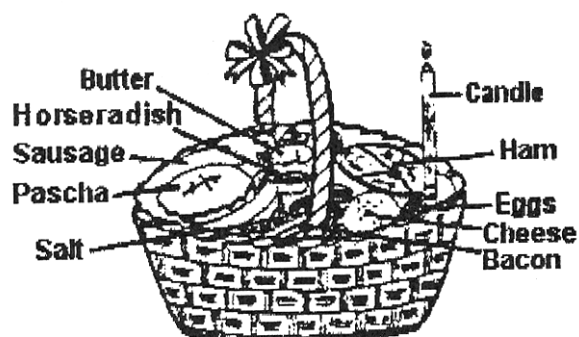


PREPARING A PASCHA BASKET



First you start with a straw basket (it doesn't have to be elaborate) and then you fill it with traditional food and cover it with a white embroidered cloth. It is also customary to have a blessed candle in it to be lighted at the Blessing. Then bring the basket to church to be blessed.

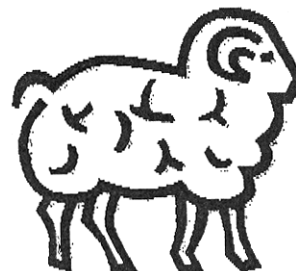
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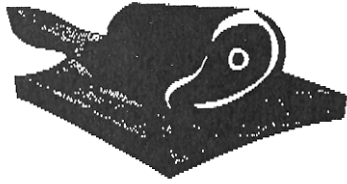
PASCHA. The large round loaf of bread, made of white flour, eggs, milk and raisins, symbolizes our Lord Himself, who is the Living Bread, He has come down from heaven to give eternal life in the Eucharist. Just as bread is the "staff of life," Christ is our spiritual nourishment for eternal life.



COLORED HARD BOILED EGGS were always considered a symbol of The Resurrection, the emergence of new life. At Pascha our Savior came forth from the tomb just as the chick emerges after breaking the shell at birth. The eggs are colored because of a tradition that says that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, wanted to take something to Pilate so that he would not let Jesus be crucified. All that she had were some eggs and her gift did no good. When Mary saw that Jesus was condemned, she began to weep and her tears dyed the eggs into many colors. After our Lord's Resurrection these eggs were a sign of joy, reminding Mary that her son lives forever.

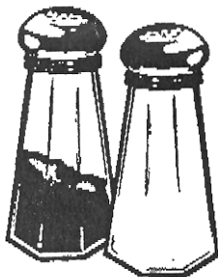
BUTTER shaped into the form of a lamb (or just a stick of butter) represents the Lamb of God who was offered on the altar of the Cross for the life of the world.





MEAT (Ham, Sausage, Veal or Lamb): Small portions of any or all of these meats are put in the basket. The meat products symbolize the sacrificial animals of the Old Testament, foreshadowing the true sacrifice of our Savior. He became for us “A Lamb of God” and took away the sins of the world. As we learn from the prayer of blessing, the meat products also symbolize the fatted calf that was preprepared for the Prodigal Son (representing fallen mankind) on his return to his Heavenly Father. Thus, at Pascha, we celebrate our return to God and our joyous participation in the blessings of our Savior, who promised to be our “true food.”

EGG, CHEESE, SIRETZ HRUTKA is a special cheese made from eggs and milk and is usually only made at Pascha time. This cheese, and all the dairy products, remind us of the peace and prosperity of the Messianic age which had been foretold by the Prophets. Metaphorically, the milk and honey in the Bible signify wealth, especially the spiritual wealth of God’s kingdom. Therefore, as he blesses the dairy products the Priest prays: “as we partake, may we be filled with your generous gifts and unspeakable goodness.”



SALT symbolizes the Truth of the message of Jesus Christ. Just as salt preserves food, so the Teachings of Christ preserve our eternal life.

HORSERADISH: A reminder of the bitter drink given Our Lord on the Cross. Take a can of whole red beets, grate finely and add 1/2 bottle of commercial horseradish. Add sugar to taste (about 2 tablespoons) and a tablespoon of lemon juice. Refrigerate.



CHOCOLATE EGGS AND CANDY: Children also share in the joy of Resurrection. The Church takes ordinary food and blesses it as an aid in making us holy. God’s blessings change us from children of natural descent into sons and daughters of the Kingdom of God.