27:3-22*
- 6) *Mark 15:16-32*

- 7) *Matthew 27:33-54*
- 8) *Luke 23:32-49*
- 9) *John 19:25-37*
- 10) *Mark 15:43-47*
- 11) *John 19:38-42*
- 12) *Matthew 27:62-66*

May you make this a quiet, blessed evening.

## HOLY FRIDAY – THE BURIAL OF CHRIST

*“When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.” (Matthew 27:59-60)*

It is a time of great sorrow, for our Lord has died. Like Joseph of Arimathea, let us take His Body and set Him in a new tomb.

### YOU CAN ARRANGE A NEW TOMB

Clear a surface in the prayer corner. Take the cloth or Ručnik from Holy Unction, drape it over your arms, and place a proper icon of Christ onto it. In absence of this, there is a removable image of the Plaščanitsa (burial shroud) in Appendix C, located in the back of the book, that could be used reverently.

### YOU CAN JOIN THE PROCESSION FROM HOME

If you are streaming an online service, you can have your candle(s) lit and your shroud ready. When the procession begins in Church, process around the room where you are three times. If there is more than one member in the household, one can carry the shroud and the other(s) lead with candles or icons. Follow the hymns and place the shroud onto the cleared surface at the end of the procession. Kneel and venerate the icon of Christ at the end.

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If you are unable to stream online services, you can do all of this during your evening prayers. Include the Gospel Reading from St. Matthew, Chapter 27, verses 1 through 61. Then you can process around the room three times, singing hymns or, if hymns are unknown, quietly. Kneel and venerate at the end.



The Noble Joseph having  
taken your most pure body down  
from the Cross, wrapped it in  
a clean shroud and  
annointed it with  
fragrant spices  
and laid in a  
new tomb.



# HOLY SATURDAY MORNING

*“Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” (Matthew 28:6)*

It is a solemn day, a day of mourning but great promise. In the Vespereal Liturgy this morning, the Priest and those celebrating with him begin the service in dark vestments. And yet, in reading several Old Testament passages, we get hints of the Resurrection: The passing through the Red Sea, the three youths in the fiery furnace, and Jonah’s three days in the great fish, to name a few. The vestments change from dark to light. We read the Gospel lesson (Matthew 28:1-20) and inside, hear the words of the Resurrection by the angel! Yet we wait.

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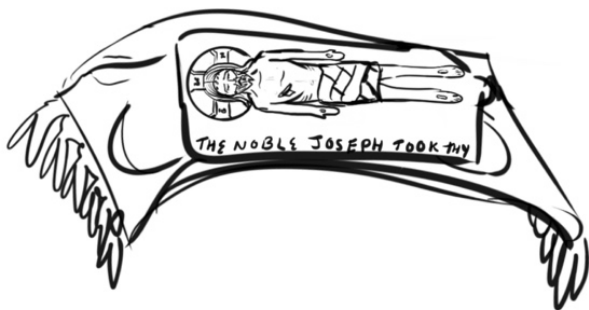
How will YOU wait for our Lord’s Resurrection?

## YOU CAN DO MORNING PRAYERS AT THE TOMB

When you rise in the morning, let the first thing you do is go to the tomb, kneel, and venerate the shroud. You may say your usual morning prayers at this time. If you are able to stream online services, you can do that at the tomb as well.

## YOU CAN KEEP WATCH

You might choose an hour of the day to stand by the tomb. Read aloud from the Book of the Acts of the Apostles or from the Book of Psalms. Let a candle burn by the tomb while you stand guard.



## YOU CAN GET READY

Use this time to prepare your paschal foods, if you have not yet. Fill the home with good smells.

# HOLY SATURDAY EVENING

*“He is risen! He is not here.” (Mark 16:6)*

It has arrived. The Joy of joys; the Feast of feasts; Pascha.

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How will YOU celebrate our Lord’s Resurrection?

## THE EMPTY TOMB

You can remove the icon from the tomb and raise it back onto the wall. If you are using the Plaščanitsa/Shroud from the appendix of this book, you may simply replace the image on the cloth with Appendix D, which reads “He is risen! He is not here” from the Gospel message for the service.

## YOU CAN JOIN THE PROCESSION FROM HOME

If you are streaming an online service, take up your lit candle(s) when the Priest comes out with the holy light and stand ready to hear the Holy Gospel message when it comes. Join in the singing of the troparion “Christ is Risen!” and all the hymns you can. Let the joy of the Resurrection fill your heart and home!

