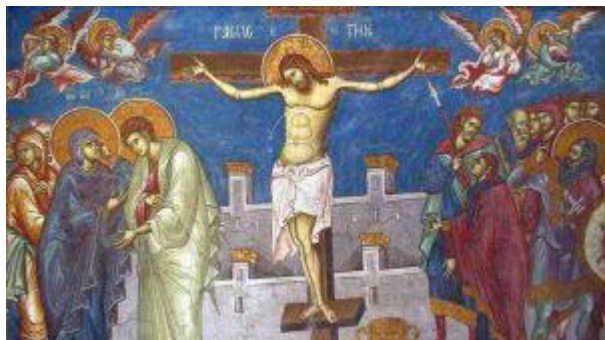


Easter to the Romanian, faith, tradition, customs, legend



Selected by Netuta Stratulat, from Galati, Romania

The Resurrection of the Lord is the most important holiday in the Christian calendar, being accompanied, in Romania, by many traditions and customs, some inherited from generation to generation. The Orthodox Easter is celebrated each year on the Sunday following the full moon after the spring equinox. The rule by which it is calculated was established at the Ecumenical Council of Nicea in 325.

Easter, named in the popular tradition and the Great Lent, is the longest post over the year, stretching over a seven-week period.

The Easter fast precedes the Lord's Resurrection, being a hard and harsh post, especially in the last week, called the Week of Suffering.

This post refers to the 40-day and 40-night followed by the Savior Jesus Christ before beginning the preaching of the Gospel.

According to the popular belief, the Great Lent is divided into two periods: The Fake Post, which lasts until Sunday of Flowers and Easter, represented by the last week, Week High (the Week of Suffering).

In Lent, believers abstain from forbidden foods (meat, eggs, fish, cheese, milk, etc.), but at the same time they adopt a spiritual attitude, being exhorted to prayer and spiritual purification.

Throughout the post, there are so-called fish discharges (permission to eat), when fasting is allowed to consume fish dishes. The days when fishing is done are on the Feast of the Good Annunciation, on March 25, and on the Palm Sunday, on the Sunday before Easter.

Children, pregnant women, women who are breastfeeding and sick people can be exempt, but that does not mean that they can not miss the spiritual and prayer posts. At the same time, there are no weddings, baptisms and weddings in the Easter Post, practically birthdays are not celebrated, and entertainment is forbidden.

After fasting, Christians must confess to be able to share. Confession involves confession of sins and repentance toward sins committed. It's usually done in the last week before the Resurrection. Also in the last week of Lent, fasting, in every Christian Orthodox church, "Deniile", some of the most beautiful and uplifting religious services, are celebrated in the evening.

The week before Lent is called by Orthodox Christians, White Week or "Week of Cheese." Sunday is called Frightened Judgement, it is the last day of eating meat. In the coming days only eggs, milk, cheese and fish are consumed. The next is Adam's Extinction Sunday from Heaven, also called "Lasted Cheese". It is also known as "Sunday of Forgiveness". There is the order to ask for forgiveness, the first attempt to overcome the struggle with sin is forgiveness, return to love.

The days of this week also have proper names. The first day is White Monday, also known as the Monday of sheep cheese, because then the sheep's cheese is cut. On white Tuesday, it's good to eat cheese. Do not wash clothes and do not bathe, because it becomes white hair.

On White Wednesday is the release of dairy and fish. Neither this day is not good to wash your head, if you not turning gray early. On the unclean Thursday, women wash their shirts to be white over the year, but not a torch, so that men are not in danger when they go to work to the woods. It's also called Thursday's ants, because women offer food to these insects. Make bread made from flour or corn flour, which is greased with butter or cheese and placed on a mushroom, so that the insects have what they eat and do not damage during the summer. This is the first of 12 precious expensive Fridays that are marked before each feast. It is kept without food but with prayer, eating only in the evening, for the good of the house and for the purification of the soul. In some villages, they are mostly kept by young people, in order to be lucky to marry.

On Saturday, white pies are made, which give themselves alms. Men do not work, being in danger of falling, and women do not sew or wash men's shirts. Give small knit bread, cage with small candles and pies, so that those who give them alms have something to eat in the other world. The girls bring a jar of water from the coldest spring, and give alms to have spring in the other world.

