

Lenten Greetings to you all.

Easter has always been a special time for me. I was born on an Easter Sunday morning, so no teddy bears growing up. Instead, it was bunnies as my stuffed animals. My father's side of the family were originally Anglican. My mother grew up Roman Catholic. On my mom's side, there was no more important Holiday than Easter.

I announced a while back about the tradition that my grandfather had handed down to me regarding the sharing of a blessed egg on Easter Sunday morning prior to going to church. My grandfather was first generation Polish American. His parents, my great grandparents, fled Poland right around the stirrings of WW I, emigrating to the US. They were traditional in their beliefs having been members, I believe, of the Polish Catholic Church, though celebrating here as Roman Catholics.

Two traditions that I was introduced to were a particular wafer that was blessed and then shared with the household on Christmas Day and the blessing of one egg to be shared amongst the household on Easter morning. The Easter tradition included hand grinding the horseradish on Palm Sunday and prepping it for Easter. The horseradish included the adding pickled beets and storing it upside down in the jar without opening it until Easter.

The full tradition in Poland of the Easter blessing is for a basket to be brought up to the priest during Holy Saturday services. The basket would contain the decorated egg(s), some meat, salt, pepper and other items (such as the horseradish) to be blessed by the priest. As the family gathered before going to church on Easter morning, the egg would be divided amongst all that were gathered, a toast said and the egg consumed (ideally with a bit of the freshly made red colored horseradish—a reminder of the bitterness Jesus endured for our sake). Various liquids might accompany the egg.

In Poland, they had a separate wafer for Easter, *oplatek*, just like at Christmas. My family resorted to the blessed egg to fulfill the role as the wafer was more difficult to find at Easter than at Christmas.

I invite you all to join me in this tradition if you choose. Since we don't typically gather on Holy Saturday, I invite any who would like to bring in a hard boiled decorated egg to be blessed (and if you like other pieces of the meal with it in a basket) on Palm Sunday. You would then bring home the items and come Easter, when gathered with you family, prior to engaging in the main meal, to divide up that egg amongst whomever is gathered in the house at the time and offer up a toast/blessing/prayer at that time.

Many blessings to you all,

Fr Frank