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If you are unable to stream online services, you can chant or read the Gospel message (Mark 16:1-8) just outside the front door of your home, make the sign of the Cross, and enter your fully lit home with candle(s) in hand singing “Christ is Risen!”, and process around the inside of your home with hymns. Do not stop until every room has been filled with the song.



THE RESURRECTION HOMILY  
of ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM  
*You can read it aloud in your home*

“Let all pious men and all lovers of God rejoice in the splendor of this feast; let the wise servants blissfully enter into the joy of their Lord; let those who have borne the burden of Lent now receive their pay, and those who have toiled since the first hour, let them now receive their due reward; let any who came after the third hour be grateful to join in the feast, and those who may have come after the sixth, let them not be afraid of being late, for the Lord is gracious and He receives the last even as the first. He gives rest to him who comes in the eleventh hour as well as to him who has toiled since the first: yes, He has pity on the last and He serves the first; He rewards the one and is generous to the other; He repays the deed and praises the effort. Come all: enter into the joy of your Lord. You the first and you the last, receive alike your reward; you rich and you poor, dance together; you sober and you weakling, celebrate the day; you who have kept the fast and you who have not, rejoice today. The table is richly laden: enjoy its royal banquet. The calf is a fatted one: let no one go away hungry. All of you enjoy the banquet of faith; all of you receive the riches of His goodness. Let no one grieve over his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed; let no one fear death, for the death of our Saviour has set us free: He has destroyed it by enduring it, He has despoiled Hades by going down into its kingdom, He has angered it by allowing it to taste of His flesh. When Isaiah foresaw all of this, he cried out: “O Hades, you have been angered by encountering Him in the nether world.” Hades is angered because it has been destroyed, it is angered because it has been reduced to naught, it is angered because it is now captive. It seized a body, and lo! It discovered God; it seized earth, and behold! It encountered heaven; it seized the visible, and was overcome by the invisible.

O death, where is your sting?  
O Hades, where is your victory?  
Christ is risen and you are abolished;  
Christ is risen and the demons are cast down;  
Christ is risen and the angels rejoice;  
Christ is risen and life is freed;  
Christ is risen and the tomb is emptied of the dead:

For Christ, being risen from the dead, has become the Leader and Reviver of those who had fallen asleep. To Him be glory and power unto ages of ages. Amen.”



