

Easter Traditions in Romania

by Ana Zlibut, Timisoara, Romania

The greatest celebration of the Romanians is the Easter celebration. It is preceded by 40 days of fasting, in which Christians prepare spiritually to meet the great feast. At midnight, the Resurrection service is done. The people go to church with candles to light them from the priest's candle. In the church it is dark, people are waiting the moment when the priest comes out of the altar with the lit candle and says three times: "Come and take light!" Then all the people take the Holy Light and the priest says, "Christ has Risen!" And the people from the church respond: "He is truly Risen!"

The Liturgy of the Resurrection lasts about two hours, after which all those present are given myrrh oil by the priest and receive pieces of holy bread sprinkled with wine. Then they go to their houses, carrying the Holy Light with them.

The next day of Easter, the people go to the cemetery, in traditional clothes, where there is a memorial service for the deceased. After the liturgy, the candles are lit on the tombs again, the pictures are taken, and after the meal, at the evening, special prayers are performed, singing "Christ has Risen!"

The meal that unites the entire family on this Holy Day is accompanied by the joy of reunion, to be together in family, to teach future generations the moral values that support each Christian family. These have been "added" as an ingredient in the dishes that have been dearly prepared for this wonderful event. Along with dyed eggs, sweet bread and cakes, the lamb is prepared in various ways.

The dyeing of Easter Eggs is usually made naturally, with the help of onion skins. The eggs are painted differently from a region of Romania to another. Red paint symbolizes Jesus' blood and it's the traditional color. Nowadays Easter eggs are painted in many other colors. Orange, brown or yellow eggs are painted using everyday ingredients. The natural dye materials can be onion skins, beetroot or even red cabbage.

Now, you can wait for the moment to knock the eggs together end-to-end, on Easter day. It's a tradition of breaking the Easter eggs: Two eggs are cracked together, the first person saying, "Christ has risen!" ("Hristos a Înviat") and the second person saying, "He's risen indeed!" ("Adevărat a Înviat!")

Let God help us celebrate healthy many Happy Easters and let our souls to reach Heaven!