

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
Holy Supper at Home
Christmas Eve 2020

Holy Supper (святий вечір) is a Nativity tradition from the Carpathian region of Eastern Europe. Families would begin this meal as the first star appeared on Christmas Eve.

While there are many variations of this tradition, the purpose is to keep a holy **fasting meal** (no meat/fish/dairy) at home before the evening service on the last night of the Fast - before the Feast.

Items to gather in preparation:

Candles, a loaf of bread (unsliced), slivers of garlic and honey (to dip them in).
It's customary to make koliva/kutia (boiled wheat with honey).

Traditional table setting:

A white table cloth, hay/straw strewn on the table, an empty place setting, and the icon of the Nativity - set out for veneration.

Symbolism:

- **Candles:** *Sun of Righteousness * light of the world * star which led the Magi*
- **Straw:** *the manger * humility * kenosis*
- **White cloth:** *swaddling clothes * winding sheet * our baptismal garments*



The following prayers were prepared for parish usage by +Archbishop Job (Osacky) of blessed memory and then later adapted by Archpriest Stephan Meholick.



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Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Begin by lighting candles and singing (or saying) the festal Troparion.

Nativity Troparion - Tone 4

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God,
has shone to the world the light of wisdom!
For by it, those who worshipped the stars, were taught by a star
to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness,
and to know Thee, the Orient from on high.
O Lord, glory to Thee!

1st Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, You have given us the forty days of Advent
that we might through prayer, fasting, almsgiving and
repentance prepare for the celebration of your First Coming to
us. As we stand at the threshold of this great feast, we gather to
partake of this Holy Supper, asking that you yourself may be
present, blessing and strengthening us as we praise the mystery
of your Incarnation.

For Yours is the might, the power and the glory together with your Father without origin, and your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

2nd Prayer

O Lord our God, gazing upon the holy icon of the feast of the nativity and recalling the words of the prophet Isaiah: “the ox and the ass know their master’s crib,” we call to mind the animals that were present in the cavern in Bethlehem. We also call to mind all the animals, domestic and wild, which you have created. We remember the endangered species and ask that you preserve them from the excesses and cruelty of fallen humanity. We thank you for the pets that bring us joy and all the animals which serve us.

For all of creation praises you, O our God, and to you we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.



We sing “Memory Eternal” to all whom we have in mind that have departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

Grant rest eternal and blessed repose O Lord, to the soul(s) of Your servant(s) <Names>, who have fallen asleep, and make their memory to be eternal.

Memory eternal! (3x)



*We sing "Many Years" to all those present
and to those who are absent whom we call to mind.*

Grant, O Lord, a prosperous and peaceful life, health, salvation,
and furtherance in all good things to Thy servant(s) <Names>,
and preserve them for Many Years!

God grant them many years! (3x)



Prayer with garlic and honey

May God give us the courage to accept the difficulties of life over
which we are powerless: symbolized by this bitter clove of garlic.

A sliver of raw garlic is dipped in honey...

May all these difficulties be overcome by the fruits of the Spirit:
love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
gentleness, and self-control; symbolized by this sweet honey.

... and then eaten.

Prayer at the breaking of bread

Blessed are You, O Lord, King of Universe, who brings forth
bread from the earth!

Bless us, O Lord, as we break this bread together in love. May
our tables be filled with an abundance of wheat, wine, and oil
that we may in turn give to those who are in need. May we
continually be mindful of all who are hungry; those who are

homeless; those who suffer the ravages of war, terror, disaster, cruelty, injustice, addiction, abuse and loneliness. Finally, as we partake of this food may we recognize that you are the true Bread of life, the bread which has come down from heaven. May our communion of the Holy Mysteries on this great feast be for the healing of our souls and bodies, that being united to You and to each other in a bond of love by partaking of the one bread and cup which are Your most pure body and precious blood, we may send up glory, thanksgiving and worship to You, the Only-begotten Son whose glorious nativity in the flesh we celebrate, together with your Father without origin, and your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The loaf of bread is passed, broken and shared.

Meal blessing

The poor shall eat and be satisfied. Those who seek the Lord shall praise Him; and their hearts shall live forever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Christ our God, bless the food and drink of your servants, for you are holy always, now and ever unto ages of ages. Amen.



Prayers of thanksgiving after the meal

We begin by singing (or saying) the festal Kontakion.

Nativity Kontakion Tone - 3

Today the Virgin gives birth
to Him who is transcendent in essence,
and the earth offers a cave
to Him who is the Unapproachable One.
Angels with shepherds glorify Him;
the wise men journey with a star,
for unto us is born as a little child
He who is the Pre-eternal God.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now
and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. (3x)

God is with us, through His Grace and love for mankind, always
now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



*If you are unable to participate in the church services of this day/night,
it is recommended to read the Nativity narrative from the Gospel of Luke.*

Luke 2: 1-20

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from
Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This
census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So
all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.

So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those

who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.



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