# PASCHA SUNDAY

*“...because there is no other God who can deliver like this.”  
(Daniel 3:29)*

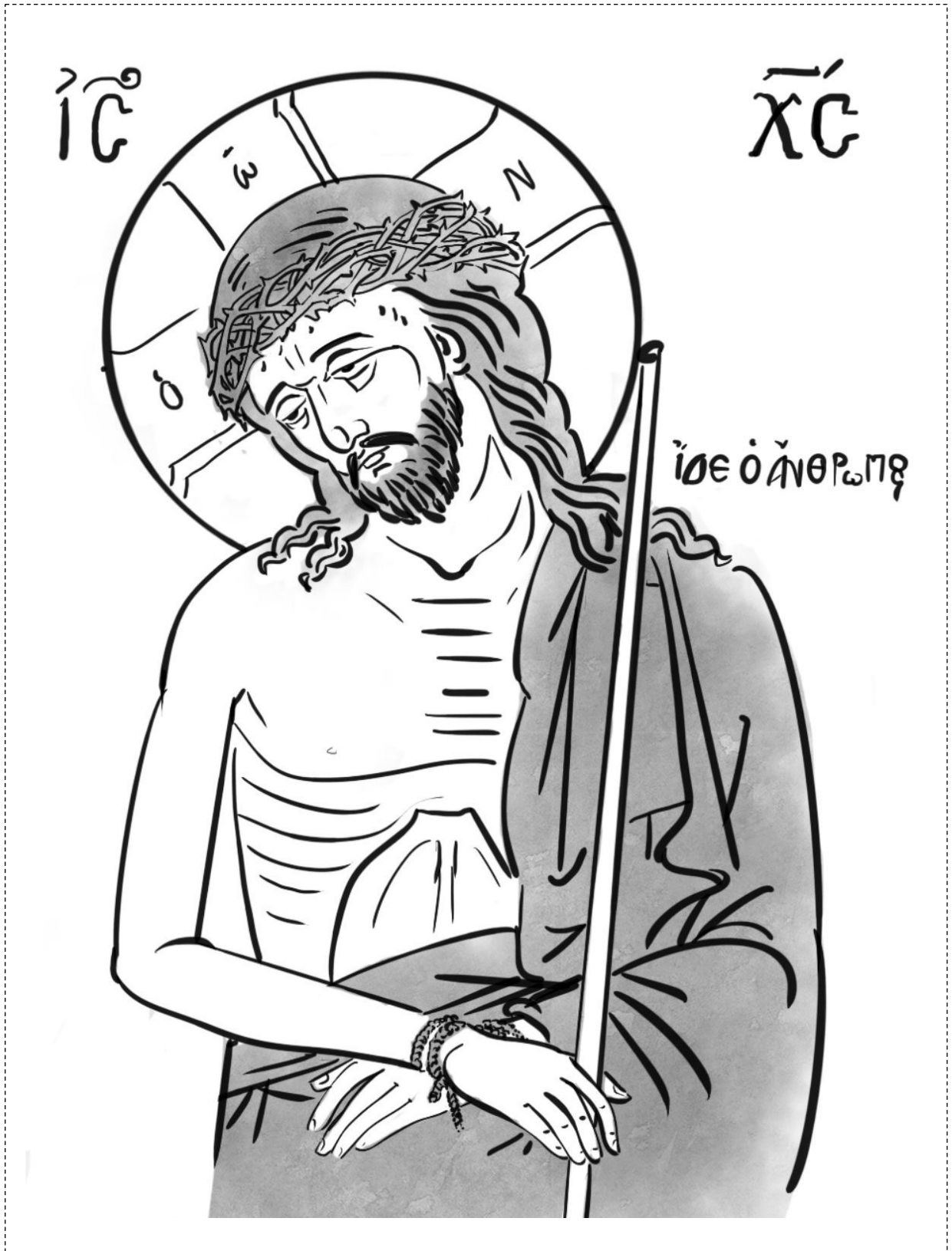
You ran the course of the fast and made it to the ‘Great Day’. Now complete the joy of our Lord and bring it home. If you can stream the service online or call in, be there. Be dressed for your Lord, be bright, and shine. Do not start or end the day without singing “Christ is Risen!”. Only once services are over, open the basket and table for celebration, singing “Christ is Risen!” when it’s time to bless the food. Reach out and contact both loved and unloved ones, the first breath carrying the Paschal greeting. Death now only limps on, Hades is conquered, and the hope of the Resurrection of our Lord lifts us all!

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*You can find an aid for your basket preparation in [Appendix E](#):*



APPENDIX A: CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM (CUT ALONG LINE)





