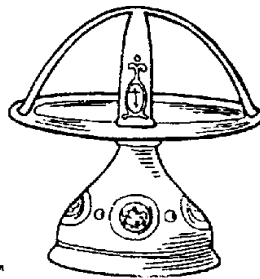
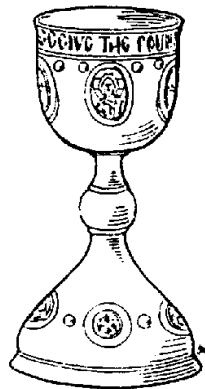
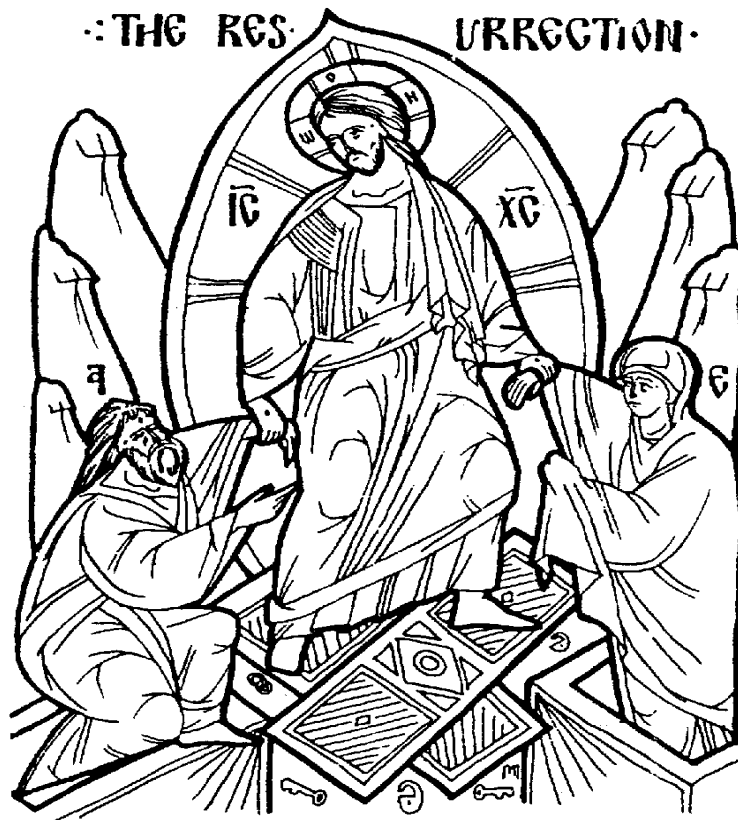


*Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Parish
21580 Atlantic Blvd. Unit 160, Building D
Dulles, VA 20166*

*Presiding Priest: Rev. Fr. George A. Alexson
Prosforo Liaison: Effie Koutsourais*



Prosfora = Bread for Holy Communion



We need 5 Prosfora every week
4 Prosfora for a Sunday's Liturgy & 1 for a Weekday's Liturgy
Total: About 240 Prosfora per Year



Liaison: Effie Koutsourais (e-mail: emkouts1@aol.com)

Beloved Parishioners,

What a blessing it is for someone to make a Prosfora or to bring some Wine for Holy Communion!
We need about 240 Prosfora every year. If all of us participate by offering 20 Prosfora for a month, we would be called on only every five years to meet this obligation. You can find the recipe on our Church's Web page.

a) Could your family (if unable to personally make the Prosfora) offer a small donation towards this endeavor? The cost is \$8 per Prosfora (\$160 for one full month). Money collected for this effort (we want to make this very clear) will be used to purchase bread only from the Monastery of Agia Skepi = Holy Protection of the Theotokos located in White Haven, PA (your donation is tax deductible).

