

ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF FOOD FOR THE FIRST MEAL OF EASTER

Introductory Rites

The minister says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

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.

R. Blessed be God for ever.

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

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah (55:1-11):

All you who are thirsty,
come to the water!
You who have no money,
come, buy grain and eat;
Come, buy grain without money,
wine and milk without cost!

Why spend your money for what is not bread;
your wages for what does not satisfy?
Only listen to me, and you shall eat well,
you shall delight in rich fare.
Pay attention and come to me;
listen, that you may have life.
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
the steadfast loyalty promised to David.

As I made him a witness to peoples,
a leader and commander of peoples,
So shall you summon a nation you knew not,

and a nation that knew you not shall run to you,
Because of the LORD, your God,
the Holy One of Israel, who has glorified you.

Seek the LORD while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near.

Let the wicked forsake their way,
and sinners their thoughts;
Let them turn to the LORD to find mercy;
to our God, who is generous in forgiving.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways - oracle of the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways,
my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

Yet just as from the heavens
the rain and snow come down
And do not return there
till they have watered the earth,
making it fertile and fruitful,
Giving seed to the one who sows
and bread to the one who eats,

So shall my word be
that goes forth from my mouth;
It shall not return to me empty,
but shall do what pleases me,
achieving the end for which I sent it.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

The minister says:

My soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

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

Athrist is my soul for God, the living God. When shall I go and behold the face of God? **R.**
Those times I recall, now that I pour out my soul within me, when I went with the throng and led them
in procession in the house of God, amid loud cries of joy and thanksgiving, with the multitude keeping
festival. **R.**

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

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

Intercessions

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.

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

That Easter may find us cleansed of sin and ready to live anew our Christian faith, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

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.**

That we may be ready to give from our table to those who hunger and thirst, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

That we may one day enjoy the banquet of the Lord in the heavenly kingdom, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

Christ taught us to pray for our daily bread and so we dare to say:

All: Our Father...

Prayer of Blessing

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

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 for ever.

R. Amen.