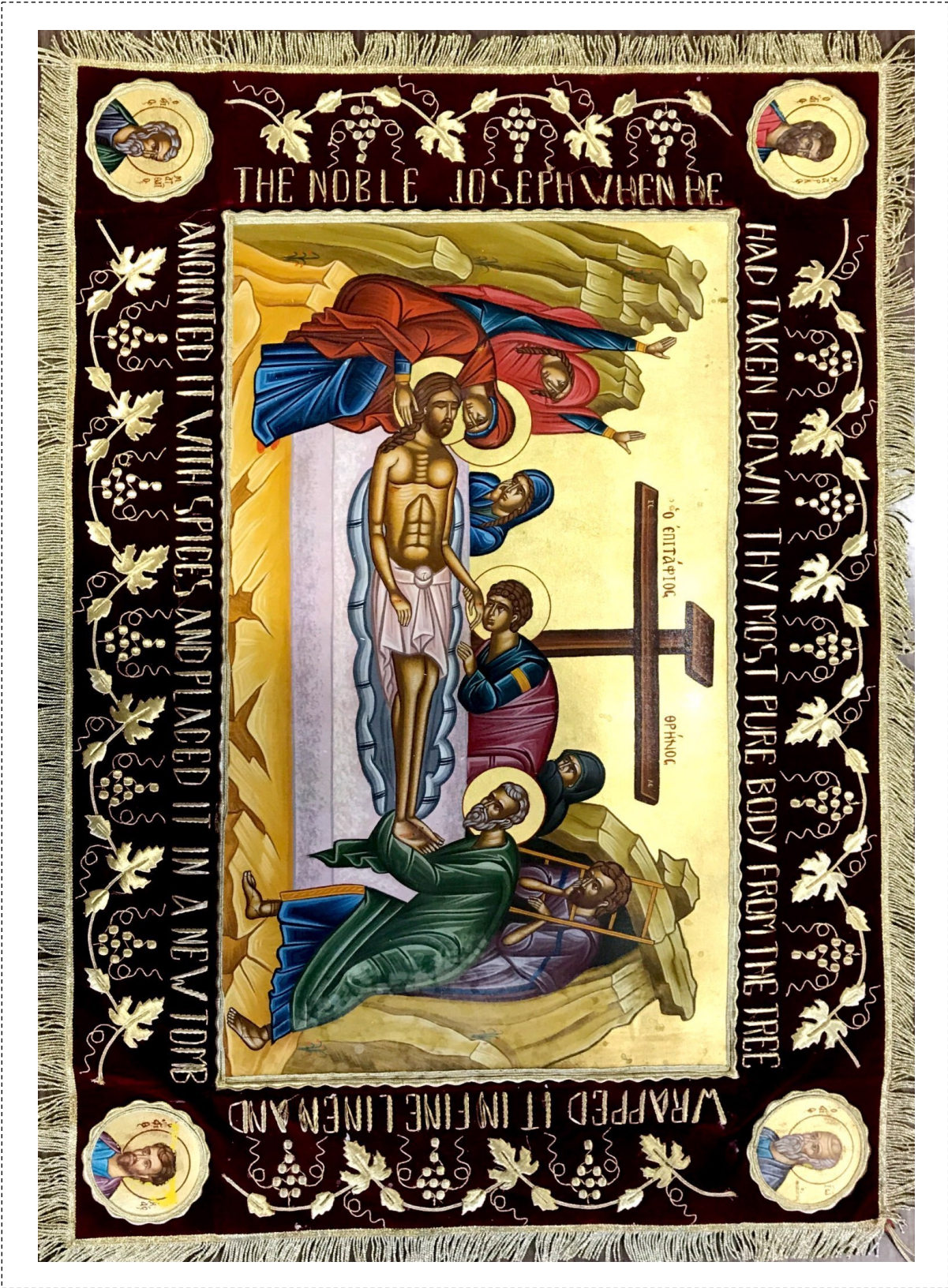


APPENDIX B: THE LAST SUPPER (CUT ALONG LINE)