It is also said that in the White Week it does not turn, so as not to make fruit worms over the year. Also, in order not to white your hair or to blind yourself, it is not good to wash your face and your head unless you put a piece of cheese in the water. On Saturdays, the rest of the cheese, the Church remembers all the men and women who were "lit by the fast". This day is called "the Ascetic." The week ends with Sunday leaving the cheese, the last day of the party before the Great Lent. The traditional meal ends with a boiled egg and with sayings: "With an egg put your mouth now, with another egg dropping your mouth at Easter" or " Little egg Little egg to make me the Lent easy "

The first day of the Lent is also called Polocaniile or Spolocaniile. On this day, the pots in which sweet food (with meat) was washed and climb into the attic. Only children eat this day from the food that remains from the left of the century. Preparing for a feast would not be complete without mentioning those who are no longer in our world. From the first Saturday of the fast begins the commemoration of the deads, called in some parts of the country " the Saturday memorial " or "wearing heads".

Unlike other memories of the dead, on these Saturdays, a pot full of wheat or flour is kept in the church until the Saturdays of Lazar. This is a symbol of man - the clay vessel that received the divine soul.

Half of the Great Lent, on Wednesday, on the fourth week, is the number of eggs. After White Week no more eggs are taken from the nest. Now they gather and count the best eggs to be painted Easter.

In the popular calendar, there are some important dates: the St. Thoader Shopping Market, the ritual wash and the combing of the girls on the night of St. Toader (the first Saturday in the fasting), the spring celebration (March 1), the martyrs (9 March), the first work of land etc. . The Saturday before the Flowers reminds us of Lazar wich resurrected of the Savior from the dead. Now is the last day of "bearing the heads" when the dead are mentioned for the last time before Easter. The resumption of memoirs for those who are asleep is made by "Easter 's Deads" on the Monday after Luminated Week.

In the south of Molda, in Muntenia and Dobrogea, with the name of Lăzărita or Lăzărelul, similar to the custom of the Christmas carol, a group of girls, one of which is distinguished by special clothing, enters the farmer's yard and plays "the song of Lazar " and dancing specifically. They are welcomed by the host with eggs, donuts, cakes and more. On March 25 th, we celebrate the Good Annunciation or the Blagovestenia. Those who hold the Great Lent have their permission to eat fish.

On this day, the Virgin Mary received the news from the Archangel Gabriel that he would give birth the Son of God.

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Sprinkle with the brandy at the root of the trees, and with wine the root of the wineryard, for the rich fruit, and incense the fruit trees for the removal of the pests. The Annunciation can be plowed, but it can not be given with the seed so that the birds do not eat the beans under the furrow.

In the folk tradition it is said that Blagovestenie comes from the swallows and begins the cuckoo to sing, to Sanziene or St. Peter. After that, it is said siling with barley grains or cherry

beans, and turn into hawk. He will remain hawk until the next year, when he will regain the voice of the Annunciation.

Also, in some places, people count how many times they played the cuckoo to know how many years to live.

At the same time, in other parts of the country, it is common for married girls and boys to ask cuckoo when they will marry: "the strong cuckoo/ how many years will you give me / until my married?" If it happens that after saying these words playing the cuckoo, it means that it will wait for a year. If he did not hear, it means he's going to marry that year.

Also, the branch he sang his birthday cuckoo, he was cut and put in the girls' bath, in the hope that the boys will not be around.

In other areas, is doing a fire in the yard, in front of the door, and next to the fire are put water, salt and bread, which are then given. In some places, bread and salt are placed on the threshold to have what the angels eat.

The housewives do not keep the eggs made on the Annunciation Day and they will not put them under the closet because they will not get healthy chicks.

It is said that if someone is angry with the Annunciation, it is angry all year. In Maramures, gather things that are no longer to be burned. The ritual is called the Night of Fire, and it is practiced in every house, the fire is done until midnight or even dawn. After the day of Lazar on Saturday is the Palm Sunday (the Lord's Entry in Jerusalem - the Palm Sunday), which ends the Great Lent, and begins the Week of Lord's Suffering.

