

# News of Polonia

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## Wiadomości Polonijne

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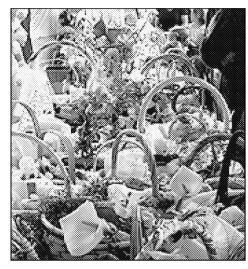
March 2008

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## Food blessing – the Poles' most popular **Easter custom**

By Robert Strybel,

Polish/Polonian Affairs Writer

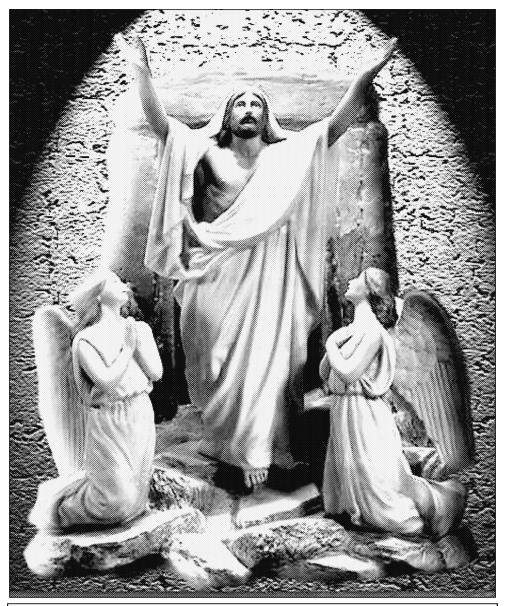


The Polish Holy Saturday food-blessing custom is one of the Polish people's two most popular traditions holiday, the other being the sharing of oplatek on Christmas Eve. Despite the catastrophes, tragedies and changes Poland has experienced over the past two centuries, at present both these customs are still practiced by some 95 percent of all Polish families. But perhaps "despite" is the wrong word. Maybe it was precisely all the historical turbulence that has made those two customs so unchangeably comforting, something to come home to, rally round and find consensus with brother-Poles.

Needless to say, the food-blessing custom known as święcenie pokarmów has been taken by Polish émigrés to the far corners of the globe. Since it is both symbolic, colorful and generally

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## Kalendarz Świąteczny – Matki Boskiej Częstochowskiej

3424 W. Adams Blvd. - Los Angeles - (323) 734-5249

20 marca Wielki Czwartek - Pamiątka ustanowienia Eucharystii i Kapłaństwa.

Msza św. o godz. 19:30 Wielki Piątek - Dzień Męki i Śmierci Chrystusa na Krzyżu. 21 marca

Droga Krzyżowa o godz. 15:00

Liturgia wielkopiątkowa o godz. 19:30 Adoracja przy Grobie Pańskim do godz. 22:30

22 marca Wielka Sobota - Pan Jezus złożony w grobie Adoracja Najświętszego

Sakramentu od godz. 10:00 do 16:00. Spowiedź święta od 10:00 - 16:00. Poświęcenie pokarmów od godz. 10:00 do 16:00 co 30 minut.

Blessing of Easter Baskets 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - every 30 minutes

Oraz po Procesji rezurekcyjnej w Niedzielę.

23 marca Niedziela Zmartwychwstania Pańskiego - Liturgia Wigilii Pascalnej z procesją Rezurekcyjną o godz. 5:30 rano.

Pozostale Msze św. o godz. 10:00 i 12:00

24 marca Poniedziałek Wielkanocny - Msze św. o g. 12:00 i 19:30.

