

Queen of Heaven Monastery

Sister Barbara Pavlik, OSB



This is a picture of those who attended the March 31, 2019 Spirituality Day at SS. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Warren, Ohio. Spirituality Days are sponsored by the Byzantine Benedictine Sisters twice a year, to assist the faithful in preparing themselves to celebrate the Feasts of the Nativity and the Resurrection of Christ more fully. The day usually consists of two input sessions by the presenter, time for reflection, questions and answers, and for the reception of the Mystery (Sacrament) of Reconciliation. There is no charge for the Spirituality Days and they are open to all in the parish and the local community.

Very Reverend Robert M. Pipta, Rector of SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary Pittsburgh, PA was the presenter for this day. His topic was “Living in Peace and Repentance.” He brought out the fact that Great Lent is a blessed time for us to be truthful about ourselves - to take stock of our spiritual obstacles, our selfish passions and our bad habits. He spoke of the value of repentance and how true repentance and fasting can lead us to a peaceful life.

Father Robert gave many examples of how to put fasting, prayer and repentance into practice in our lives every day. He examined different ways in which we can pray and how these holy conversations with God keep us on the path of peace and repentance ... and he did this in the context of our Byzantine Liturgical and Lenten observance. It was a very enriching afternoon!

TRADITIONAL EASTER BASKET

A Traditional Byzantine Easter Basket usually contains the foods that were not eaten during the Great Fast (Lent). Fasting regulations are not observed as strictly in the U.S. as they were in the countries of our parents or our ancestors, but we still try to observe this tradition as best we can. Our basket at Queen of Heaven Monastery for Easter 2019 is pictured. The foods were prepared by Sister Barbara Pavlik and were blessed after the Resurrection Divine Liturgy. The Basket contains the following:

PASKA is a sweet, yeast bread. It is a round loaf, decorated with a cross on top, encircled by a plait giving it a “crowned” effect. The PASKA is symbolic of Christ who is our true Bread of Life.

HRUTKA, is a custard type cheese made from eggs and milk, flavored with vanilla, salt, and sugar. It is poured into cheese cloth, shaped into a ball and hung up to drain. It is very “Benedictine,” in that it is indicative of the “moderation” that Christians should have in all things.

HAM is the most popular flesh meat. The ham is cooked or baked and served cold so that all may enjoy the Day of Resurrection, and not be burdened with more cooking. It is symbolic of the great joy and abundance of Easter.

BUTTER is usually shaped into the figure of a lamb or cross. It reminds us that Jesus is the Lamb of God. His goodness is shown to ALL. This is what we are to imitate.

KOLBASI symbolizes God’s favor and generosity to His people. (It is usually a pork sausage, but I used Butterball turkey polish kolbasi and no one knew the difference).

EGGS are hardboiled, brightly colored, and decorated with symbols and marking made with beeswax. They are indicative of New Life and Resurrection!

SALT reminds us of our Christian duty of love toward others (flavoring them with love).

HORSERADISH is a bitter root which is ground and mixed with ground pickled beets and sweetened with a little sugar. It is symbolic of Christ’s suffering, mercy, compassion and Resurrection! (P.S. It is not Easter without homemade horseradish!)



These foods are arranged in a wicker basket. A decorated candle is placed in the basket and is lit at the time of blessing!