The Sisters bake exceptionally good Prosfora and, because it is bread used for the Holy Liturgy, it cannot be shipped. Thus, we depend on parishioners who visit the Monastery to bring the Prosfora to us and if anyone plans to visit Agia Skepi, please let us know. We will provide you the funds to bring Prosfora for our beloved Parish.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the ladies, families or groups for supporting this sacred effort by baking or purchasing Prosfora. Every year 2 months would be left open (any Sunday through the whole year) for all those families that would like to offer a couple Prosfora too.

Prosfora can be offered for special occasions: Anniversary, Birthday, Memorial service, Nameday or, for loved ones struggling with illness. When you offer Prosfora, you should submit the names of both the living and deceased to be commemorated by the Fr. George.

b) In our Church Fr. George is using **only** the Cypriot Wine "**Nama**" for Holy Communion. If you would like to participate on that effort too, you can offer a donation (\$160.00 for six months supply).

c) Also, if you would like to participate for Candles, Votives, Charcoal & Incense for the Altar & Iconstasion, you can offer a donation towards that as well (\$160 for 6 months).

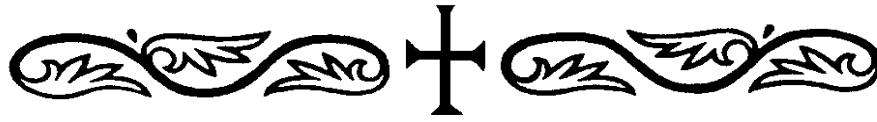
Thank you so much in advance for your Kindness & support!

Effie Koutsourais & Presvytera Joanna Alexson



Prosforo

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA



OBJECTIVE: To learn about the making a Prosforo offering and what it represents.

AGE: JOY appropriate, See developmental notes for how to make this session HOPE, GOYA and YAL appropriate.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Flour, Salt, Yeast & Water

Seal, Toothpicks

Paper and something to draw with

Bowls, Measuring Cups & Baking Pan

Bible, Icons, Candles, CD Byzantine Chanting

Poster Board with the seal drawn on it

OPENING PRAYER:

Let us Pray to the Lord. Lord Have Mercy. Dear Lord, this bread that we are baking represents each one of us. We are offering ourselves to You, our very life, in humble obedience and total commitment to You. We place ourselves on Your holy altar through this bread to be used by You in any way that You feel will help enlarge Your kingdom. Accept our gift and make us worthy to receive the greater gift that You will give us when You consecrate this bread and give it back to us as Your Precious Body. Amen

ACTIVITY: MAKING PROSFORO

INTRODUCTION:

Have all of the young people wash their hand thoroughly, remove all bracelets, rings and watches, push up any long sleeves

STATE: Today we are going to make a gift for God. We are going to make Prosforo.

- Can anyone tell me what you know about Prosforo? (Accept all answers and reflect back)

STATE: Our Lord gives us all things. He gives us wheat, water and wine. We take things from the earth that He gives us and offer them back to God. We take part of the possessions that God has given us and return them to Him.

- Why is it important that we bake this bread for God? (Accept all answers and reflect back)

STATE: Think about when you draw a picture for your parents. It doesn't cost you a lot of money. It isn't something they need. But it means a lot to them because you made it and it is a way to show them that you love them. Making this bread shows God that you love him and that you are giving him not just this bread but your life as a Christian. Making this bread is an awesome responsibility. We need to make the bread prayerfully. To prepare ourselves, we need to begin with prayer and continue praying as we are preparing the Prosforo.

- Read opening prayer as a group
- Split the group in to small groups of 5 people. It is best to have an advisor for each group.

The advisors should be there to help keep the young people focused on the task.

STATE: As we work on the bread, we are going to continue to pray by singing hymns of the church, listening to chanting music and reading from the bible. Even though it will be hard, we should try our best to not talk about things that are not related to the Prosforo. We should stay with our groups.

Also, we should not play with or eat the dough.



GETTING STARTED:

We recognize that there are many different ways to make Prosforo. This is one recipe. You can follow your own or bring in someone from your church that regularly makes Prosforo to help. More important than recipe is that this is done prayerfully and that all the young people get to contribute.