The church goes with willow branches that are sanctified and symbolize the renewal, spring, the rebirth of nature, they symbolize the fiery branches with which the people of Jerusalem met Jesus.

The blessed willow branches are placed in the door and window frames, in the streets of the house, at the entrance to the barn, at the icons, or even on the tombs. It is believed that after the saint the sail brings peace and prosperity to the home.

Beekeepers "bless" beehives with willow branches. In other areas, the willow has the role of scattering hailstones or curing diseases such as back pain.

The sanctified branches are preserved until the next year and serve as defense, protecting against evil spirits, spells, and diseases. Now there was to be clean home and yard cleanliness, it is a fresh and clean atmosphere. For the Palm Sunday, the house must be like a flower!

In Romania, the Palm Sunday combine the significance of the Biblical event with popular traditions that draw its roots from Traco-Pontic antiquity. The Palm Sunday are celebrated as the name of all those who have flower names. The Palm Sunday are allowed to eat fish. The population of Dobrogea and the lower basin of the Danube prepares grumbling on the grill, and in Galati, by the Palm Sunday, is every year the Scrumbean Festival

The popular tradition says the weather will be just like in the Palm Sunday and Easter.

In some parts of the country, it is the mountain of girls of the tradition of Lazarel, which continues on the day of the the Palm Sunday with a large mountain in the middle of the village and a shopping fair. Girls and boys show off their new clothes sewn so carefully all winter. Now every girl shows how skillful and diligent she is and draws her boyfriend's eyes to choose his future wife.

This renewal is the desire of everyone to renew their souls, to become better after the need for the Lent, at the beginning of a great feast.

As Romanian habits and traditions, in the Great Week, it is good for all believers to forgive and to reconcile with all those with whom they have been in hostility.

The big week, also called the Suffering of Week, is the week of denial, of watch. In the Romanians, these services are expected with great piety, representing the most intense period of preparation of the soul for entering the great feast of the Resurrection. In particular, the Thursday nights, Denia of the 12 Gospels, are expected, and Friday, when the Lord's Prohod is played. Many of the elderly used to keep a black post every day, eating poorly after the service. Interrupting work in the field, lighting ritual fire for warming the earth and the dead, preparing the holiday clothes. All days of this week are considered, from the very beginnings of Christianity, great and holy, and even from the evening of the Palm Sunday, readings of the denial , sevice watching are being read. They are read only in the fifth and seventh weeks of Lent. Denials are morning service in the evening.

They bring the light of the morning into the darkness of the evening, they are meant to prepare the Christian to pass from the darkness of sin to the light of faith.

As habits and traditions, in most places, Great Thursday is the day when red eggs are painted. Also on Thursdays there is a post with dry food, churches are no longer bells, but they are just hammering, and Christians who have been confessed can share. On Great Thursday, there is superstition that the girls, during a service to making a knot, after each gospel, and then put their rope under the pillow to dream their chosen.

On Good Friday, also called Black Friday, the saddest of the sad days of the Lord's Suffering, we remember the bringing to trial, the mockery, the scorn, the crucifixion, the death and the burial of Jesus. In the evening, remembering the moment of the Savior's seating in the tomb, Denia Prohod is officiating in the churches. This day is a black post in the memory of the Savior's Crucifixion and Death. Believers, headed by priests, surround the church three times, after which they all pass under the Holy Air (Epitaf) a cloth on which the icon of the Sacrament's burial is printed. At the same time, according to the doctrine, the faithful returning from the Church bring home the light of the Prohod, the putting Jesus in the grave, and surround the house by holding the burning candle.

In the villages the children go to the field and gather flowers, coming to the church at the Holy Air.

The Lord's Prohod is now sung with great impetus by the entire Christian community, forming several groups in the church. The living of the sadness of the Savior's death, combined with the imminence of the Resurrection, is unique and was seen by Mircea Eliade as the essence of the Christian religion: "From this simple confrontation of contradictions is revealed the whole greatness of Christianity."

Believers, who can not keep a black post, do not have to eat nettles, and there is no vinegar in the food, because Jesus was given to drink vinegar after it was whipped.

Other superstitions would be the following: if it rains on Good Friday, the year will be rich; if you bathe in cold water three times on Good Friday, you will be healthy all year; women are not allowed to sew, weave, bake bread or the like, because there is a great danger of illness and evil spirits.