6 kwietnia **Święcone Parafialne -** o godz. 13:15

## Easter Schedule - Pope John Paul II Center

3999 Rose Drive - Yorba Linda (714) 996-8161

Holy Thursday - Mass of the Lord's Supper (English and Polish) 7:30 pm March 20

March 21 **Good Friday -** 12:00 Noon Stations of the Cross 3:00 pm Liturgy of Good Friday in English

Divine Mercy Chaplet

7:30 pm Good Friday Liturgy in Polish

March 22 Holy Saturday - 10:00 am to 2:00 PM - Blessing of Easter Baskets

12:00 noon to 2:00 PM Egg Hunt 3:00 pm Divine Mercy Chaplet

Saturday March 22 - 8:00 pm Easter Vigil (English)

Easter Sunday - 7:00 am - Procession and Resurrection Mass in Polish March 23

9:00 am Easter Mass in English 10:30 am Easter Mass in Polish 12:00 noon Latin Tridentine 1:15 pm Easter Mass in Czech

3:00 pm Divine Mercy Chaplet

Easter Week 3:00 pm Divine Mercy Chaplet every day - Feast of Divine Mercy Second Sunday Saturday, March 29 - 4:00 pm Mass in English

Veneration of Relics of Saint Faustina of Easter Sunday, March 30 9:00 am Mass in English

> Veneration of Relics of Saint Faustina 10:30 am Mass in Polish - Veneration of Relics of Saint Faustina 12:00 to 3:00 pm - Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions

3:00 pm - Chaplet of Divine Mercy, procession of flowers

Veneration of the relics of Saint Faustina and Solemn Benediction

### Yesteryear's **Polish Easter**

By: Robert Strybel, Polish/Polonian Affairs Writer

Many Polish Americans still take their food baskets to be blessed in church on Holy Saturday, share blessed-egg wedges at Easter brunch and enjoy the ham, kiełbasa and horseradish as well as the babkas and mazurkas of yesteryear. Some even attend the sunrise Mass of Resurrection (Rezurekcja) at a Polish parish and sing "Wesoły nam dzień dziś nastał". In general, however, there is a vast difference between the Easter observed in today's America and Polishstyle celebrations at the time when huge waves of immigrants were arriving in the New World in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. That difference stems from a variety of things including geography,

The vast majority of our peasant ancestors lived in rural hamlets and tried to eke out a meager existence from their small plots of land. The Polish peasant was tied to the soil and to his Catholic faith, and the two were inextricably intertwined. His work was defined by the changing seasons, and his religion fit into the overall scheme of things with its cyclical feasts and rituals.

occupation, religion and technology.

Proverbs said to predict the weathersomething all-important to an agrarian society reflected the interconnection between religious feasts and the coming harvest. "Gdy w Popielec pogoda służy, suchą wiosnę wróży" (When Ash Wednesday's weather is fair, of a dry spring beware), one proverb advised. Another went: "Kto w Wielki Piątek sieje, ten się w żniwa śmieje" (Who on Good Friday goes out to sow, at harvest time will smile and glow).

One might think that Good Friday was too somber a day for field work, but in fact farm work, Easter cooking and housecleaning went on undisturbed until 3 PM. Only then did householders begin preparing for the solemn 6-9 PM Good Friday services commemorating the Passion and Death of Jesus at their parish church. There they would hear the familiar, but always moving account of Christ's ordeal, sing haunting Lenten hymns such as "Ludu mój ludu" and go to confession if they hadn't already done so. Body, home and soul had to be fresh, clean and tidy for the Great Feast.

As Lent gradually drew to a close, both the spiritual experience and physical preparations grew more intense. Frequent church attendance and severe fasting were widespread, and the most devout traveled to pilgrimage centers known for their realistic Passion Plays. These were regarded as mystical experiences, not entertainment. There was also backbreaking spring cleaning, done only with scrub-brushes and twig brooms, as well as butchering, cooking and baking, the handcrafting of Palm Sunday "palms", the painting of Easter eggs and the preparation of fresh paper cut-outs and mobiles to decorate the home.

Tableaux of Christ's Tomb were set up in churches. A figure of a lifeless, reposing Christ was placed in something meant to resemble a grotto or tomb, surrounded by votive lamps, flowers and greenery. Special honor guards took turns watching over the Holy Sepulcher, where

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