- Give each table a bowl, 2 cups of flour, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 cup tepid water, 2 cakes of yeast
- Mix the water and the yeast together and let it sit for about 5 minutes until bubbles are forming.
- Mix the salt and the flour together then add the water/yeast mixture.
- Have the young people take turns mixing the ingredients with their hands
- Once it is mixed well, sprinkle some flour on the table, take the mixture out of the bowl and begin kneading until the dough is smooth. Have the young people take turns kneading.
- Once the dough is done being kneaded. Place it in a bowl with a towel over it a place in a warm (*but not too warm area*). Allow it to rise for an hour.

WHILE THE DOUGH RISES:

- Give the young people a 5-10 minute stretch break and then have them come back and sit around the tables (if a priest can come and help with this it would be wonderful).
- Bring out the poster with the drawing of the seal. Hold it up for the young people to see.

STATE: This is the seal that we are going to stamp into the bread after it rises.

- Have them all draw a large circle for the seal on the piece of paper

STATE: The first thing we are going to draw is this middle part (point to it on the poster board). Does anyone know what this is?

STATE: This square piece is the piece that will be changed into the Body of Christ; it is called the Lamb of God. It has the letter ICXC NIKA. Does anyone know what this means? (*Jesus Christ Conquers = Ἰησοῦς Χριστός Νικά*). Have the young people draw the Lamb on their picture.

STATE: Next we are going to draw the large triangular piece (*point to it on the poster board*). Does anyone know what this is?

STATE: This represents the Virgin Mary. Have the young people draw this on their picture.

STATE: Next we are going to draw the nine smaller triangles. Does anyone know what these represent?

STATE: These pieces commemorate the angels, prophets, apostles and saints of the church. Have them draw these on the picture and have them finish up the drawing.

STATE:

During a service before liturgy starts, the priest breaks the bread and the seal and prays for the different people represented by the seal; the Theotokos, the prophets, angels... The priest also prays for all those living whose names have been submitted to him. Then he prays for all those who have passed away whose names have been submitted to him. We are going to make list of people we want the priest to pray for that are living and dead.

- Give the children a sheet of paper with Living and Deceased written across the top. Have them make 2 separate list of whom they would like the priest to pray for.
- Collect the lists and make sure to give them to the priest.



AFTER THE DOUGH HAS RISEN:

- Have each group punch out and knead the dough a bit longer. They should shape it into a smooth round ball.
- Once this is done, place the dough on a floured (*not greased*) pan. Have the young people press the seal in (*make sure to flour the seal*). This must be done evenly and firmly. Let each young person help push it in but make sure to hold it straight.
- Once this is done. Have young people use the toothpicks to prick holes around the seal and around the sides of the Prosforo.
- Bake the Prosforo for about 30 minutes at 375
- While the Prosforo is baking, ask the children different questions pertaining to offering in their life. What is their offering to God? How do they make their offering? What is an offering? Also be sure to add that after the priest places all the particles on the diskos, the entire Church is represented (*Christ, Theotokos, Saints, Prophets, Martyrs, etc., the living and the dead*).

CLOSING & WRAP UP: Read *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein

CLOSING PRAYER:

O God, our God, You sent the heavenly Bread, the food for the whole world, our Lord and God Jesus Christ, as Savior, Redeemer, and Benefactor, to bless us and sanctify us. Do bless this offering and accept it upon Your heavenly altar. As a good and loving God remember those who brought it and those for whom it was brought. Keep us blameless in the celebration of Your divine Mysteries. For sanctified and glorified is Your most honorable and majestic name, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen