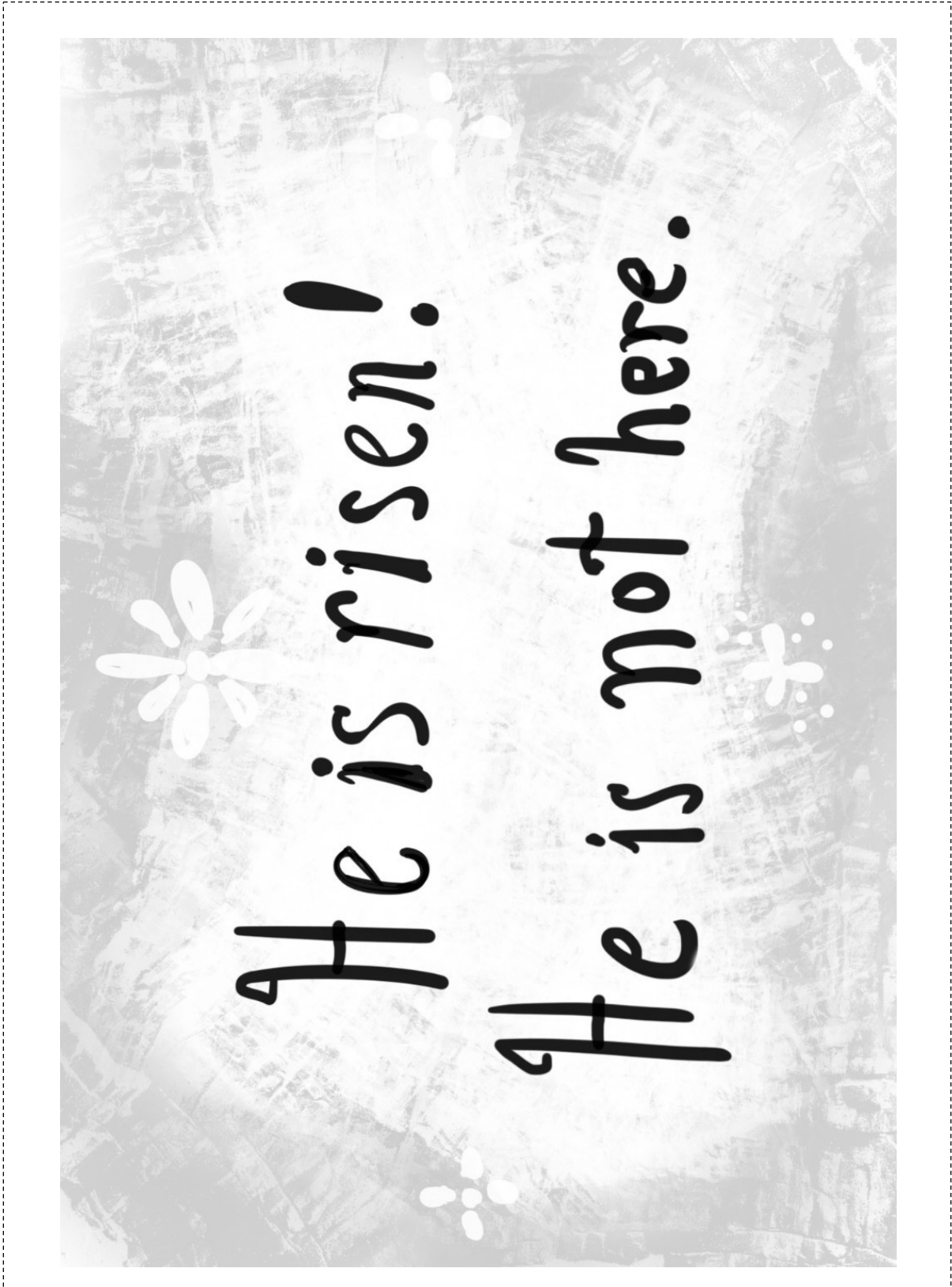


APPENDIX C: PLAŠČANITSA/SHROUD (CUT ALONG LINE)





APPENDIX D: TOMB RESURRECTIONAL MESSAGE (CUT ALONG LINE)

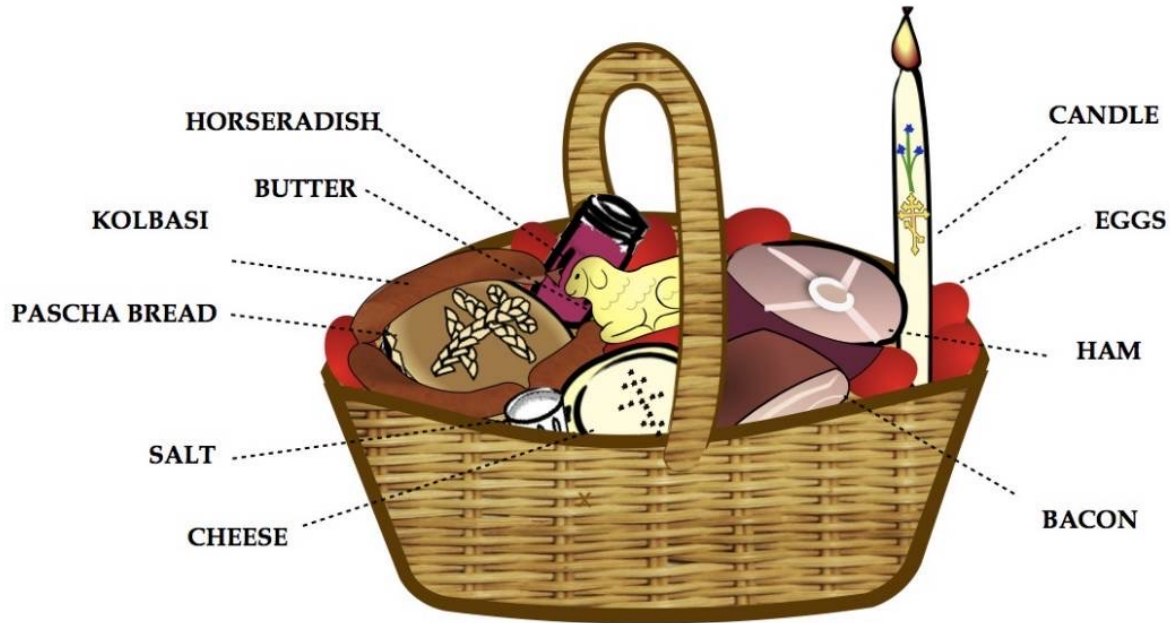




## APPENDIX E: THE PASCHA BASKET

### HOW TO PUT TOGETHER A TRADITIONAL EASTER BASKET

"TEXT ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY FR. BASIL KRAYNYAK, GCU MESSENGER, APRIL, 1979" ILLUSTRATED BY FR. JONATHAN BANNON



