

Family Ritual for the Blessing of Food for the First Meal of Easter

Book of Blessings 1701-1723

1701 The custom of blessing food for Easter arose from the discipline of fasting throughout Lent and the special Easter fast during the Easter Triduum. Easter was the first day when meat, eggs, and other foods could again be eaten. Although not of obligation, the special fast during the Triduum may still be observed as well as the tradition of blessing food for the first meal of Easter.

1702 According to custom, food may be blessed before or after the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday(see endnote 8) or on Easter morning for consumption at the first meal of Easter, when fasting is ended and the Church is filled with joy.

1703 The blessing may take place in the church or another suitable place.

1704 The food which is to be blessed may be placed on a table or held by those who bring it.

1705 The shorter rite may appropriately be used after the Easter Vigil.

1706 These orders may be used by a priest or a deacon, and also by a layperson, who follows the rites and prayers designated for a lay minister.

Endnote: 8. Festive customs and traditions associated with this day on account of the former practice of anticipating the celebration of Easter on Holy Saturday should be reserved for Easter night and the day that follows (Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts, no. 76).

I. ORDER OF BLESSING

INTRODUCTORY RITES

1707 *When the community has gathered, a suitable song may be sung.*

*The minister says: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.***

All make the sign of the cross and reply: Amen.

1708 *The minister greets those present in the following or other suitable words, taken mainly from sacred Scripture.*

A) Before the Easter Vigil

For our sake Christ became obedient, accepting even death, death on a cross.

Therefore God raised him on high and gave him the name above all other names.

Blessed be God for ever.

And all reply: Blessed be God for ever.

B) After the Easter Vigil

Christ is risen. Alleluia.

And all reply: He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

1709 *In the following or similar words, the minister prepares those present for the blessing. Throughout Lent we have been preparing for the resurrection of the Lord by prayer, almsgiving, and fasting. Our lenten fasting is a reminder of our hunger and thirst for holiness which is satisfied only by Christ who feeds and nourishes us by his word and sacraments. When we gather at our first meal of Easter may this food be a sign for us of that heavenly banquet to which the Lord calls us.*

READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

1710 *One of those present, or the minister, then reads a text of sacred Scripture.*

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the book of Deuteronomy:

16:1-8 The passover of the Lord.

Observe the month of Abib by keeping the Passover of the LORD, your God, since it was in the month of Abib that he brought you by night out of Egypt. You shall offer the Passover sacrifice from your flock or your herd to the LORD, your God, in the place which he chooses as the dwelling place of his name. You shall not eat leavened bread with it. For seven days you shall eat with it only unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, that you may remember as long as you live the day of your departure from the land of Egypt; for in frightened haste you left the land of Egypt. Nothing leavened may be found in all your territory for seven days, and none of the meat which you sacrificed on the evening of the first day shall be kept overnight for the next day.

You may not sacrifice the Passover in any of the communities which the LORD, your God, gives you; only at the place which he chooses as the dwelling place of his name, and in the evening at sunset, on the anniversary of your departure from Egypt, shall you sacrifice the Passover. You shall cook and eat it at the place the LORD, your God, chooses; then in the morning you may return to your tents. For six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh there shall be a solemn meeting in honor of the LORD, your God; on that day you shall not do any sort of work.

1711 *Or: Isaiah 55:1-11--Come all you who are thirsty. Luke 24:13-35--They knew Christ in the breaking of the bread. John 6:1-14--Multiplication of the loaves.*

1712 *As circumstances suggest, one of the following responsorial psalms may be sung, or some other suitable song.*

Psalms 42 and 43

R. My soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

Athirst is my soul for God, the living God. When shall I go and behold the face of God?

R. My soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

Those times I recall, now that I pour out my soul within me, When I went with the throng and led them in procession to the house of God, Amid loud cries of joy and thanksgiving, with the multitude keeping festival.

R. My soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

Send forth your light and your fidelity; they shall lead me on And bring me to your holy mountain, to your dwelling-place.

R. My soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

Then will I go in to the altar of God, the God of my gladness and joy; Then will I give you thanks upon the harp, O God, my God!

R. My soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

Psalm 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12, 13-14, 24, 35 R. (v. 1) Bless the Lord, O my soul.

1713 *As circumstances suggest, the minister may give those present a brief explanation of the biblical text, so that they may understand through faith the meaning of the celebration.*

INTERCESSIONS

1714 *The intercessions are then said. The minister introduces them and an assisting minister or one of those present announces the intentions. From the following those best suited to the occasion may be used or adapted, or other intentions that apply to the particular circumstances may be composed.*

The minister says: **The Son of God who invites us to the Paschal feast stands ready to help. Let us call upon him in our need with the words:**

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

Assisting minister: 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.**

Assisting minister: 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.**

Assisting minister: 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.**

Assisting minister: 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.**

1715 *After the intercessions the minister, in the following or similar words, invites all present to sing or say the Lord's Prayer. Christ taught us to pray for our daily bread and so we dare to say: All: Our Father . . .*

PRAYER OF BLESSING

1716 *A lay minister says the prayer with hands joined.*

**God of glory, the eyes of all turn to you
as we celebrate Christ's victory over sin and death.
Bless us and this food of our first Easter meal.
May we who gather at the Lord's table
continue to celebrate the joy of his resurrection
and be admitted finally to his heavenly banquet.**

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE

1718 *A lay minister concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:*

May Christ nourish us and strengthen us in faith and love now and forever.

R. Amen.

1719 *It is preferable to end the celebration with a suitable song.*

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