No. 2 Recipe of Maria Themis Tsapos

Prosforo = Offering Bread to God for the Divine Liturgy

The word Prosforo means "an offering to God". It is a uniquely personal offering in the liturgical life of the Church. Our Lord assures us that He is the Bread of Life and, if we eat of this bread we shall never hunger. The Prosforo is baked by someone in the church and brought to the priest for each celebration of the Divine Liturgy. By bringing the loaf of bread, we are offering our life to God as a gift of our love. Along with the bread, a list of names, living and deceased loved ones, is given to the priest. During the preparation for Communion, the priest cuts pieces of bread representing Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, Angels, Prophets, Apostles, and Saints of the Church. Along with these, he cuts tiny pieces of bread representing the names you have given him and places them all into the Chalice. God is so pleased with our gift to Him, that He transforms it through the power of the Holy Spirit and gives it back to us as His Precious Body for Holy Communion. These gifts become the true Body and Blood of Christ at the consecration. The remaining bread is cut into cubes by the altar boys and placed in a large bowl for the Priest to distribute to the parishioners at the conclusion of the Liturgy. This bread is called Andithoro, which means "instead of the Gifts".

Opening Prayer: Let us Pray to the Lord. Lord Have Mercy. Dear Lord, this bread that we are baking represents each one of us. We are offering ourselves to You, our very life, in humble obedience and total commitment to You. We place ourselves on Your Holy Altar through this bread to be used by You in any way that You feel will help enlarge Your kingdom. Accept our gift and make us worthy to receive the greater gift that You will give us when You consecrate this bread and give it back to us as Your Precious Body. Amen.

Ingredients (for 1 Prosforo)

- Holy Water
- sifted Bread Flour or for best texture use
- 3 cups Bread Flour & 1 cup semolina-farina
- 1 pack. Fleisch. Quick start active Dry Yeast
- 3 Dashes of salt (symbolic of Salt of the Earth)
- 1.5 cups warm Water

Supplies

- * Shallow pan (8" in diameter, 1.5 - 2" high)
- * Large bowl (used only for Prosforo)
- * Wax Baking Paper or just use some Flour
- * Icon & Lighted Candle
- * Incense and Censer
- * Toothpick
- * Prosforo Seal



Procedure:

Begin by making the sign of the cross, asking our Lord to bless and guide you in making the Prosforo. Light your home censer and maintain a prayerful attitude by either listening to chanting or by reciting the "Jesus Prayer" (Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me), the 50th Psalm, or, other similar prayers. Maintain peace and quiet in the home during this time, in respect for the awesome task in which you are engaged: baking bread that will be offered to become the Body of our Lord.

Cut a piece of wax paper, large enough to cover the baking pan, and push it down to take the form of the pan or, just flour the pan itself. Pour one package of yeast into a large bowl. As you start, bless the ingredients with the sign of the cross. Slowly add warmed water, simultaneously stirring, and dissolving the yeast with the tips of your fingers. Pour in Holy Water in the sign of the cross (saying, "Jesus Christ is Victorious"). Add 3 dashes of salt (symbolic of the Holy Trinity & our Lord's reference to the faithful as, 'salt of the earth'). Slowly add 3 cups of flour and 1 cup of semolina, mixing the flour, semolina and water with the yeast. Begin kneading the dough with both hands, for about 10 min.'s, until the dough does not stick to your hands. Once you have formed a large ball, place it in the bowl. Bless it again.

Divide the dough ball in half and, cut off a small piece (to make a 2" cross and save it on the side). Take the first dough ball and knead it in your hands until it is smooth (add extra flour if it is necessary). Put the ball onto a floured work surface, and with a rolling pin, roll it into a flat round 7"- 8" piece of dough. Take the first flattened dough ball and place it in the floured baking pan (never greased). Be certain that the dough covers the whole bottom of the pan. Take the small 2" piece dough and cut it in half. Roll each half, into a long 2" piece and, place the first one in the center on top of the 1st flattened dough and, the 2nd small rolled piece should be placed on top of the 1st one, so it can form the sign of the cross. Take the 2nd half of the dough from the bowl and, repeat steps 10-11 and then place it on top of the first one. Once you have put the two halves of the dough together, one on top of the other, with the cross in between, take a little bit of flour and sprinkle the top of the dough to prepare it for the seal. The double layer represents the dual nature of Christ (Divine & Human).