On Great Saturday, according to the ancient tradition, women wash their heads, arrange their hair, dress with clean clothes, make a cross and pray to icons, then begin to dice the dough for Pasca and sweet bread, and to cook traditional foods with lamb: drop, steak, rump. As a traditional superstition when the baking, the pots should only be placed with the right hand, and the number of trays in which the Pasca or sweet bread, should be doubled, otherwise there are many trouble in the coming year.

Housework is complete, people are resting to participate in the Resurrection service. The housekeepers carefully prepare the bag with those that will be blessed by the priest at the end of the service. On a white towel put in a bag a clean wax candle and some of all the (sweet) foods that were stopped during the post.

Saturday's Easter, the last day of the Great Week, is the day when the body of the Savior Jesus rested in the tomb, is a day of silence for the faithful.

It's a day of meditation. The luminous light of the Resurrection makes its presence felt by the coming of the Holy Light at the grave of the Lord from Jerusalem.

The Great Lent is a reference to spirituality, mercy, Bible readings, and other spiritual books. Believers must confess during the Great Lent to prepare to receive Holy Communion. The Great Lent at Easter involves physical and spiritual cleaning.

A very beautiful prayer that says in the Great Lent:

"Lord God and Master of my life, the spirit of tranquility, of the care of many, of the love of dominion, and of the love of desert, does not give it to me. And the spirit of courage, cleaning, humble thought, patience, and love, give it to me, Your servant. So, Lord, King, give me to see my mistakes and not to blame my brother, that you are blessed for ever and ever. Amen".

At 12 o'clock at night, in the Orthodox churches the lights are lit, the Resurrection approaches, the priests share the Holy Light of the Resurrection, brought with a special

transport from Jerusalem, to all believers and says three times: "come to take the Light". In the middle of the night, in the churches the Holy Easter service is celebrated. Blessed are Pasca, red eggs and other dishes, because the Lent is over. Believers take Light from the Light, say "Christ has Risen!" and answer "He has truly Risen!", formulas that they then address for 40 days until the Lord's Ascension.

The Feast of Easter is the moment when we celebrate "the death of death, the breaking of hell and the beginning of eternal life, and we praise the Savior, the blessed and glorified God of our fathers." As this really happens, we say, "The brothers, who hate us, forgive them all, for the Resurrection, and cry: Christ is Risen, from the dead with death to death, resurrection to life in the tombs, giving them".

The Feast of the Resurrection, one of the most beautiful in the world, is traditionally the occasion of family reunion around the table with traditional dishes, is a reason for joy and optimism.

On the Resurrection day, believers are used to going to the church, taking light and singing the Lord's Resurrection. People bring home "the light" - the candle lit directly from the one lit by the father in the Altar - some are used to making a small cross on the top of the house door or on the eastern wall, smelling it with the candle, and most keeps the Easter candle and light it over the year in the event of great trouble, sickness, or extreme weather phenomenon.

The Easter kitchen is built around the meat of the lamb - stew, roast or crumb – the lamb, symbol of the Savior Jesus, who was sacrificed to save mankind.

Another symbol of the celebration is the Easter (Pasca) prepared usually on Saturday morning, which is taken to the blessing at the church at the Resurrection service, next to the bags of dishes prepared for the feast. The next morning, some believers, eat the Holy Pasca instead of the anaphase or the Holy Easter.

Those born on the Easter Day are said to have a lively and lucky life.

It is said that the Resurrection is good for people to be clothed with new clothing that would symbolize purification.

Also, it is not good for the Resurrection to sleep because the rest of the year will bring sleepiness, bad luck or poor crops.

On Easter Day it is also said that it is not good to consume the egg with salt, because the author will sweat all year long, and the Pasca, or the anaphuria, are considered healing if the pieces of them are kept for a year.

Also related to the egg, it is said that the Easter meal must begin with the consumption of an egg, believing that the body will be healthy for the entire year, then fish - to be spurred like this - and then a bird - to be easy like this.

Another tradition shows that if on Easter Day the first person entering the household is a man, there will be good luck over the year. These are traditions and customs widespread in the country in the Christian-Orthodox community.