**PASCHA** - The Easter Bread (Pron. Pa-ska.) A sweet yeast bread rich in eggs, butter, etc. Symbolic of Christ Himself who is our True Bread. Usually round loaf baked with a golden crust decorated with a symbol indicative of Christ. Sometimes a cross (+) of dough is placed on top encircled by a plait given it a crowned effect or Greek

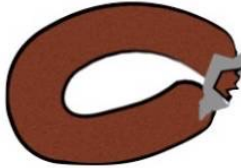
**CHEESE** - (Rusyn: Hrudka or Sirec) A custard type cheese shaped into a ball having a rather bland but sweet taste indicative of the moderation that Christians should have in all things. Also creamed cheese is placed in a small dish and both are decorated with symbols (see Pascha) out of cloves or pepper balls.



**HAM** - (Rusyn: Šunka - pron. shoon-ka.) The Flesh meat popular with the Slavs as the main dish because of its richness and symbolic of the great joy and abundance of Easter. Some may prefer Lamb or Veal. This is usually well roasted or cooked as well as other meats so the festivity of the day will not be burdened with preparation and all may enjoy the Feast.

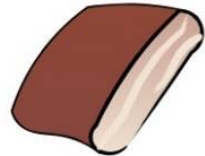


**BUTTER** - (Rusyn: Maslo pron. ma-slo.) This favorite dairy product is often shaped into a figure of a Lamb or small cross and decorated as the cheese. This reminds us of the goodness of Christ that we should have toward all things.

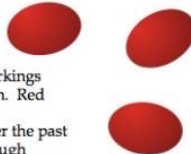


**SAUSAGE** (Rusyn: Kolbasi-pron. kol-bus-i.) A spicy, garlic sausage of pork products indicative of God's flavor and generosity.

**BACON** - (Rusyn: Slanina pron. sla-ni-na) A piece of uncooked bacon cured with spices. Symbolic of the overabundance of God's mercy to us.



**EGGS** (Rusyn: Pisanki pron. pi-sun-ki) Hardboiled eggs brightly decorated with symbols and markings made with beeswax, indicative of new life and resurrection. Red eggs are also traditional date back to a story with St. Mary Magdalene. Having been dyed with onion skins saved over the past year, red shows the color of life and victory that came through Christ's blood.



**SALT** - (Rusyn: Sol' pron. sol') A condiment necessary for flavor reminding the Christian of his duty to others.



**HORSERADISH** (Rusyn: Chrin pron. khrin) Horseradish mixed with grated red beets (optional) symbolizes the Passion of Christ still in our minds but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection. A bitter-sweet red colored mixture reminds us of the sufferings of Christ.

These articles are placed in a wicker basket. A decorated candle is placed inside and is lit at the time of the blessing. A linen cover usually embroidered with a picture of the Risen Christ or symbol with the words "Christ is Risen" is placed over the food when brought to the Church.

In some places a large Easter Bread (Pascha) is made and brought separately in a large linen cloth. If the origin of the people was from a wine growing area, a sweet wine may be brought



MAY GOD GRANT TO ALL THE SICK AND THE SUFFERING OF  
COVID-19 AND ALL MANNER OF AFFLICTION, TO ALL THE  
DOCTORS, NURSES, RESEARCHERS, ALL MEDICAL  
PROFESSIONALS, AND ALL EARTHLY AUTHORITIES  
EMBATTLED FOR OUR HEALTH, PEACE, HEALTH,  
AND LONG LIFE FOR MANY BLESSED YEARS!



AND GRANT ETERNAL REST O LORD TO ALL OF YOUR  
DEPARTED SERVANTS AND RENDER ETERNAL THEIR  
MEMORY!

CHRIST IS RISEN!