Take the seal and center it in the middle of the dough. Press down, as hard as possible for about 30 seconds, repeating the Jesus Prayer. It is VERY important for the imprint of the seal to come out raised and clear, in order for the bread to be used for the Proskomide (the service for the preparation of the gifts of bread and wine for the Holy Eucharist). After 30 seconds slowly wriggle the seal and pull it off gently. You should have a deep imprint of the seal on the top of the dough. Use a toothpick, and poke a hole in each corner of the cross in the seal. As you poke the hole in each corner, repeat. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God have mercy on the soul of your servant (name) and pray for each member of your family. Cover it with a towel, make the sign of the cross and place it in a warm place to rise. Allow the sealed dough to rise for 20-25 minutes or until it doubles in size. Before placing bread in the oven, poke toothpick into the same holes again. Bake in preheated oven at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes. Both top and bottom of the bread should emerge a very light gold. Upon removing the Prosforo from the oven, place it on a clean towel (used only for the Prosforo).

Prepare a list of names (first names only) in two sections: For the Living (family members, relatives and friends) and for the Deceased. Fr. George will receive the list and will commemorate the names in the Proskomide with your Prosforo. The Prosforo should be taken to church (in a freezing bag with the list of names inside) either the day before the Liturgy or, on the day of the Liturgy itself prior to the beginning of the Orthros (by 8:15 a.m.). Otherwise it will be used for the next scheduled Liturgy. May God bless you for your efforts and commitment for this important Ministry of preparing the Prosforo for our Lord and our beloved Parish.



Closing Prayer: O Lord, accept our humble gift and make us worthy to receive the greater gifts that You will give us, when you consecrate this Bread and give it back to us as Your Precious Body through Holy Eucharist. O God, our God, You sent the heavenly Bread, the food for the whole world, our Lord and God Jesus Christ, as Savior, Redeemer, and Benefactor, to bless us and sanctify us. Do bless this offering and accept it upon Your heavenly altar. As a good and loving God remember those who brought it and those for whom it was brought. Keep us blameless in the celebration of Your Divine Mysteries. For sanctified and glorified is Your most honorable and majestic name, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.



Prosforo Seal in Greek is Sphra-yi-tha

The Center of the seal has the letters IC XC and NI KA which mean, “Jesus Christ Conquers”. This section of the bread is removed by the Priest and, during the Divine Liturgy transformed into the Body of Christ. It is referred to as the “Lamb of God”. The left section of the seal (large triangle) represents the Virgin Mary. The right section featuring the 9 small triangles commemorate the Angels, Prophets, Apostles and Saints of our Orthodox faith. During the Proskomide, prior to the Holy Liturgy, the Priest breaks the bread and prays for those represented by the seal: the Theotokos, the Prophets, the Angels, etc.. He also prays for the living and dead whose names have been submitted to him with our Prosforo. Make certain when you buy a Prosforo seal that the carving on the seal is very deep, so that the impression of the seal will appear clearly on the bread.



Holy Protection Monastery, White Haven, PA



Note: When using any car navigation system please use address **55 Old Route 940 or Old Route 940 & Powerhouse Rd, in White Haven, PA 18661.**

From New York, NY & North, NJ

Take I-80 West and take Exit 273 (White Haven/Freeland). At STOP sign turn left onto Church Street/PA-940; continue on Church Street for 0.2 miles over I-80. Turn right at Powerhouse Road and in 0.1 miles make a sharp left on Old State Route 940. Continue on Old State Route 940 for 0.3 miles; you will see the main gates of the monastery on your right hand side.

Contact Us

Address: 1 St. Joseph's Way
Haven, PA 18661

Phone: (570) 443-2220
Fax: (570) 443-9167

White

(Weekdays: 9:00am - 5:00pm & Weekends: 12noon-5:00pm)