Besides these, there are particular traditions encountered in certain geographic regions or in certain communities.

For example, in some areas of Moldova, on the Resurrection night, after the midnight mass, believers are used to accompany the moment of Resurrection by firecrackers, which signifies the scare away of evil spirits

The bag of goodies that goes to blessed the church is strictly prepared after those passed from ancestors: here are placed, along with dishes, poppy seed, salt, sugar, flour, onion and garlic - symbols of joy over the year. Above this plate is placed the Pasca, ham, money, flowers, red beetroot and red eggs. The bag is also covered with a towel designed with area-specific patterns. There is a specific tradition for blessing the other ingredients in the bag of goodies: poppy is thrown into the river to drive the drought, the salt brings plenty year, the sanctified sugar is a healing element for diseased animals, onion and garlic have insect protection, flour sprinkle it in the field, that the fruit of wheat be the one expected. Also in Moldova there is the tradition that the unmarried girls go to the church and wash the bell with untouched water, and in the morning they have to wash themselves with this, believing that they will be cleansed by the "married" boys from the locality. In turn, the boy who loves an unmarried girl must go to his house and give her a red egg. On the night of the Resurrection candles lit up at the graves, and the first Easter day begins with the Communion with the Pasca, after the believers wash themselves with water in which a red egg, a gold coin and a nettle are put.

In Maramures, on Easter Sunday children go to friends and neighbors - and the threshold of the house must first be passed by a boy, because in that household there is no discord for the rest of the year - and announces the Lord's Resurrection, and each host gives an egg Red.

In the villages of Transylvania, on the first Easter Day, the boys go to perfume-drenched at the homes of the married girls, " for freshness " - a habit that signifies blossoming and fecundity - and the girls reward them with red eggs and sweet bread.

In the area of Călărași, the Easter Bag, for blessing, contains, besides the dishes, a white cock, and there is the tradition that when the cock sings to mean that Christ has Risen, and the lucky one is the only whose cock sing first. After the service, it is customary all cocks to be given to poor people.

A tradition in Romania is that those who leave this world on Easter go directly to heaven, the gates of are opened on this day, and also because the heavens are opened, the souls of the deceased return home, for protect their loved ones.

The week following the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is known to the people as the Lighted Week. For Orthodox Christians, the Lighted Week is the beginning of a feast time that ends fifty days from Easter to the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Rusaliile).

Friday's Lighted Week is called Pretty Friday or Fantanita. The church blesses the fountains after the evening service. It is the feast of the Spring of the Mother of God. Pretty Friday is in direct contrast to Black Friday, or Good Friday, before Easter. The legends say the Mother of God built a fountain that had water only on Pretty Friday, because that water was life-giving.

The second Sunday after Easter, is St. Thomas, the Apostle. On this day the Savior was shown to the disciples. Through the locked doors for the second time after the Risen. Because Thomas did not believe in the Savior's Resurrection, Jesus urged him to touch the signs remaining on His body following His Crucifixion.

After this moment, Thomas undoubtedly confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and God, the reality of the Lord's Resurrection being proven once again for those who could not believe.

Forty days after the resurrection of Christ and ten days before the Descent of the Holy Spirit, we are celebrating the Ascension into heaven with the body of the Son of God.

Fifty days after the Resurrection of the Lord, called Pentecost, while the Apostles and other disciples of Jesus Christ were gathered together in prayer in the "upper room," the Holy Spirit descended upon them in the form of "tongues of fire" making the noise of a strong wind, and they began to speak in languages they did not know.

Churches are decorated with flowers and green leaves that symbolize God's divine breath renewing all creation. Also, candles and green covers are used. We go to the church with walnut leaves, that will be blessed and we will put to the icons for to be protected from fire.

Orthodox Christians, live the Descent of the Holy Spirit and receive the "seal of the Holy Spirit's gift" through the mystery of anointing with Holy Chrism (anointing with sanctified oil).

In addition to the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit, in this day also celebrates the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Orthodox Church sees the Descent of the Holy Spirit as fulfilling the mission of preaching the Savior Jesus Christ and the beginning of the Messianic era of the Kingdom of God, mystically presents in the Church. Traditionally, is considered, the beginning of the Church, the Holy, the Synodally and the Apostolic.