



E~~KK~~**HOLY MEALS**~~STOU~~

CHRISTMAS
~~LA~~

EVE HOLY

SUPPER

EKKLESIOUL

- Holy Meals

A • Festal Liturgical celebrations

- Continued in the home

- In order to begin to LIVE the feast

- participate in the saving event of God

- Not just watch a ritual in Church

- Main part:
- Hymn singing between the courses
 - Hymns are of the Feast
- Starts with a home ritual
 - Could include Bible Readings
 - Various Prayers
 - Symbols
- Ends with a prayer/hymn

- **Introduction:**
- Traditionally Christmas & Theophany
- Starts with preparation
- St Philip's Fast (40 days)
- As in all Fasts / Penitential Periods
 - Fasting
 - Prayer
 - Helping the Poor
 -

- Before the Christmas Eve meal,
- the family fasted all day.
- No outside work was done.
- This was a holy day.
- At the Supper, all members wore festive clothing.
- The tone of the supper was that of "festive dignity"

- The Christmass Eve Holy Supper
- 12 meatless (fasting) courses
- before every course:
- Sing a Christmas carol
- SERVE ONLY ONE COURSE AT A TIME!

- -- ***Two plates*** are set aside:
 - one for ancestors & family who have fallen asleep in the Lord (cf. what happens at Pascha) & the other for strangers (cf. the plate for the Prophet Elijah at Passover). A small portion of each type of food is placed on these.

- -- **Straw** is strewn
- on the **table**
 - Underneath the Table Cloth
- and on the **floor**:
- because we are sharing a meal with the Holy Family - lodging in the stable by the manger with the animals.
 - Treats (candy & money) strewn in the straw
 - After the meal, the children hunt for treats

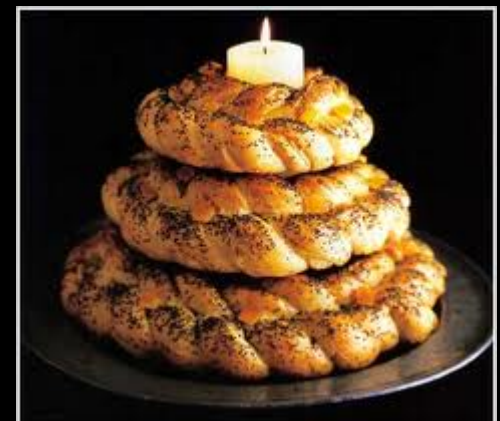
- **Beginning the Holy Meal:**
- 1: At dusk, the youngest child goes outdoors & announces the first star saying:
- **“Behold! The star of Christ! Like the Magi, let us worship Him.” (cf. Mt. 2:2)**

- 2: The mother lights the candle
- Set in the Kolachy
 - 3 rings of braided bread



- **Mother's prayer:**

- **O Christ, the Sun of Justice, shine on the souls of our faithfully Reposed and upon us, your servants. You are the Creator of all warmth for us, the earth, the fields, and the animals. May they bring forth fruit in due season unto the glory of Your Name.**



- 3: the father & mother (carrying the kutya) go to the door of the house.
- 4: the father goes outdoors where the didukh is kept.



- He bows towards it, crosses himself, and prays:
- **God of all mercies and compassion, throughout the past year You have let the light of Your Countenance shine upon us. You have given us an abundant harvest and have rained down on us the dew of Your salvation. We implore You hear us and have mercy through out this coming year.**
- **Rx: Amen.**

- He picks up the didukh, stands beside his wife, and prays:
- **O Lord, you who are the Creator of sun, moon, stars, wind, fire, earth, and rain, who fill all places and dwell in all things, in whom the souls of our faithfully departed have fallen asleep, O Lord come and abide in us this Holy Night and fill us with all Your blessings.**

The Mother offers the Kutya



- **We beseech You, O Lord to deliver us from every calamity; from fire, storm, pestilence, drought, foreign invasion and from civil war. We, Your unworthy servants pray You to be merciful to us, for You alone are truly the lover of mankind.**

- 6: returning to the dining room, the didukh is placed in the icon corner & the kutia is place on the table. All face the icons, cross themselves and sing the Tropar and Kondak of the feast

- **Blessing God for the food:**
- **The poor shall eat and be satisfied* those who seek the Lord shall praise Him;* and their hearts will live forever.* Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit*, now and for ever and ever. Amen.* Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Give the blessing.**
- *(if not priest is present, use the following prayer:)*
- **O Christ God, by the prayers of our holy father, bless this food and drink for Your servants, for You are holy, now and ever, and for ages of ages.**
- **Rx: Amen.**

The 1st Course:



- As we sing the Nativity Tropar,
- process around the table to receive the Blessed Prosphoron.
- the father offers everyone present a piece of prosphora and honey, greeting each with the words: **Christ is born!**
- Rx: **Glorify Him!**
- And they exchange **the holy kiss.**

Throwing Kutya

- The 2d Course:
- --consider the benefits of reviving the custom of throwing some Kutya on the ceiling



- **End of the Holy Supper:**
- --At the end of the meal, we again sing the Tropar & Kondak and God again is blessed:
- **Blessed are You, O Christ our God; You have given us food in due time. Fill us also with the Holy Spirit and abide with us all the days of our lives.**
- Rx: Amen..

- --after the meal, some kutia is fed to the animals so that they too may enjoy the feast.
- --Some explain the meatless meal as thanksgiving to animals, who served the infant Jesus
- --Legends say that on Christmas Eve the animals were endowed with speech as a gift from God for their service to the Christ Child on the night of His birth.

- A similar Meal may be celebrated after Resurrection Liturgy
- Some families do a Bible reading pertaining to the Feast at the beginning
- Many Feasts have distinctive Traditional foods (depending on the culture)
- As long as you have hymns and foods, a Bible and prayers, you can do a Holy Meal!
- Very much like the Hagada of Passover.

